
**EDITED AND
ABRIDGED
DRAMATIZED
STORY**

**FROM A SERMON
OF
REV. WILLIAM
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ZACCHAEUS



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He Was to Pass this Way

It must have been an awful night on the little fellow. He couldn't sleep at all. He just rolled and tossed all night long. Now it was breaking day. This little fellow was a businessman, maybe in a city of Jericho, and no doubt he had a growing business. He was in good standing with all the clubs and so forth, and was a member of the church, the Sanhedrin council, had a fine priest, and he believed this priest.

The strange thing about this case, though, is his wife. We'll call her Rebekah. "She had strayed off on the wrong side," he thought, and so did the priest. She was following a Man that was supposed to be a prophet of Nazareth, a Man named Jesus. The people, the poorer class of people, believed Him to be a prophet, or the Messiah that was

promised, but that didn't meet just the qualifications of the Sanhedrin.

They questioned His birth and He had no schooling. They didn't have any record that He'd ever been to school. He was not a priest, neither was He a rabbi. He just had claims of His Own.

But somehow or other, Zacchaeus' wife had been persuaded that He was that Prophet that was to come, and she had followed and believed Him. She had tried to tell her husband, but he was too carried away in his business. He belonged to church. "Isn't that good enough?" he'd said.

He was something like the rich young ruler, you know, who'd had a business, was a member of the church, but didn't have Eternal Life. He had seen something in Jesus that other men didn't have, so he had come to Him and wanted to know what he could do to have Eternal Life. Jesus told him to keep the commandments.

He said, "I've done this since I was a youth."

It showed he was a believer, but he knew that Jesus had something that those priests and rabbis didn't have. You're never the same when you once see Jesus, if there's any spark of God about you. So Rebekah had found this Jesus. To her, he was the exact fulfilling of the promise that the Jews had been looking for, for their day.

The news soon spread around that Jesus was going to have a breakfast, or some kind of a dinner or something, down in Jericho, so Rebekah got busy praying about her businessman husband. We need more Rebekahs everywhere. Prayer changes things. Rebekah, being a staunch believer and a follower of the Lord Jesus, (and a very fine sweet person she must have been), she was interested in her household. So she prayed hard.

The day drew close to when Jesus was supposed to enter the city. No doubt the day

before, she might have seen if his attitude had changed any. So maybe she said, “Zacchaeus, are—are you going to that breakfast in the morning?”

“Why, certainly not. Why, that bunch of people! And you expect me...I’ve got the best restaurant in town, and they’re holding it over at Lavinski’s. Over at the other place, you see. I got the best place in town, and they picked that place down there. Why, they oughtn’t. They ought to come to my place, to hold this, you see.”

He wasn’t going. Then she got to praying, really desperately. That night, the little fellow couldn’t rest at all. You know, there is something about it, if you go to really desperately praying about something, God works on both ends of the line. He answers.

So the little fellow, he must have got to thinking that night, “Wonder if I should go down and hear this Man? Now, Rebekah says that He is a prophet. Now, we know we

haven't had any prophets for hundreds of years, and I asked the priest about it, he said, 'Nothing but just a nonsense! If there'd be a Prophet raise up, wouldn't he come through the church? That's the way he'd have to come. He'd come to us Pharisees, or Sadducees, or our group, or he wouldn't be a Prophet.'"

He had discussed it with the priest and the priest had said, "Now looky here, those days of prophets were many, many years ago. We've got the law. We've got it all written out. The situation is under control, and we've got it in our hands, and we know about these things." Then of course, Zacchaeus, not looking into It, just absolutely just presuming, took it for granted. He thought that that was all right; as long as he belonged to the church, that's all he had to do.

But then as night came on, there came a sudden desire in his heart. "Maybe if this person is in town, He may never be here

again. I should go and investigate the situation, see for myself.”

So Rebekah had tried as a woman could, to explain what the prophets had said, and what Moses had said, who this Person would be, and when He would come, but yet the priest had much more influence over him than what Rebekah, his wife, did.

