

No Other Gods (6): The God's of Money

(Luke 19:1-10)

I. Introduction

A. *Money Magazine* reported on churches with increasing costs and decreasing donation

1. The basic focus of the article was the extent that some churches go to raise funds.
 - a. One congregation sued former members to collect unpaid pledges to building fund
 - 1) Court ruled that even though members move, they still must pay any pledges
 - 2) I case you are wondering— was Jewish synagogue (*was OK for them to sue*)
 - b. Another church requires members to contribute half of federal income tax refunds.
 - c. One denomination supplies clergy a fund-raising kit (*money-changers in Temple*)
2. Any wonder why people think churches are simply hucksters trying to hustle people?
 - a. Remember Ray Stevens song “*Would Jesus Wear a Rolex on His Television Show?*”

*Would Jesus wear a pinky ring; Would he drive a fancy car?
Would his wife wear furs and diamonds; Would his dressing room have a star?
If he came back tomorrow, well there's something I'd like to know
Could you tell me, would Jesus wear a Rolex on his television show?*
 - b. That was written in 1987 about preachers talking about money and getting rich
 - 1) They keep talking about money and talking about it— people keep sending it
 - 2) It's been 30 years since that song came out; preachers still talk about money!

B. But no preacher talked about money more than did Jesus. *It was his favorite subject!*

1. About 16 of his 38 parables deals with the use of money and material things.
 - a. I didn't count these myself (*not enough fingers*), according to *Preaching Today*
 - 1) One out of ten of Jesus teaching verses (288) deal with money.
 - 2) Bible has 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 on faith, but 2,000 on money!
 - b. Jesus spoke about money more than any subject except the kingdom of God!
2. Jesus talked about money, but there was one big difference— *he warned of dangers!*
 - a. Jesus warns us not to simply store up our treasures on earth (**Matt 6:19**)
 - b. Jesus tells us that our money will show us where our heart really is (**Matt 6:21**)
 - c. Most of all, Jesus warns that our money can become a false God (**Matt 6:24**)
3. As we continue our look at *No Other Gods*, we come to the false God of money
 - a. This impact us all, right? How long can we go without money? (*Some time now...*)
 - b. Like so many false gods, this is God's blessing that is twisted into God's competitor
 - c. This morning, we'll look at **Luke 19** and Zacchaeus as our study example

II. The Gods of Money: Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

- A. We are given a “short” introduction to Zacchaeus in the opening verses ([Lk 19:1-2](#))
1. Zacchaeus was a tax collector; that means he was not a popular guy at parties
 - a. A former member’s sister worked for IRS; I learned not to joke about her job!
 - b. Israel was an occupied country; it took a lot of Roman legions to keep Israel in line
 - 1) It took a lot of money to pay for them! Who was going to pay for those troops?
 - 2) Rome needed a way of transferring Jewish wealth to Rome. Tax collectors.
 2. Jewish tax collectors were collaborators with Rome in their occupation of Israel
 - a. People recognize Zacchaeus immediately [verse 7](#) as being a “sinner”
 - 1) Joe Beam asked, “*Why would you be speaking here; you’re a known sinner!*”
 - 2) He thought of having a name special badge made, “*Joe Beam, Known Sinner*”
 - b. Zacchaeus was a known sinner; he was a traitor to the entire Jewish community
 - c. He was seen by the Jews much like the French views Nazi collaborator after the war
 3. But it gets worse. He was a “*chief tax collector.*” Part of the system. Management.
 - a. Certain amounts of money had to be extracted from the Jewish population
 - b. If more than the required amount was extracted, where did it go. To the top.
 - 1) Zacchaeus was very wealthiest of wealthy class—the top of the tax collectors
 - 2) But that means Zacchaeus was also the most hated class by the Jewish people
 - c. Why would anyone set themselves up for such disdain and hate? For the money!
- B. But things changed when Jesus stopped by Zacchaeus’ tree and house ([Lk 19:3-4](#))
1. Zacchaeus was up a tree because he was too short to see over the crowd
 - a. Wealthy man was so intent on seeing Jesus, he gave up all pretense of dignity
 - 1) Imagine Bill Gates shimmying up a tree to get a look. Imagine Donald Trump?
 - 2) Why does he do it? With all he had, there was something that he missed
 - b. Before you can find what you’re missing, you must humble yourself (*knee or tree*)
 2. Jesus could eat with anyone: Pharisee, Rabbi or blind beggar he healed ([Lk 19:5-7](#))
 - a. But he intentionally singles out the most hated and notorious sinner in whole town
 - b. Was that an accident? Is he is making a point? Does he sense a need in Zacchaeus?
 - c. What was Zacchaeus things when Jesus singled him out while he crouched in tree?
 - 1) He thought he was sneaking into the back of the classroom unseen by anyone
 - 2) Now all of a sudden, all the attention is on Zacchaeus— *it changes everything*

