



CLEAR VISION

A Monthly Publication of the Center for
CHRISTIAN LIFE ENRICHMENT



Soul Food: Faith of Zaccheus

By Rich Blue

“Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words.” St. Francis of Assisi

Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. Luke 3:8a

Is true change really possible? We all seem to be able to make little shifts in our attitudes and behaviors; however, how often do we sustain change for a season only to return to our old ways. In Christian circles, we hear so much about repentance, conversion and being born again—how can we know if we or anyone else has experienced a genuine spiritual transformation?

These are challenges to our faith. As Christians, we are repeatedly embarrassed by those who declare great faith in Christ and then fall prey to moral failings. It is a common defensive reaction to assume the individual was never sincere in the first place. It is doubly upsetting when the perpetrator was self-righteous, condescending and condemning of others. What are we to conclude? Does the presence of arrogance, hypocrisy, inconsistency and set-backs invalidate the hope for genuine faith, repentance, and personal transformation?

Absolutely not! Let us not become cynical since every one of us stumbles and falls short of our professed ideals. There can be no learning without failing. There will always be those narcissistic individuals who operate as if they have no conscience and seem unaffected by how their actions affect others. These damaged people are certainly in the minority. The overwhelming majority of us are making sincere attempts to be the best

individuals we can be and falling short repeatedly.

We all need both grace and mindful determination to go along with our faith. The problem is that we are not students of change, carefully paying attention to what makes personal transformation possible. We are not drawing upon best practices and are instead practicing what Alcoholics Anonymous refers to as “insanity”—trying the same thing over and over again and hoping for different results. True transformation begins with a sense of dedication and is empowered by effective systems, accountability and support.

Let’s take a look at the story of Zaccheus found in the Gospel of Luke. Zaccheus begins the story as one of the least likely individual interested in personal and spiritual transformation. Zaccheus became very rich by aligning himself with the Roman Authorities and eventually became the chief tax-collector. His job was to collect taxes from all the inhabitants of Israel and his income was based on whatever he collected above and beyond that which was required by Rome. You can imagine how much hostility and ill will was generated toward a rich man whose wealth was a function of his overcharging and exploiting his fellow countrymen.

Luke tells how Zaccheus heard that Jesus was passing through town and he was desperately trying to get a glimpse of him. Zaccheus had to climb a tree in order to see him because he was so small in stature. As Jesus

was passing by, he looked up in the tree and said, *“Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.”* (Lk 19:5) Zaccheus hopped down and gladly welcomed Jesus into his home.

Let’s take a look at the story of Zaccheus found in the Gospel of Luke. Zaccheus begins the story as one of the least likely individual interested in personal and spiritual transformation. Zaccheus became very rich by aligning himself with the Romans and eventually becoming the chief tax-collector. His job was to collect taxes from all the inhabitants of Israel and his income was based on whatever he collected above and beyond that which was required by Rome. You can imagine how much hostility and ill will was generated toward a rich man whose wealth was a function of his overcharging and exploiting his fellow countrymen.

Luke tells how Zaccheus heard that Jesus was passing through town and he was desperately trying to get a glimpse of him. Zaccheus had to climb a tree in order to see him because he was so small in stature. As Jesus was passing by, he looked up in the tree and said, *“Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house”* (Luke 19:5 NASB). Zaccheus hopped down and gladly welcomed Jesus into his home.

Let us not become cynical since every one of us stumbles and falls short of our professed ideals.

[Continued on page 2]



Soul Food (continued): Faith of Zaccheus

The crowd was outraged that Jesus would even associate with such a “sinner” let alone ask to stay in his home. While the people were grumbling, Zaccheus was humbling himself before Jesus saying, “*Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.*” Jesus was so touched by his change of heart he said, “*Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.*” (Lk 19:9 NASB)

True transformation at the heart level is always available if we are willing to seek with all our heart and climb a tree if necessary to get into relationship with Jesus. If we will express our yearning, intend our desired outcome, Jesus is ready to partner with us in the building of the Kingdom of God.

Apparently, Zaccheus did not need a lesson on personal and moral responsibility. He knew where he was out of integrity and instinctively understood what he needed to do to manifest his change of heart. With no

apparent coaching from Christ, Zaccheus chose to address the suffering of the poor and go above and beyond to make amends to those people whom he had defrauded.

Let us pray for the spirit of Zaccheus as we live our lives with abandon, leaving behind anything which does not propel us toward our deepest desires, care for those less fortunate, making amends where appropriate and walking, talking and working with Jesus.

“I’ve learned that whenever I decide something with an open heart, I usually make the right decision.” ~Maya Angelou

Christian Life Enrichment *An Emotionally Focused Marriage* 2009 Winter Couples Retreat

Friday, February 13th

at 6:30pm to

Sunday, Feb. 15th

Join us for an exciting and meaningful weekend where we will be looking at our marriages through the unique lens of Attachment Theory, examining how our earliest experiences interacting with our parents have influenced our ability to bond meaningfully with our spouses.