When morning began to dawn, I can imagine Rebekah giving him a punch, and saying, “Zacchaeus, you mean to say you don’t want to go down?”

“No, I don’t want nothing to do with It.”

After a while, Rebekah acts like she’s asleep. Only, she was praying. Zacchaeus slips out of bed, real easy, you know, and goes over and grooms himself, combs his hair just right, and puts on his best garment. She peeps over, out of one eye, to see what he was doing. She knew right then God had answered prayer. She knew something was going to take place. So Zacchaeus tiptoes out,

not letting Rebekah know where he is going. He slips out, and gets outside and looks back. She raises the curtain, looks out, to see him go out. She says, "Thank You, Lord. It's all all right now." See? Just like Elijah did, when he said, "I see that, the cloud the size of a man's hand." Just the first little evidence, something is fixing to happen.

So he goes out, and down the streets. He said, "Now I understand He is going to enter in by the south gate, so I better go over there and stand. I'll get me a place, and I'll stand right there, and when He comes in, I'll see how much Prophet that fellow is. I'm going to walk right out and put my finger under His nose, and I'm going to give Him a piece of my mind when He comes. I'm going to tell Him that all of His nonsense has caused my wife...and these prayer meetings and things. I'm getting sick and tired of it. I'm going to. I'm going to say something about this, see, and I'll tell Him. And then I know rabbi will certainly pat me on the back, and say, 'Zacchaeus, you're a good member of this

church here. You're sure a fine fellow." So he said, "I'll get down there early," so he got down.

When he got about a block, or two, from the gate, he came to find out that the place was jammed. People were hanging on the walls and everywhere. Somehow or another, even though Jesus was talked about, there was somebody who still liked to hear Him. Somebody would listen.

So he said, "Now, how am I going to ever see Him come in the gate?" You remember, the Bible said he was small of stature, and he said, "I'm too little." So he pushed around, "Here, give me a little room!" You can tell he isn't a Christian yet, you see, acting like that. Christians don't have that attitude.

"Stand back! You know who I am? I am Zacchaeus. I own the restaurant up here. Get, stand out of my way!" See? Now, that wasn't Christian. Everybody knew he wasn't. Maybe

some of them knew that Rebekah was praying.

“Well,” they said, “well, you stand back.”

But he knew he'd never get to see Him in all that crowd, so he wouldn't be able to express his thoughts to Him. So he thought, “Well, now, what'll I do? Maybe I'll go back home and just forget the whole matter.” But, you know, there is something about it, when you make up your mind that you want to see Him, there is nothing going to stop you from seeing Him. But, remember, when you make up your mind, then the devil is going to do everything he can to stop you. He is determined that you're not going to understand It, that you're not going to see It. He'll throw every black sheet across that he can to keep you from seeing It.

There was his first barricade, right there. So he started off, and looked over there, and there stood some of his competitors, and some of the folks from the church. He had

made so much fun of this Jesus of Nazareth, of Him being a prophet, and now here stood some of his members looking at him, right down there in the same group. He just couldn't hide. He was identified.

So he said, "Well, this is odd here." He looked around, saw one standing here. "And you know, after all, they're all about like you, they—they want to find out something."

A man knows that he came from somewhere, from the beyond; and when he leaves, he goes back somewhere. He is always trying to find out where he came from and where is he going. There is only One has that answer, that's God. Every man wants to look over that curtain. There is only one Book, of all the literature that's been written, that tells you who you are, where you come from, and where you are going. There is no other book that'll do it, but the Bible! "And the Word is God," the Bible said.

Now this fellow, Zacchaeus, was embarrassed to find out he was in the midst of a people that were screaming, and crying, and hollering, and acting like they were crazy. But there he was sitting, identified with them, so he just had to stay, that's all there was to it. Now he said, "Well, if I have come this far, I might as well go on till I really find Him out."

