

Wonderful Counselor

Luke 19:1-10 Then *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. ² Now behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³ And he sought to see who *Jesus* was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that *way*. ⁵ And when *Jesus* came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house." ⁶ So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. ⁷ But when they saw *it*, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner." ⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold." ⁹ And *Jesus* said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰ "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The sign of a true master, someone who is really good at their profession, is that they make it look easy. A really good mechanic can hoist your car up fix it and have you back on the road in an hour and your left thinking why did I pay him to do that I could do that.

I remember probably ten years ago now a link to a website that everyone kept emailing around. If you had no experience with websites you would have looked at and thought it was ordinary enough, but those with experience practically salivated over how well it was done.

The account of *Jesus* and Zacchaeus is in many ways unremarkable. There is no miracle, no great parable, no amazing teaching. Yet when you look a little closer you can see how *Jesus* took something incredibly difficult and made it look super easy.

Jesus is the Wonderful Counselor, who knows exactly what it is that Zacchaeus needs and with a single phrase is able to turn Zacchaeus from a selfish, lying, thief into a true disciple with a heart of love that willingly gives to those who have need.

- **Jesus knows our problem**

Jesus is the wonderful counselor because He knows exactly what we need and is willing to reach out and fix our broken and sin filled hearts and lives. The Pharisees call Zachaeus a sinner but they didn't really know what they were talking about. It is *Jesus* who really understood the depth of Zacchaeus' sin, yet *Jesus* is the one who reaches out to heal and fix.

We might confess that we are sinners, but we don't really understand or appreciate the full depths of that sinfulness. Jesus knows how sinful we really are, but instead of looking down his nose, avoiding, or giving us up as a lost cause, he comes to stay in our home and heart. He comes to heal and fix. He comes to save the lost.

- **Jesus knows us intimately**

The one miracle that Jesus does do, is that he instantly knows Zacchaeus by name. This is a wonderfully comforting truth. Jesus knows each and every one of us by name and calls us. He doesn't just group us altogether, he deals with us as individuals. He knows when we need a little encouragement, or a little discipline. It's always the children's songs that are the best. I am Jesus little lamb, calls me every day the same, even knows me by my name

- **Jesus has the power to fix our problems**

With a single short phrase Jesus completely changed Zacchaeus' heart. That took power, power that can come only from God.

Early this week I went out to put Vanessa's Buick in the garage. I didn't want it sitting outside in the snow. Of course it wouldn't start. So I tried to push it. That worked for a bit but then when the drive way slanted up and with the icy driveway I had to get Vanessa to come help me. We pushed and pushed and got it right up to the garage. Then the garage floor was just a quarter of inch above the driveway, and the car wasn't going to go over that little bump with our strength. Eventually I backed the Subaru up and tied the Subaru tow hitch to the Buick tow hitch.

You could of course look at the outward words and circumstances. You could talk about how Jesus showed love and mercy to a man who expected no such thing. You could talk about the power of forgiveness. But the truth of the matter is there is something far beyond anything we can see. There is power in Christ to take a broken twisted heart and fix it. He has power to take a broken sinful hate filled man and teach him love. True love, the kind of love that goes out and gives back all the money that he stole.

"A Christmas Carol," by Charles Dickens is a lie. As much as I appreciate the story, especially when the Muppets do it, the fact is that even if such a thing were possible it wouldn't change Scrooges heart. But Christ can.

Christ has power that we simply don't, just as my Subaru has power that I simply don't have.

How many pastors, therapists, and counselors wouldn't love to have that power. To have the insight, and the power to change the heart. There is a reason that we don't have this power. Christ knows we would use it to turn people into what we think they should be. We would take sinners and make them worse.

So God took that power and hid it in the preaching of the Gospel. There in the preaching of the Gospel Christ comes to visit each of us in home and in our hearts. He fixes our problems. He is our wonderful counselor.

Amen.