

Matthew 20-03-08b

Let's resume our study now in Matthew chapter 9, and this is where I would submit to you, it's going to get interesting, even more so than in the first session, because these sinners and tax collectors come and sit down with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees see it and they say, why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? Well, a really good question to ask is, why is he eating with these tax collectors and sinners? He didn't just go to the marketplace and stick up a sign and say, if you're a sinner or a tax collector, come eat with me. These are friends and associates of Matthew, who is a positively disposed, faithful, obedient believer.

We know this because of his recognition of Jesus. He knows who he is. This is a community where Jesus has been active and has been known.

Jesus knows who he is. He knows who Jesus is. I think that there was probably prior association along the lines that we see in the gospel of John, as I said before.

So when Jesus hears this in verse 12, he says, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. And this is kind of a two-edged sword in terms of are these sick people that have come to eat with Jesus and the well have no need of a physician. You Pharisees are well, you don't, you know, is there somebody who doesn't need the Lord Jesus? Is there somebody who doesn't need the forgiveness of sin and the authority that Jesus can wield in that area? Are there some that are righteous and they don't need their sins forgiven? You could sort of make that case.

Well, to clarify this, and you can see it if you just look at the context itself, but for a quick clarification, keep your finger here and turn over to John chapter nine. I alluded to this in the first session, the story of the man born blind being healed. And you know that Jesus sends him to the, to Salome to wash and he does and receives his sight.

And so then in verse 13, they brought him who formerly was blind to the Pharisees. It was a Sabbath when Jesus made the clay and opened his eyes. And you remember this from back in verse six, Jesus tells his disciples, neither this man nor his parents sin, but that the works of God should be revealed in him.

I must work the works of him who sent me while it is day, the night is coming when no one can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. And this is very pertinent because we're talking about the darkness of blindness and you have to be able to see, to see the light.

So while he said these things, he spat when he said these things, he spat on the ground and made clay with the saliva and anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. The Pharisees are going to argue that this is working on the Sabbath. You know, this is all the same as if Jesus has gotten a wheelbarrow and a couple of sacks of sackcrete and mixed

up, you know, a big batch spitting in the ground, picking up, you know, you think about the size of, of a, of a puddle that you're going to make when you spit on the ground.

There's just enough clay here to smear it on the man's two eyes, but this he's broken the law. He has worked on the Sabbath. So the man went and washed in the pool of Salome, went and washed and came back seeing.

So it was a Sabbath verse 14, when Jesus made the clay. So the Pharisees asked the man how he received his sight. He said, he put clay on my eyes and I washed and I see some of the Pharisees said, this man is not from God because he does not keep the Sabbath.

Now this is the righteousness of the law keeping the Sabbath, right? This is one of the 10 commandments. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, right? So arguing for protecting the sanctity of the Sabbath, this would be righteousness. Others said, how can a man who is a sinner do such signs? There was a division among them.

So they said to the blind man again, what do you say about it? Because he opened your eyes. He says, well, he's a prophet. It's pretty obvious, but the Jews did not believe concerning him that he had been blind and received his sight until they called the parents.

Parents say, we know this is our son. He was born blind. Verse 21.

We don't know how he got his sight. Ask him. He can speak for himself.

He's, he's grown. So again, verse 24, they call the blind guy, give God the glory. This would be righteousness, right? Give God the glory.

We know this man is a sinner. The man says, I don't know if he's a sinner or not. One thing I do know, I was blind and now I see.

They said to him, what did he do to you? How did he open your eyes? He answered. I told you already, and you did not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples? They reviled him and said, you are his disciple, but we are Moses' disciples.

Righteousness versus sin in their eyes. We know that God spoke to Moses. As for this fellow, we don't know where he's from.

The man's answered and said, why this is a marvelous thing that you don't know where he's from, yet he has opened my eyes. You couldn't, and believe me, you can run into people in this world. It doesn't matter how plainly you point out facts like this.

They are just so hard headed and intransigent in their viewpoint that facts don't dent the titanium skull they have equipped themselves with. This is a marvelous thing that you do

not know where he's from, yet he's opened my eyes. We know that God does not hear sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, he hears him.

Since the world began, it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing, just like you in parentheses. They answered and said to him, you were completely born in sins, and are you teaching us? And they threw him out.

So I point this out because being a sinner and being righteous largely depends on who's doing the accounting, who's doing the evaluation, what's happened in our modern day, our postmodern day. Now we're in the post, did you know we're post postmodern now? We've actually left postmodernism and we're post postmodern now. But in this day, what is the standard of what is right? Well, what's trending? What does the mass say? If there's enough people piling on, that makes something wrong.

