

- Business Directory -

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THIS WEEK'S SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

THE DECISIONS OF TWO RICH MEN

Golden Text.—Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.—Matt. 7:13,14
The Lesson as a Whole
By J. C. Macaulay, D.D.
Approach to the Lesson

Our lesson relates two incidents on our Lord's final journey to Jerusalem. His previous visit to the capital city made it quite clear that the attitude of the leaders had hardened into a determination to destroy Him (John 11:47-53). Jesus therefore withdrew to the northern town of Ephraim, where He spent some time with His disciples (v. 54). From there He swung north through Samaria and Galilee (Luke 17:11), and crossing to the east side of the Jordan, south through Perea (Matt. 19:1). His meeting with the rich young ruler was almost certainly in Perea, on the east side of the Jordan, while the meeting with Zacchaeus was in Jericho, on the west side of the Jordan, near the northern end of the Dead Sea. Jericho, we remember, was the first city taken by the Israelites in their occupation of Palestine (Josh. 6). The city was rebuilt more than five hundred years after its destruction under Joshua, by Hiel the Bethelite, in the days of the wicked King Ahab (1 Kings 16:34). In the time of Christ it was a flourishing city and a winter resort, but the road between Jericho and Jerusalem was at times hazardous on account of brigands (Luke 10:30).

Notice how our Lord's going up to Jerusalem is emphasized at this particular period (Luke 17:11; Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 19:11, 28). "Already Jesus had begun to live in His passion," says Bengel, and the Evangelists have caught the spirit of that last amazing journey up to the cross. It is the spring of A.D. 30, and the last Passover is drawing nigh. With regard to the first incident, it should be noted that we glean the description of the unhappy visitor to Jesus from all three synoptic Gospels. All three tell us that he was rich (Matt. 19:22; Mark 10:22; Luke 18:23). Only Matthew tells us that he was young (19:20, 22), and only Luke tells us that he was a ruler (18:19). So we have the rich young ruler. As for Zacchaeus, there is a tradition that he became bishop of Caesarea.

Verse by Verse
Luke 18:18. — "Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" "Master" here means "teacher." An inheritance is strictly by right of birth, not by reward. Here was an earnest seeker, although his ideas were confused.

Verse 19. — "Why callest thou me good?" The Talmud never refers to a rabbi as "good," the term being applied only to God. Our Lord's question is no admission of sin, but a reminder that if we call Him good, we must follow through the implication and call Him God.

Verse 20. — "Thou knowest the commandments." Since the inquirer seeks life by doing, Jesus refers him to the Law. See Leviticus 18:5, and compare Romans 7:10. Because the latter is universal experience, the need of grace arises. Law is life for the perfectly obedient, but death for the transgressor (see Jas. 2:10).

Verse 21. — "All these have I kept." He did not know the inner implications of the Law, but prided himself on outward conformity. No sense of sin is felt, yet he is not sure of life! Trying to work one's way to Heaven never gives assurance, but always leaves a question.

Verse 22. — "Yet lackest thou one thing: sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have life." The Lord kept heaping up the demands. This one, however, involved complete trust in the Lord Jesus.

Verse 23. — "He was very sorrowful: for he was very rich." The other accounts mention that "he went away," revealing that he was a transgressor of the last Commandment, the one which has to do specially with the attitude of the heart: "Thou shalt not covet." Chap. 19:1. — "Entered and passed through Jericho." Read "was passing through."

Verse 2. — "Zacchaeus, the chief among the publicans, and . . . rich." Apparently a farmer of taxes, not like Matthew, a subcontractor who did the actual collecting. It was lucrative business, but they were ostracized by their Jewish conationals.

Verse 3. — "And he sought to see Jesus . . . little of stature." Doubtless he was curious to see the great miracle worker, but he also desired to see the Man who did not despise publicans. Smallness of stature can be embarrassing at times. It was a real "thorn in the flesh" to Isaac Watts, the great hymn writer.

Verse 4. — "Climbed up into a sycamore tree." A Pharisee would never have lost dignity like that! But this man had a longing to see Jesus which he himself could not analyze. The tree was probably a mulberry.

Verse 5. — "Jesus . . . looked up . . . and said, 'Come down.' The Lord will never pass by a longing, seeking soul. He knew the heart of Zacchaeus better than he knew it himself. Don't spiritualize the command to 'come down.' To use this as a text on the necessity of humbling oneself is bad homiletics and bad ethics. It is the Pharisee on the ground who needs to come down in that sense.

Verse 6. — "Received him joyfully." A glimpse of Jesus was all he expected. To have Him as guest

was beyond all expectation. Right there the Lord had all the little man's heart.

Verse 7. — "Gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner." The old complaint (chaps. 5:30; 15:2). In Jewish eyes, it was polluting oneself to enter the home of a publican.

Verse 8. — "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor . . . restore him fourfold." As Jesus came in the door of his heart, greed flew out the window. What he had lived to amass now became an instrument of ministry, and a sense of justice and equity possessed him. Here are evidences of a change of heart, indications of the new birth.

Verse 9. — "Salvation . . . a son of Abraham." His generosity and justice were not the cause of his salvation, but the evidence of it. He who was a son of Abraham after the flesh (and an unworthy one!) was now a son of Abraham after the spirit (Rom. 4:12).

Verse 10. — "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Cf. chap. 5:32.) Once again criticism draws out a great definition of our Lord's purpose. He acknowledges the sinfulness of Zacchaeus, but it was for him and all sinners that He pressed His way to the cross.