- C. Jesus says, “*Let’s do lunch.*” And Zacchaeus answers, “*I surrender all*” (**Luke 19:8**)
1. Do you ever find yourself feeling a bit skeptical of “miraculous” conversion stories?
 - a. We’d like Jesus to spend some time beating Zacchaeus over the head with scripture
 - b. Threaten a little brimstone. But this dramatic change follows invitation to lunch
 - 1) It’s tempting to read this text to have Zacchaeus change follow their dinner
 - 2) But Jesus explanation here seems to be intended for the crowd (**Luke 19:9-10**)
 2. Zacchaeus dramatic change of focus here is seen on two different fronts (**Luke 19:8**)
 - a. **First**, he gave away 50% of his possessions to poor. **Note:** Possessions, not income
 - 1) Jews in OT tithed, they gave 10% of income. But that was just the beginning
 - a) There was a second 10% of harvest; almsgiving to poor; and then the sacrifices
 - b) Add that up and the pious Jew in the OT gave 30-35% of their income to God
 - 2) We ask, “*Do Christians tithe?*” That’s code for, “*Must we give 10% to God?*”
 - a) Example of Zacchaeus tells us tells us, “*It’s perfectly acceptable to give 50%*”
 - b) Zacchaeus change a heart that said that money was the most important thing
 - b. **Second**, he promised to give back four times the amount to anyone he had cheated
 - 1) Now he is moving from the area of mercy and charity to that of justice
 - a) The law said that if you cheated someone, well there’s a price to pay (**Num 5:7**)
 - b) Zacchaeus by offering four times in restitution again goes well beyond the Law
 - 2) The reason he does that is very simple—his heart and now his life are change
 - 3) And that changes the way that he looks at money.
 - a) Once he gave up everything for money—relationship with others and with God
 - b) Now he is willing to give up his money to do the right thing in sight of God
- D. In *Counterfeit Gods*, Tim Keller talks of difference in our *deep idols* and *surface idols*
1. He suggests that our “*deep idols*” are things tend to motivate and drive us deep within
 - a. **Comfort:** Evidently a synonym of “rich.” “*We’re not rich; we’re comfortable*”
 - b. **Popularity:** Some are people-pleasers. They seek approval; desire to be liked
 - c. **Power:** Some want to have their own way; they give up being liked to get control
 2. Our “*surface idols*” are those things we pursue and use to achieve those “*deep idols*”
 - a. Money is #1 on that list. We don’t want money itself—may as well collect rocks
 - b. Money is a “medium of exchange,” and I don’t just mean of good and services
 - 1) Money helps us get the comfort or popularity or power and control we want
 - 2) It is the overall idol that helps us to enthrone all our other false gods

III. Conclusion:

A. Money is so easily seen an idol because we look to it do what only God can do

1. **Money will satisfy.** “*Money won’t make you happy*” is made up by rich to keep is in line?
 - a. So why are there so many miserable rich people? *Money doesn’t satisfy*
 - b. You never get enough of the deep idols—*comfort, control, power, popularity*
 - c. While money and what money brings can’t satisfy, God can (**Psa 103:4-5**)
 - 1) We sang, “*Who can satisfy my soul like you?*” Sounded like we meant it
 - 2) But then we chase money like we won’t we satisfied unless we have more
2. **Money gives you worth.** We judge people cars & neighborhoods (*Should be phone*)
 - a. When someone ask, “*How much was he worth*” we know what they were asking
 - b. The right only answer is **John 3:16**, right? But that’s not what anyone is asking
 - 1) We judge worth as if money were a true God and able to give us worth
 - 2) Don’t look to idols to give true worth only a true God can give (**1 John 3:1**)
3. **Money makes you secure.** We look to money to give us security for the future
 - a. We invest in IRA’s, 401K; we play all the angles and tax codes in retirement
 - b. Then someone we’re not sure even pays taxes starts talking about changing it all up
 - 1) A butterfly beats its wings, someone on Wall St. panics and the bubble bursts
 - 2) Guy managing our retirement fund takes a swan dive from 95th floor. Security
 - c. Deep idol here is control; we can’t have or save enough to manage our future
 - d. Only way to secure money for the future is to go Zacchaeus with it (**1 Tim 6:17-18**)
4. **Money will save you.** Money allows us to think something other than Jesus can save
 - a. If I have money (with credit, not so much money) to pursue those deep idols
 - 1) If I feel down and depressed, I can comfort myself with a shopping spree
 - 2) If I’m lonely and isolated, then grab the credit card for a night on the town
 - 3) If I need to be more in control and get my way, I can if I have a few bucks
 - b. Those things aren’t salvation—they’re band-aid that take our minds off being lost
 - c. What Peter said son long ago is still true today—only Jesus can save us (**John 6:68**)

B. Zacchaeus saw Jesus and changed how he saw money... and salvation came (**Luke 19:9**)

1. Jesus salvation came to Zacchaeus “*today.*” That means it wasn’t there “*yesterday*”
2. If you want this salvation thing, you must get straight this god thing first (**Matt 6:24**)
3. When you truly turn your eyes on Jesus, the things of earth will grow strangely dim