If there's enough people applauding, that makes it right. We have a running joke in our family when we try to watch some piece of entertainment and it's usually some sort of an adventure and there's a problem and people have to go in and fix it and deliver somebody that's kidnapped or find their daughter that's been taken away or whatever and foil the perpetrators. But at the end, Hollywood is so enamored with applause that it will show up in a movie.

And at the end, the toe in the dirt, aw shucks hero comes out, Bruce Willis comes out of the building after he's gotten rid of the German terrorists or whatever. And the whole crowd out there of firemen and law enforcement and passersby and hangers on applaud. There's this big applause scene.

It's the obligatory applause scene. You'll see it at the end of just movie after movie after movie. Well, that whatever happened must be right because look at the applause.

Applause means that's good. The applause of men, the praise of men, the plaudits and the approval of men. So what is righteousness and what is sin? That's the real question.

What standard are you applying? So they say here, you were completely born in sins. Jesus began this episode in John nine by saying it has nothing to do with he or his parents involvement in sin. His situation ultimately is going to reflect the glory of God.

This is something to remember when we have hardships, setbacks, deficiencies, or, or limitations, even from birth, things that are a part of our family or a part of our physicality or a part of our situation in life. Germans call that sits in Lieben, whatever it may be. If you are a Matthew, if you are a David, it doesn't matter that you're the eighth son out with the sheep.

If you're Joseph, it doesn't matter that you're the 11th son and despised by your brethren. If you're born blind, if you're paralyzed, if you've got an issue of blood, if you

are afflicted with demons, nothing can stop you from coming to the feet of the Lord Jesus. Nothing can stop you from answering the call to follow.

And none of those limitations end up being limitations. They end up redounding to the glory of God. That's how you have to look at the hardships of life, whether they are inherited, whether they are endemic, whether they are pandemic, whether they are intrinsic or extrinsic, whether they're our fault or somebody else's fault, whether it's nobody's fault.

And it's just the inherent corruption of the world. It doesn't matter. Jesus says, these things are present in this fallen world ultimately so that God's glory can be revealed.

God's glory is revealed in us. Not because we're perfect, not because we were born righteous, not because we are fantastic examples of righteousness, but because God's healing, regenerating, transforming work is done in us. Jesus didn't walk around teaching only people who weren't flawed.

So this John nine, Jesus heard that they had cast him out in verse 35. When he had found him, he said to him, do you believe in the son of God? He answered and said, who is he Lord, that I may believe in him. Jesus said to him, you have both seen him and it is he who is talking with you.

So this is additional revelation. The blind man already knows that Jesus is from God. Now he knows that he is God.

It's an interesting idea here. When the man says, who is he Lord, that I may believe in him. There is some question about whether the blind man recognized Jesus.

You remember he hasn't seen him. He was blind. The clay is put on his eyes and he has to go to the pool.

And when he washes the clay off now he can see, but he hasn't gone back and seen Jesus. So he doesn't know what he looks like. And you think, well, people blind from birth, their acoustic sensibilities are really heightened and that, you know, voice identification and they can echo locate themselves in rooms and all kinds of amazing things.

Their hearing overdevelops in the absence of sight. So you would expect that. Well, when he hears Jesus voice, because Jesus went and found him and talks to him.

But you could imagine that perhaps in the excitement, the man might not have really filed away the sound of the voice. He's distracted by clay being smeared on his eyes and the rest of it. So you don't really know for sure that he knows that the man talking to him here is the one who healed him.

Possible, but it just doesn't really tell us. It's kind of a question. Jesus says, who is he Lord, that I may believe in him.

Jesus says to him, you have both seen him and it is he who is talking with you. So there's almost a chiasm here. He hears him and then he gets the ability to see.

Now he can see him and he is hearing him talk to him again. So the loss of sight and gaining of sight is in the middle. And the hearing Jesus talk is on the outside.

Then he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshiped him. Jesus said, for judgment, I've come into this world that those who do not see may see.

And those who see may be made blind. That those who are righteous may be exposed for their sin. And those who are sinners may be made righteous.

It's the same thing. Do you see the connection here between blindness and seeing between righteousness and sin? Those who refuse to acknowledge their sin by their standard are righteous. Those who acknowledge their sin are actually made righteous, cleansed, purged.