Now as they went along, he said, "If I stay here, I cannot see Him, because I'm too small. So, you know, I believe I'll get out of this crowd, and run down to the corner where I'll be standing by myself, get me a place right on the edge of the pavement. And when He comes by, then I'll walk right out in the street and tell Him what I think of Him. I'll give Him a piece of my mind."

He took off, away from the crowd, and went down. He thought, "Now which a way will He go?" Well, he went down to "Hallelujah Avenue." That's usually the way He travels, you see. Then on he went down to "Amen

Corner,” where it turns to go down to the eating place.

So he went down and stood there on the corner, and said, “Now there is nobody here, so I’ll stand here. When He comes by, I’ll find out how much Prophet He is. I’ll walk right out in the street, and I’ll tell Him something.”

Standing there, he happened to get to thinking, “Now just a minute. You know, if I was too small down there, that crowd will probably go wherever He is going. And I—I don’t want nobody hollering when I talk to Him. I want to tell Him so He will hear me. And them hollering ‘Amen,’ and ‘Hallelujah,’ and ‘Glory to God,’ ‘Hosanna to the—to the Prophet that comes in the Name of the Lord.’ Oh, they’ll never hear me, all that noisy bunch. Then they’ll crowd all around me, and then I can’t even see Him at all.”

So he happened to look, and standing on the corner, there was an old familiar sycamore tree. He thought, “Well, if I could get up

there on that limb and sit down, then I would be up there, then I could really tell Him when He comes by.”

He runs over but he was too small and he couldn't get up to the limb. So he said, “Well, now there is only one thing I can do,” and there sat the city garbage cans, sitting on the corner. So he thought, “Well, now, if I go over and get that garbage can, and pick it up and bring it over here, then I can get the rest of the way up the tree from that. That'll help me.”

So he goes over. The garbage disposal hadn't come by yet that morning, and it was pretty heavy. He was small and he couldn't pick it up. There was only one way to do it, and that was to wrap his arms around it, and he had on his best garment.

You know, there are always hindrances when you're trying to see Jesus. But that didn't make any difference, whether it was good garment or not, he wanted to see Jesus,

anyhow. So he threw his arms around the garbage can to get it over there, scooted it over, and there he had garbage all over him. Well, that didn't make any difference; he wanted to see Him, anyhow.

While he was pushing the can over, with his arms around it, he heard somebody laughing. He looked around, and if it wasn't Lavinski standing there, his competitor, saying, "Well, what do you know! Zacchaeus has begun, got him a new job from his restaurant. He is working for the garbage disposal."

You know, the devil just wants to see what he can do to throw everything in your way, that he can, to keep you from seeing Jesus. But if you're determined to see Him, God will make a way for you to see Him.

So that didn't make any difference. His little old face turned red, and he was embarrassed, but he just pushed the can on over, anyhow, and got a hold of it, and shinnied up the tree. He got up there, and he found where two

limbs came together and met in the trunk of the tree, and there he sat down. Now, that's a good place to sit, where two ways meet; yours and God's; your idea, and His. That's a good time to sit down and think it over. Your own thoughts about Him; and what His Word says He is.

No doubt, Satan got on one of his shoulders. He said, "You know what? You are a pretty-looking sight, sitting up here picking splinters out of your hands, and with your best garment on, and garbage all over it. Now your name will be published all through the city, the jokes will be all on you, because look what a rash thing you have done, sitting here." See, when you make a start, satan will try to tell you, "You've made an error."

There he sat, in that condition! He said, "Well, Rebekah said He was a Prophet. I'll give Him a trial. I'll see if He is a Prophet. When He comes by here, I'll just disguise myself, and He'll never know I'm up here. First, I'll get a look at Him, and then when I

see Him, I'm going to jump out of this tree, and then I'll go down there and tell Him. Now, if He is a Prophet, as Rebekah said that He was, He might know I was up in this tree, if that's true. So I'll tell you, I'll fix Him up."

