



“Changes the Way I Live”

Idea: When you are confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus, it changes the way you live.

Intro: A story has been told of a master who was preparing to leave on a long journey. He called for his three servants and divided up his estate between them, charging the servants to care for it while he was away. The master gave the first servant five pieces. He gave the second servant two pieces, and he gave the third servant one piece. The servant that was given the five pieces immediately went and did business with what was entrusted to him, doubling his estate. Likewise, the servant with the two pieces doubled his estate. The servant who was given one piece, however, did nothing with what he was given.

After the long journey the master returned home and called for his three servants in order to settle accounts with them. The first servant presented the five pieces entrusted to him along with the five pieces he had earned. The master was pleased and blessed his faithful servant. The second servant did the same, presenting the two pieces with two more. The master too blessed him. The third servant brought the one piece

entrusted to him along with an excuse for doing nothing with it. He claimed that he knew the master was a harsh man and that he feared failing the master, so he did nothing with what he was given. The master was furious at the servant's failure to properly manage and care for the property. He ordered that the servant's one piece be taken from him and given to the servant with ten pieces. He also ordered that the servant be driven from his land and exiled.

This parable, shared by Jesus, teaches that God is serious about stewardship. Therefore, if it is serious to God, it ought to be serious to us.

Inquiry: Stewardship begins with a proper understanding of God. It begins with the acknowledgement that Jesus is God, and I am a man...that Jesus is Lord, and I am His servant...that Jesus is Savior, and I am a recipient of His grace. Any discussion and study of stewardship must begin with a biblical understanding of God and His Lordship over all.

“Stewardship is the practice of our religion.” – W. H. Greener

You see, when you are confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus, it changes the way you live. You cannot help but live with palms up in worship, adoration, and surrender. There are two truths that I want to share with you in regards to how your life is changed.

When I am confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus...

1. I no longer live for myself; I live for Someone greater.
(Luke 19:1-10)

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. He and those who worked under him collected taxes from the Jews for Rome. They could basically require from the Jews whatever they wished as long as Rome got the taxes that were owed. The extortion done by Zacchaeus and his colleagues resulted in an outright hatred for tax

collectors. The Jews despised tax collectors because they only cared about themselves and building their own wealth. They were evil, selfish extortionists.

Something began to happen in Zacchaeus' heart. He began to realize that the things he was living for in life only left him empty; he longed for something greater. Then one day Jesus came to his hometown of Jericho. Most likely Zacchaeus had heard about the miracles Jesus had performed, but he had never seen Him. So he climbed up in a tree in order to see over the crowd surrounding Jesus.

As Jesus passed by Zacchaeus, the Lord looked up and told him to come down because He wanted to be his guest. A Jew eating and going to the home of a wicked tax collector was unheard of and forbidden. They were treated as someone who was unclean.

At some point during Jesus' visit, Zacchaeus placed his faith in the Lord. Luke doesn't describe it for us, but he does record the evidence of a changed life. Zacchaeus told Jesus that he was going to give half of his wealth to the poor and repay anyone who he had defrauded fourfold. E. E. Ellis states in his commentary that Zacchaeus' gift of half of his estate to the poor was a thank offering expressive of a changed heart. Robert Stein points out that his gift and his desire to repay those he had defrauded revealed in action a heart of repentance. Jesus clarifies for us that Zacchaeus had indeed come to faith in Christ (19:9). His good works did not earn him salvation; they gave evidence of his salvation.

When Zacchaeus was confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus Christ, he found what his soul longed after. He came face to face with the God he was created to know. That encounter forever changed Zacchaeus' life. He no longer lived for himself; on that

day he began to live for One greater than himself. He lived for Jesus.

Appl: When you encounter the glory and grace of Jesus it changes you. The things that were once so important to you lose their significance. The things that you once would have fought to keep hold of you now freely give up. What are you living for today? What occupies your thoughts, finances, and plans? Has there been a time in your life when you met Jesus the way Zacchaeus did and He changed your life?