It's all a matter of adopting God's point of view. When we agree with God, when we homo logeo that we have sinned and are sinners, we can be made the righteousness of God in Christ. He made him to be sin for us who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

So some of the Pharisees, verse 40 of John nine, Pharisees who were with him heard these words. Now this is interesting because Jesus has left and gone to seek out this blind man and the Pharisees are following him. There was a whole big, long discussion between the Pharisees and the blind man.

The Pharisees kicked him out. But there's some of the Pharisees who have tracked down Jesus and are reconnoitering. They're doing, they're watchers.

They're keeping track of him. They want to see if he's going to do anything else. So some of the Pharisees are in having this council and talking to the blind man and trying to find a way to hang Jesus for violating the Sabbath.

Others are still watching him. So when Jesus goes through the streets and finds this blind man, there's Pharisees trailing him. It's just, you know, it's Jesus looking over his shoulder saying, Oh, still here? But they trail him.

So they hear these words that they overhear the conversation. They're, you know, keyhole peepers. They're, they're, uh, listening in.

And so they say to him, are we blind also? And you get the idea that, you know, you do see my, my robes and marks of being a Pharisee here, you know, I'm a Pharisee. So, uh,

when you say, uh, that, uh, those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind. And he says, well, are we blind? You're going to tell us something we don't know.

Uh, and he says, if you were blind, you would have no sin because I've come to give sight to the blind. And this is equated with forgiveness of sin. Son of man is authority in order to forgive sin.

But because you say, we see your sin remains because you say I am righteous, your sin remains. So this is the key and a real clarification for our passage in Matthew chapter nine. But those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

And, you know, if you think you're well, and you don't need a doctor, then no doctor is going to be able to come and do anything for you. I'm not sick. It's those who are sick, who need a physician, go and learn what this means.

I desire mercy and not sacrifice. This is unique to the Matthew account. The other gospels have no need of a physician and have, I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

And notice the call is to repentance. He doesn't say, I've called sinners to righteousness, right? You can't just call and say, Hey, be righteous. Oh, okay.

I'll be righteous. What is the path to righteousness? Repentance. You repent, God grants righteousness.

God makes us whole and able to perform those good works, which God has foreordained that we should walk in them. But repentance is the key. Confession, acknowledgement, humility are all tied up in that change of mind.

Now here's what I want to suggest to you. Why does Matthew include this middle portion? Go and learn what this means. It's a quote from Hosea 6, 6, I desire mercy and not sacrifice.

And, uh, I've made this point as recently as this past couple of days, when you have an old Testament allusion, and there are over a hundred of them in this gospel, uh, either quotes or allusions to old Testament scripture, it's, it's a footnote. It is a call to those who knew the scriptures because they heard them recited and memorized great chunks. And they were read at feasts and, uh, read in the synagogues and they heard them over and over and over again.

Do you ever notice when you go to a funeral that, uh, somebody will recite the 23rd Psalm, 23rd Psalm, you hardly have a funeral where if there's any notion of the person being a believer, they'll print the 23rd Psalm in the, in the program or whatever, but you can recite the 23rd Psalm. And even people who haven't darkened the door of a church

in forever, uh, may not even be Christians, certainly not practicing Christians. They know the 23rd Psalm.

Did they sit down and memorize it? No, it's because they've heard it over and over again. It's like the lyrics to songs on the radio. You just end up knowing them because you hear them so much.

Well, these passages of scripture were known because they were regularly recited throughout the ritual, uh, religious observances in Israel. So if you keep your finger here and turn back to Hosea 6, 6, when Jesus quotes the first part of this and says, I desire mercy and not sacrifice people are going to fill in the rest of it from their memory. It's, uh, it's like a hyperlink.

You don't have to quote a full thing. You can just put a link in your web page or in your message or whatever. And somebody can tap that and pull up the whole thing.

Well, people used to be able to do that in their own mind. You give them a little link and they can pull up the rest of it, just like clicking a URL. So you look at Hosea chapter six, come and let us return to the Lord.

He has torn, but he will heal us. He has stricken, but he will bind us up after two days. He will revive us on the third day.

He will raise us up that we may live in his sight. Let us know. Let us pursue the knowledge of the Lord.

His going forth is established like the morning. He will come to us like the rain, like the latter and former rain to the earth. Oh, Ephraim, what shall I do to you? Oh Judah, what shall I do to you? For your faithfulness is like a morning cloud and like the early dew it goes away.

Therefore have I hewn them by the prophets. I have slain them by the words of my mouth and your judgments are like light that goes forth for I desire mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. What's the point here? They're going through the motions of their faith, their religion, but their actual faith, their disposition toward God and their desire to live their life to please him, i.e. mercy is like the morning dew.

