

## **“God’s Power to Change A Life”**

### **July 18 & 19, 2009**

**Intro:** You know, most days I feel like I have the best job in the world! WHY? Because I get to see God work in people’s lives on a daily basis. I get to witness the radical change Jesus produces in those who trust Him. In fact, I couldn’t do this job if I didn’t believe and witness the power of God to change a life. This is what keeps me passionate / committed / keeps me driven / It’s what rolls me out of the bed every day. This is REAL! I get to see God today!

- Jesus has been changing people’s lives for over 2000 years. I want to share a story today about the power that Jesus has to change a life. It’s a story about a man named Zaccheus.
- Story of Zaccheus – Luke 19:1-10 – Summarize / Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem and to get there He had to go through Jericho. (15 miles apart – 3400 ft. in elevation)
- 3 truths about life change from this story. Maybe you’re wondering if

### **1. Jesus is always looking for lost people**

*Luke 19:5 “When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name.*

*“Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.” (NLT)*

- Zaccheus was a chief tax collector – explain / viewed the same as a prostitute.
- What we see from this story is no one is beyond Jesus’ ability to find – So many people think they have “gone too far” or their past disqualifies them from God. Not true!
- If you feel lost / beyond help / think you’ve gone too far / know He is actively looking for you / He’s calling you by name!

### **2. Religion judges and rejects lost people**

*Luke 19:6-7 “Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.” (NLT)*

- Why? Because they believe these people are beyond God’s help. That is what the religious leaders thought about Zaccheus. He was a “notorious” sinner. His fate was sealed! How could Jesus hang out with him? Didn’t fit their picture.
- Unfortunately, this is many people’s experience with religion. They have been judged and condemned. For some of you, this has been your experience with “church”. Some of you have been deeply wounded in churches. You were looking for help and instead you got judged.
- This is why many people stay away from church. “Don’t do the church thing.”

### **3. Jesus accepts and transforms lost people**

*Luke 19:8 “Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!” (NLT)*

- Here is radical transformation. What this man loved has changed. His values / priorities / his lifestyle – His life was no longer all about money.
- What could change a man so completely like this? Answer: Jesus’ power to forgive and provide new life.
- Zaccheus’ story is one great example of the power that Jesus has to radically change a life. Jesus didn’t come to bring religion. He didn’t come to bring “the church thing”. He came to bring new life. He came to radically transform people!

*Luke 19:9-10 “Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.” (NLT)*

- I believe the greatest miracles we get to see today are the transformed lives of individuals who have been found by Jesus.
- Jesus is still transforming people’s lives today. How many of you here could tell a story of how Jesus has changed your life?

*I Cor. 6:9-11 “Don’t you realize that those who do wrong will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Don’t fool yourselves. Those who indulge in sexual sin, or who worship idols, or commit adultery, or are male prostitutes, or practice homosexuality, or are thieves, or greedy people, or drunkards, or are abusive, or cheat people—none of these will inherit the Kingdom of God. Some of you were once like that. But you were cleansed; you were made holy; you were made right with God by calling on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.” (NLT)*

*II Cor. 5:17-18 “This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun! And all of this is a gift from God, who brought us back to himself through Christ...” (NLT)*

- I want us to celebrate the work of Jesus transforming lives today by rejoicing in some modern day stories...people whose lives have been radically changed because of what Jesus has done for them. We have 3 people who are going to share about how Jesus has given them “new lives” / fresh starts / new directions new perspective...real life change.
- Testimonies
  - Dale Watson
  - Bob Friedrich
  - Leota Childress