The Heart of the Lesson

Here is a study in contrasts. First there is a contrast between the two men who came to the Lord Jesus. One is a reputable character, and knows it; the other is just as disreputable, and knows it. They are at opposite extremes in Jewish society. They have, however, two things in common. They are both rich, and they are both conscious of a need which their wealth cannot meet. The one is seeking eternal life, the other is seeking he knows not what, but both are strangely aware that Jesus has the answer: and He has the answer to your need.

The other contrast is in the manner of our Lord's dealing with these two men. On the rich young ruler, glorying in his righteousness and bent on obtaining eternal life by the works of his own hands, Jesus imposes the demands of the Law to the limit. When the youth claims to have observed the Commandments, the Lord applies the uttermost test of the Law. He touches the young man at his weak point, love of money, which is covetousness. So by the very Law in which he trusted he is found wanting, and goes away, hardened in his worldliness, selling eternal life for a few shekels.

How different was the case of Zacchaeus! This little man who threw dignity to the winds in his eagerness to see the Man who received sinners was not faced with the demands of the Law at all, but was dealt with in pure grace. Christ saw his heart, its secret longing and penitence, its love and submission, and immediately extended to him the tokens of friendship. The official language of repentance and faith on the one hand, and of pardon on the other hand, was lacking, but the tokens of these were clear. The transaction of salvation does not have to be executed in certain set phrases. The evidence of salvation in this case was the complete change of attitude on the part of Zacchaeus. He who had formerly squeezed the most out of everybody had such a change of heart that he was opening his hands wide to the needy, and especially to those whom he had wronged.

If we insist on Law, we shall receive Law, to our eternal doom; if we come as sinners, we shall receive grace, unto life everlasting.

COUNTY CONSIDERS NEW HOME FOR AGED

York County Council will again consider the construction of a new home for the aged at an approximate cost of \$1,000,000. Plans for the extension and renovation of the present county home for the aged located on No. 11 Highway north of Aurora were considered by county council in 1949.

No action was taken at that time on the plans which would involve the expenditure of \$972,000 because of the amalgamation proceedings which dealt with the 12 suburban municipalities.

A special committee will be named by Warden Joseph Spillette to work with the two county commissioners for the home in preparation of plans for a new home.

Reeve Oliver Crockett of Scarborough Township advised council not to wait for the decision of the Ontario Municipal Board on amalgamation before starting on a new county home.

"This proposition has been kicked around by this county council for years," declared Reeve Thomas Carter of Long Branch. "The home is terribly overcrowded and we have a long waiting list." Reeve John Warren of East York Township said the province would contribute \$600,000, the county \$300,000 and the public would have to donate the balance. "A proper appeal led by prominent men could make the new home a reality," he said.

Only 1-14th of the land area of the Dominion has been improved by man or used as pasture.

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EARL HOWSAM HEADS COUNTY HOG PRODUCERS

Earl Howsam, R.R.3, Uxbridge, formerly of Altona, was re-elected to the presidency of the Ontario County Hog Producers' Association at the annual meeting held last week in Reach Township hall. The business meeting, held in the morning saw the election of officers after which a luncheon was held and the principal speaker, Charles McGinnis, Ontario Association President, addressed the meeting.

Charles Newton, Director of the Provincial Association and a member of the Hog Producers' Marketing Board, was a speaker at the morning meeting.

Other officers elected are as follows:

Honorary president, Grant Christie, Port Perry; first vice-president, Russel Windatt, R.R.3 Beaverton; second vice-president, Milton Pegg, R.R.2 Claremont; secretary, H. L. Fair, Uxbridge; treasurer, Alex Johns, R.R.4 Port Perry; auditor, Armour McMillan, R.R.2 Seagrave.

Directors: Rama: Hector McKinnon, Gordon McArthur, Grant Johnston, George Gowinlock. Mara: Harper Newman, John A. McDonald, Don Munro, Frank Davis, Grant Windatt, Alex Camp-

bell, William Jackson, Archie Newman.

Thorax: Russell Windatt, Percy Butcher, Tom Harrison, Gilbert McMillan, Fred Drake, Alex Gray, Duncan Wallace.

Brook: William Heron, Les Faux, Archie McMillan, Bruce Tocher, Fred Lamb, Vince Beaton, Ivan Rennie, Keith Rynard.

Scott: Milburn Meek, Bert Collins, Gordon Rynard, Tom McKnight, Les Lapp, Bill Harrison, Harvey Blackburn.

Reach: Earl Howsam, Lorne Thompson, Richard Steer, Fred Lambe, Armour McMillan, Allan Crosier, Harold Dobson.

Uxbridge: Stuart Ball, Walter Davis, Lorne Tindall, Walter Shell, Edgar Johnston, Clarence Armstrong.


Scugg: Cecil Fralick, Clarence Carter, Orval Heayn, Anson Gerow.

East Whitby: Harvey Pascoe, Walter Groat, Gordon Reesor, Gordon Corner, Oliver McCullough.

Whitby: Gordon Fisher, Allan Downie, Herb Down, Lloyd Stanley, Roy Jackson, Alf Jackson, William Parendre, L. Prowse.

Pickering: Allan Endicott, Alex Schneider, William Clark Jr., Milton Pegg, Ralph Jones, L. Gordon, Paul Wellman.

Directors to the Federation of Agriculture: North Ontario, Russell Windatt; South Ontario, Earl Howsam.



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