It, it shows up briefly and then vanishes for the rest of the day. The faithfulness, notice both of these are morning events, you know, it happens at a, at a particular point at sunrise and then it's gone for the rest of the day, a morning cloud or the dew. Once in a while you, you have a manifestation of faith, but then the whole rest of the day, you know, what happened to the morning cloud? What happened to the dew? Well, it's, it's gone.

God says, you're, you're spending the rest of your day in these sacrifices and so on, but where is your mercy? And notice I desire mercy and not sacrifice. This has the implication of more than sacrifice. It isn't that God hasn't prescribed sacrifices or doesn't appreciate them when they come from a repentant and obedient and faithful heart.

God accepts the sacrifices that are brought in contrition and in humility and in recognition and in appreciation for God. Those are always accepted. This is why Paul will say in Romans 12, present yourselves a living sacrifice.

This is holy and acceptable to God, and it's a reasonable service. But here he says, I desire mercy. The implication is more than sacrifice because without mercy, the sacrifices are meaningless.

But in what direction does sacrifice go? We don't sacrifice to each other, do we? Sacrifice to God. Which direction does mercy go? Toward each other. And he says, your sacrifices are not going to be accepted so long as you're not merciful toward each other.

If you do not forgive the sins of others, you yourself are not forgiven. Remember, we've already had that in Matthew. Forgive us our debts as we forgive those who trespass against us or who are our debtors.

I desire mercy and not sacrifice and knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. Knowledge of God and living by implication, living in the light of that knowledge. God wants me to be this kind of person.

God is expecting me to reflect his glory, not through empty ritual, not through superficialities, not through appearances, but through what goes on in my heart. Matthew quotes this in his account uniquely. So Jesus said it on the occasion.

The other gospel writers don't include it, but Matthew does. It particularly resonated with him. Why? Who is it that can really put on a sacrifice? Who can bring an ox and who has to bring doves? It's your economic status, right? The richer you are, the more elaborate and expensive sacrifices you can bring.

If you're a well-to-do landowner and you've got flocks and herds, you can bring a great big ram or you can bring an ox and you can bring a wonderful fatted calf. If you're poor, it's turtle doves, right? Matthew, rich or poor? Rich. But what kind of man is Matthew? He's a merciful man.

This is why Jesus can call him and he's going to follow. This is why when he brings up the guest list for this celebratory banquet where Jesus is the guest of honor, he is calling people who are outcasts in polite society, who are of ill repute and condemned by the religious establishment. But Matthew invites them.

Why? Even though they are of lowly station, maybe they've got things wrong with them

that cause the Pharisees to impute sin to them, just like the blind man. Maybe there's just somebody in there. Can you imagine if you had somebody with birth defects or some other congenital problem? The whole family would be thought of as who sinned, this man or his parents.

His whole family is under some kind of cloud because look, they've got a problem child. They've got a problem person in their midst. They've had a series of calamities.

They must be sinners because they're not prospering and they're not healthy. This one has a twisted foot. This one's got a withered arm.

This one's got an issue of blood. This one can't see. This one can't hear.

This one can't speak. They're sinners. These are the people that Matthew invites to the banquet.

And so Matthew loves the fact that Jesus quoted this verse. Go and learn what this means. Why am I here and not at the house of a Pharisee? Because I desire, I appreciate mercy more than sacrifice and knowledge of God, which is what Matthew and his friends and his guests have more than the burnt offerings, the fat of rams, right? Go and learn what this means.

I desire mercy and not sacrifice. I did not come to call the but sinners to repentance. You'll notice there's a text note in your New King James there that says the best text omits to repentance.

And I think that's probably correct. I think this has been imported. If you look again over at Luke chapter five, there is the quote where he says in verse 32, I've not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.

And it is the acknowledgement of sin that enables us to have that change of mind. And that's a true thing. And it's in the Luke account, but I don't think it's here in Matthew because Matthew says, I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Those who acknowledge their sin and certainly repentance is a part of that. And it's part of any healthy spiritual life. But what I want you to do now is we're going to go back to Luke because, and here's your pop quiz for the morning.

See if you can dredge this up out of your memory. Can you think of another tax collector story? Matthew's a tax collector. Zacchaeus was a little man.

Turn to Luke chapter 19. Interesting parallels and some interesting insights from comparing these two accounts. This is only recorded in Luke.

Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. A lot of interesting things happen in and out of Jericho. This is where you've got some other happenstances I don't want to devolve into.

Jesus entered and passed through Jericho, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, a chief tax collector, and he is rich. He is Levi slash Matthew on steroids. He is really well off.

And he sought to see Jesus, sought to see who Jesus was, but he could not because of the crowd for he was a short guy. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him for Jesus was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him and saw him's probably not in the text and said to him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down for today.

I must stay at your house. So he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. When they saw it, they all complained.

This is the crowd. He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. Shades of Matthew chapter nine.

Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor. And if I've taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold. And Jesus said to him today, deliverance has come to this house because he also is a son of Abraham for the son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.

When I was in Sunday school, this was presented to me as the day of Zacchaeus salvation. I no longer think so. And here's why.

Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. There's a man named Zacchaeus, chief tax collector, and he's rich. He sought to see who Jesus was, but he could not because of the crowd.

He was of short stature. So he ran ahead. This is kind of like they've published the parade route and you want to get a good seat so you can see the floats or the bands or whatever.

And so he goes and he says, well, when the crowd gets here, I'm not going to be able to stand and see. So he climbs a tree. So when Jesus comes to the place, Jesus looks up and says, Zacchaeus make haste and come down for today.

I must stay at your house. Calls him by name. You'd say, well, this could have been just supernatural knowledge from the Lord Jesus.

But Jesus has been in Jericho before. He's familiar with the town. Zacchaeus is a very prominent individual there.

He's the chief tax collector. Everybody knows who he is. People point him out on the street.

He's easy to spot if he's not in a crowd because he's short. He's somewhat unique in this

regard. He's extremely short.

Think Danny DeVito. And so he's immediately recognizable. And I think Jesus didn't require a supernatural revelation.

He knows who Zacchaeus is and he spots him in the tree and he says, Zacchaeus, hurry up and come down. You don't need to stay up in the tree to see me. I'm coming to your house.

So he made haste and came down and received him joyfully, received him joyfully. Now, why is he joyful? Because he knows who Jesus is. The reason he's gone to all this trouble just to catch a glimpse of him is he knows who he is.

He believes who he is. He is one of those faithful believers. And you say, oh, Sam, that's a stretch.

Look, deliverance has just come today to his house. It's a revelation on this day. I always was taught that.

I always thought that as a result, but I no longer think that. And here's why. Look at the next verse.

There's complaints. He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. But Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, he's short, so he's got to stand up even at the banquet table so that he can be seen.

So the short guy stands up and look at what he says to Jesus. Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor, and if I've taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold. These are not future tenses.

These are present tenses. These are customary present. This is what Zacchaeus customarily does.

This is what he always does. He's not starting a new policy on this day. He's not, oh, now that Jesus has come, I've got a whole new way of doing business.

Zacchaeus says, look, Lord, I customarily give half of my goods to the poor. He's been doing this for years. And if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, notice here, somebody has presented false testimony, and Zacchaeus made a collection on that basis, and it turns out to be false.

Zacchaeus' refund policy is fourfold. Have you ever seen this? If you are dissatisfied, we'll return your money, and we'll pay the shipping. We'll make it better than good.

If you find a cheaper price, we'll give it to you for free. We say we have the cheapest price. If you find it cheaper somewhere else, you can come get it from us for nothing.

There are people who will actually go that far because they're so sure that they have the lowest price. Zacchaeus says, anytime I've taken something from someone, and it turns out that it was on false information, I restore fourfold present tense. This is what I customarily do.

People have tried to say, oh, well, it's a futuristic present. It's not a futuristic present. It's a simple present tense.

If he wanted to say, I'm going to start doing this, he could use an aggressive heiress. He could use a future. It's present tense.

This is the kind of guy Zacchaeus is. Why does he welcome the Lord joyfully? Because unlike almost every other tax collector, except maybe Levi Matthew, Zacchaeus is a good guy. Notice what Jesus says.

Today, deliverance has come to this house because he also is a son of Abraham. He hasn't become a son of Abraham. He is a son of Abraham.

Now, does this mean he's of Jewish descent? What does it mean to be a child of Abraham in the Bible? How does Paul use that phrase? You Gentiles are all sons of Abraham. How? By faith. And he says, Zacchaeus is a son indeed.

He's a son of Abraham. He's got the faith of Abraham. He's got the righteousness of Abraham.

He is the exceptional guy who is rich and is looking out for the poor. He's not the rich man who leaves Lazarus at the gate being licked by the dogs. This is a son of Abraham.