There's a second truth that is evident when confronted with the glory and grace of Jesus.

2. I no longer waste my time on temporal things; I invest my time in eternal things. (Matthew 25:14-30)

In many ways the change in my life is best reflected in the way I use my time. Benjamin Franklin once said, "...do not squander time, for that's the stuff life is made of."

"The highest value in life is found in the stewardship of time." – Robert M. Fine

"Time isn't a commodity, something you pass around like cake. Time is the substance of life. When anyone asks you to give your time, they're really asking for a chunk of your life." – Antoinette Bosco

When we come face to face with the glory and grace of Jesus, it changes the way we live. It changes the way we view the things in this life. No longer do we live for ourselves; we live for Christ. Paul said, "for me to live is Christ..." (Phil 1:21). Thus, when Jesus changes our lives, we no longer waste our time in the pursuit of things that don't last; instead we invest our time in things that are eternal.

It is here that we must become disciplined. Godliness is the result of a disciplined spiritual life. By default we naturally move in the opposite direction of discipline. By nature we are in rebellion against order because our flesh is in rebellion against God. No one falls into a disciplined life. For example you don't fall into healthy eating. It takes work and discipline. You don't fall into a fit lifestyle. Our bodies are inclined to ease, pleasure, gluttony, and sloth. It takes commitment, hard work, and determination to be healthy and fit. You don't fall into healthy finances. It requires a willingness to say no to the immediate for the sake of your long-term goals. Likewise, you don't fall into a godly life. It calls for spiritual discipline.

All of these areas and more involve the use of your time because time is the stuff of which days are made. If we do not discipline the use of time for the purpose of godliness in these evil days, these evil days will keep us from becoming Godly.

In the parable presented at the outset (Matt 25:14-30), the first two servants chose to not waste their time on temporal things. Instead they invested them in things that lasted and things that pleased their master. The third servant, however, chose the immediate and the temporary over the purposeful and eternal.

What are the things that are eternal and pleasing to the Lord?

- Spiritual development
 - Loving God
 - Living out His Word
 - Living in community with His bride
- Evangelism & Discipleship
 - Sharing the gospel
 - Teaching new believers how to walk with God

- Service & Ministry
 - Serving others
 - Using your spiritual gifts
 - Impacting the community for the sake of Christ

The one who seeks to please the Lord invests his or her time in the things that last. That servant understands that he has been entrusted with a limited amount of time in this life, so he strives to invest it in things that bring glory to Jesus and will remain in eternity.

The person, who is preoccupied by temporal things and cares little for eternal things, reveals his or her true spiritual condition. You can be religious and not be in relationship with Jesus. You can give lip service to the gospel message and not be in relationship with Jesus. You can participate in religious worship and activities and be outside of a life-transforming relationship with Jesus. You can have the things of God all around you and miss the whole thing. The third servant found himself in this exact predicament. That wicked servant's neglect of what he had been entrusted indicated he was not a true servant of the master (25:26, 30).

Appl: If the only time you open your Bible is on a Sunday morning, you might be living for the temporal rather than the eternal. If the only time you get down on your knees to pray is when you're in a jam, then you might be living for the temporal rather than the eternal. If you think that living in community with other believers is an option rather than a need, then you might be living for the temporal rather than the eternal. If you give to the church when you feel like you can rather than by faith and obedience to God's Word, then you might be living for the temporal rather than the eternal. If your church experience is better described as a spectator than a participant, then you might be living

for the temporal rather than the eternal. If you can't remember the last time you told someone how they could have their sins forgiven and come into relationship with Jesus, then you might be living for the temporal rather than the eternal.

Conclusion: How is your stewardship? How is the practice of your faith in Jesus? Can you say today that there has been a time when you were confronted with the awesome glory and the amazing grace of Jesus and you were forever changed? Can you say today that you are right with God? Are there temporal things in your life that need to be replaced with eternal things?

If the Holy Spirit is revealing areas that need to be confessed and repented, then follow Zacchaeus' example and obey completely...forsake it all.