At this retreat, we will:

- * Identify our attachment styles.*
- * Learn how to more effectively overcome our blocks.*
- * Create more emotionally secure and satisfying partnerships.*
- * Examine our cycles of conflict and learn new ways to short-circuit the time we are punishing each other.*

We will also build on the concept of maintaining a relational “dashboard” through which we can monitor the health and safety of our marriages. We will practice creating gauges and warning lights to monitor the vital systems in our partnerships.



DeKoven Retreat
Center,
Racine, Wisconsin

Biblical MKO's (More Knowledgeable Others)

By Rich Blue

Brief looks into the lives of influential spiritual leaders found in the Bible. We will be highlighting individuals whose lives parallel the message found in Soul Food.

Zaccheus

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham." ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost." Luke 19:9-10 (NIV)

Read Luke Chapter 19:1-10

This meditation on Luke 19 is guided by the following questions which are for you to reflect on and you may find it helpful to journal your answers and thoughts.

Reflection Questions:

- 1 Jesus happened to be passing through Jericho and there was a particular individual with whom Jesus was intending to have a meeting. What does that suggest about Jesus' mission, power and the way God intervenes in our lives?
- 2 What do you make of Zaccheus from what we know about him? Make a quick character sketch of this man who was the chief tax collector and very rich.
- 3 Notice the level of Zaccheus' hunger

- 4 and intention to see Jesus. What in the passage suggests he was absolutely determined to get a glimpse of Christ? What did he want from Jesus?
- 5 It would seem Zaccheus' intention to see Jesus was inversely proportional to his size and stature. Would you have had the resolve to see Jesus?
- 6 Why do you think Jesus saw Zaccheus in the tree and asked to stay in his house? What may have been happening within Jesus?
- 7 How do you think Zaccheus felt when Jesus singled him out? What was he thinking?
- 8 Why did Zaccheus not even hesitate to host Jesus at his home?
- 9 How do you relate to the crowd who was bitter and angry about Jesus choosing to spend time with Zaccheus? Who are you tempted to make bad when you get jealous about how God is working in their lives?
- 10 Something changed Zaccheus in a very short period of time. What do you think led up to his transforming moment with Jesus?
- 11 How did he decide to give half his pos-

sessions to the poor? What happened that led him to offer to reimburse anyone he defrauded 4 times what he stole from them?

- 11 What did Jesus mean when he said, "Today, salvation has come to this house because he too is a son of Abraham?"
- 12 The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost? This is a declaration of Jesus' purpose and passion. If you are a Christ follower, how are you striving to seek and save those who are lost? Do you think Zaccheus had any problem embracing Jesus' comment that he was lost and needed saving?
- 13 How can you have the faith of Zaccheus and totally give yourself to God's work in your life?

Regardless of your shortcomings, seek after Jesus, overcoming every obstacle which life places in your way. Think creatively and climb a tree if you have to in order to get a glimpse of Christ. Welcome Him into your heart, mind and soul and fellowship with Him. Commit yourself to cleaning and clearing up any unfinished business as a demonstration of the sincerity of your intention.

Christian Life Enrichment Staff Directory



Richard Blue, M.A., LCPC, NCC
Clinical Director
rich.blue@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 14



Gabriela Caballero Cantú, M.A., LPC
gabriela.cantu@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 15



Lyndi Wood, M.A., Therapy Intern
lyndi.wood@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 12



Nancy Rollins, M.S., LCPC, NCC
nancy.rollins@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 13



Andrew Mercer, Therapy Intern
andrew.mercer@cle.us.com
(847) 272-3684 ext. 17

Women Alive Presents
Relational Investments:
Sharing Your Growth Process

How often have you thought, "I wish my friends understood why my work at CLE is so important?"

Well this is your opportunity ladies:

Bring a friend to experience the power of this amazing community of women. Together we will discuss and explore the principles which embody CLE's empowering model of growth and change. Attending this workshop with a friend will move your relationship to the next level as you "share the wealth." Let this be part of your vision for integrating this work in your life in 2009. Be a generative force.

*847.272.3684 *13 or email info@cle.us.com*



Date: January 31, 2009

Time: 8am-11am

Place: CLE office (refreshments included)

Cost: \$100

bring guests for free

\$125 same day registration

This newsletter is intended to offer general information only and recognizes that individual issues may differ from these broad guidelines. Personal issues should be addressed within a therapeutic context with a professional familiar with the details of the problems.

Bring Life Abundantly



CHRISTIAN LIFE ENRICHMENT

666 Dundee Rd. Ste 503

Northbrook, IL 60062

Phone: (847) 272-3684

www.cle.us.com

CLEAR VISION

You can now sign up to receive the CLEar Vision monthly newsletter when you visit our website cle.us.com. You can also read and download back issues of the newsletter or find out other information about the Center for Christian Life Enrichment from our site.