He's a rich man, and yet he gives 50% of everything he makes to the poor. He's a regular donator and supporter of the poor. And anytime he finds out that he's been led into a mistake by false testimony, he restores it fourfold for your trouble, for your inconvenience, for the disparagement to your good name.

Four times as much. Jesus says, you know why deliverance has come to this house? Because this man is a son of Abraham. Deliverance has come because he's a man of faith, because he's a man of faithful practice.

Interestingly, and this is perhaps as bizarre as anything in this story, people will come to this and say, well, harumph, harumph. Jesus told the rich young ruler that he needed to give all of his goods to the poor and come follow me. Zacchaeus has only given half.

So what kind of a good guy is he if he's only giving away half? Why doesn't he give away at all? He hasn't really made a full recognition of Jesus. He's saved, but he didn't give away everything and trudged along, taking twice as many steps to follow the disciples and follow Jesus around the area there. They think, first of all, that he only started giving

away half at this point, and he didn't give it away at all.

Here's the thing. It's a completely different situation. Jesus puts the question to the rich young ruler who goes away sorrowing because he had great wealth.

If Jesus had said the same thing to Zacchaeus on this day, if he had said, Zacchaeus, give away the rest of what you have and come follow me, what do you think Zacchaeus would have done? Lord, I'm there. Jesus doesn't call him to that. Why? Look at the support for the poor that Zacchaeus provides on an ongoing basis, has been providing for years.

Look at the example that he's setting and the difference between him and your standard tax collector. Now he's this man who gives half of what he makes to the poor and restores fourfold. Anybody who's wrongfully assessed is branded a sinner by the Pharisees.

Did you see it in the story? When they see it, they complain. He's gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner. How many of the people making that accusation gave half of their stuff away to the poor, and any time they committed a wrong, they made it right four times over.

Who's the righteous and who's the sinner? The distinguisher, the distinctive factor is faith and the expression of faith. I desire mercy and not sacrifice. Jesus doesn't come to Zacchaeus and say, I want you to sacrifice everything you have and run along behind my disciples.

Zacchaeus is a man of mercy. Zacchaeus is a man who uses his position to benefit others. Mercy and not sacrifice and knowledge of God.

He knows what is pleasing in God's sight. That's why he's so excited to see the Lord Jesus and so joyful when Jesus comes to his house. And that's why deliverance comes because he's a man of faith and he's a man of obedience.

He's a man of generosity. He's a man of compassion. He's the opposite of what you see a few chapters earlier in Luke with the poor Lazarus out at the gate being ignored.

One man and this rich guy can't help him. Zacchaeus is extremely rich and you think, how many poor people are being helped in Jericho by him? It's got to be the biggest charity in Israel. Well, that's your other tax collector story.

And the parallel is that Matthew and Zacchaeus, they are both named, they are both honored by the presence of the Lord Jesus at their table, which is fellowship. And sure, everyone is a sinner, but who leaves at the end of the day righteous? To whom does the Son of Man use his authority to grant the forgiveness of sins? People like this. Hopefully people like us.

This is who we want to be. The calling is going to be different for different people. Zacchaeus is not the rich young ruler.

Zacchaeus succeeds and doesn't need, he's already demonstrated that he's not wedded to his riches. He's giving them away all the time. So there's no need to demonstrate that obsession, that unbreakable connection.

Rich young ruler can't do without his stuff. Zacchaeus is giving half of it away all the time. Matthew invites those who share his appreciation and his enthusiasm for the Lord Jesus and those who will join him in celebrating his wonderful opportunity as a newly called disciple of the Lord Jesus.

It's a celebratory banquet. And those who are willing to come and appreciate the Lord Jesus and avail themselves of his mercy and his forgiveness are the ones who receive it. And those who are carping about, well, what happens on the Sabbath? And well, but your profession is unworthy and other people who are in your line of work are evil, so you must be as well.

And all of these false assumptions of righteousness fall to the ground in the blazing light of the glory of the Lord Jesus. This is where we want to be. Mercy and not sacrifice.

Knowledge of God more than burnt offerings. These are the people who receive forgiveness, who are credited with righteousness, and who are involved and useful and productive, fruitful in the plan and purpose of God. That's who we want to be.

Let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for these wonderful examples of faithful men who responded to the call of the Lord Jesus. May we likewise be those who are attuned to the voice that comes to us through the Holy Spirit and through your word to be merciful, to be faithful, to lay hold of righteousness by faith, and to be those who can serve both now and in the ages to come.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.