He pulled all the leaves around him and disguised himself, all over, so he couldn't be seen; and left one leaf, to look out, to see Jesus as He turned the corner. He sat there, thinking it all over. After a while, he heard a noise coming around the corner. It's strange, wherever Jesus is, there is always a lot of noise.

One time, when He came into Jerusalem, they were screaming and hollering, and, "Hosanna to the King that cometh in the Name of the Lord!" and some of those priests standing there, said, "Why, make them keep still, hold their peace."

He said, "If they hold their peace, the rocks will cry out." Something has to move when Jesus is around.

Zacchaeus heard this noise coming around the corner, and screaming and going on. He thought, "Well, He must be approaching." He pulled up his leaf, and raised up to look over. "Now I've got Him all now. We'll find out how much Prophet He is."

So he was sitting there, with his leaf up, looking; he's up in this tree, way up above their heads, where they would pass beneath. He noticed the first man coming around the corner - he must have been the apostle, Peter because he was a big, strong, burly sort of a man. I can see him pushing the crowds back, saying, "Friends, I'm sorry. Our Master had a great service last night, much virtue has gone from Him. You all will understand. Would you just stand aside so Master can pass by? Please do that."

Matthew, Mark, and the others are coming along too, saying, "Now we don't want to be rude; we're not here for that purpose. But our Master is awfully tired, and He hasn't had His

breakfast, so we want you to stand aside, if you will.”

There was another man standing there, that maybe Zacchaeus took a look at. A few days earlier, at one of the meetings at a business place, a doctor had been there. The doctor had told this little fellow with a little girl that was really sick of a fever that she wasn't going to live. He had done all he could do for her. Zacchaeus, when he raised his head up and looked, had seen this man, with his baby wrapped in a blanket, coming around the corner. He thought, “What a rashel thing that that father would do, trying to follow that—that so-called Prophet! Here he comes around the corner with this baby, it with a fever, and standing out in this wind.”

But, you know, just as Zacchaeus, when you really believe, there is nothing going to hinder you. The man wanted to get that baby to Jesus. Every time they would make a corner, or a change, he would be pushed back. But, he was persistent, he was going on.

Finally, at this corner, his little wife ran out with the baby in her arms, and she must have fallen down, saying, “Lord, be merciful to my child.” There stood the father of the baby, crying, too. He was a friend to Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus said, “What’s changed his attitude?” So he couldn’t make out Who the Man was yet, He was down in the crowd. All at once, he saw a hand stretch out and touch, over the top of this little blanket. The little girl was unwrapped, and went off skipping down the street.

“Now there has got to be something to that,” Zacchaeus said. Finally, Jesus came in view. With one look at Him, Zacchaeus changed his opinion. Just once glimpse of Him! There He was. He didn’t look like man. There was something different about Him. Meek, gentle, kind; and yet, it looked like if He would speak, the world would come to an end. He was a different character to what Zacchaeus had thought.

Jesus comes walking on down the street. Zacchaeus looks over this little leaf, to see what was taking place. He said, “You know, that Man could be a Prophet. Maybe Rebekah was right. She might a knowed more about the Scriptures than I did.”

So Jesus walks right on down, with His head down, walking along, humble, gentle, as He always did. The disciples were keeping the people out of His way. But as He got right under the tree, Jesus stopped. Zacchaeus was looking over the leaf. Jesus looked up in the tree, and said, “Zacchaeus, come on down.”

Not only did Jesus know he was up in the tree, but He knew his name was Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus had a lot less trouble of getting down out of the tree, than he did getting up. He knew him; the miracle was done on him. He said, “Lord, I’ve been wrong. I’m ready to confess I’m wrong. If I took anything, that was wrong, I—I’ll pay it back. I’ll give half my goods to the poor.”

Jesus said, "Today, salvation has come to your house."

What changed him? Think just for a moment. The change was, he had seen Something real.

He saw something genuine, something that he could see himself.

The miracle had happened to him.

Source:

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