

Luke 19

Luke 19:5 Jesus knew the name of Zacchaeus

Clearly, Jesus and Zacchaeus had never met. Yet, Jesus calls him out of the sycamore tree by name. If the Lord knew the name of this short, tree-climbing publican, you can be assured that he knows your name, even if your behavior is more like a tall, well-dressed Pharisee. The Lord knows your name. He knows your struggles. He feels your pain. He wants you to come down from your tree, welcome him into your home, and join him in a spiritual feast.

"One of my favorite examples of the Savior's intimate knowledge of a person, and his kindness toward him, is the story of Zacchaeus...What a special honor for this man who was wealthy, chief among the publicans, and who consequently had undoubtedly received much scorn and abuse in his community. (See Luke 19:7.)

"'But,' you might think, 'that was when Jesus was on the earth. Does he really know us that well today from his distant position in the heavens?'

"Listen to the Lord's words to a congregation just 150 years ago, in 1831, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants: 'Behold and hearken, O ye elders of my church, who have assembled yourselves together, whose prayers I have heard, and whose hearts I know, and whose desires have come up before me. Behold and lo, mine eyes are upon you.' (D&C 67:1-2.)

"Note also that in section 5 of the Doctrine and Covenants the Lord refers to 'my servant Martin Harris.' (D&C 5:1.) He knew his name! He also knew the names of John Whitmer, as recorded in section 15, and Frederick G. Williams in section 93. Indeed, the Lord gave specific instructions to more than sixty-five individuals in revelations recorded in that book of scripture.

"I am personally convinced that the Lord is aware of each of us. I have felt his sustaining influence on many occasions during trials in my life. Whether experiencing fear after a painful knee injury in the mission field, loneliness during a traumatic separation from my family to serve in Vietnam, or an awful hollow numbness following the death of a beloved companion, I have found no balm so soothing as the sweet, peaceful, comforting assurance that comes from divine whisperings, 'Be still,' 'Be calm,' 'I am here,' 'I know.'" (David A. Whetten, "Sir, We Would See Jesus," *Ensign*, Oct. 1978, 5-6)

Luke 19:5 make haste...for to day I must abide at thy house

Chieko Okazaki

"I believe that Jesus was very conscious of time, but he was never in a hurry. He never said, 'Don't you get it? I've only got three years. Listen up! Pay attention! Get that multitude fed right now! Get a move on. Snap it up. We've got to get to the walls of Jerusalem before the owner of the colt moves it.' I think it's very interesting that the only time Jesus is recorded as saying, 'Hurry up' was when he walked under the sycamore tree where a short tax collector named Zacchaeus had climbed so he could see Jesus. According to Luke: 'And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.' (Luke 19:5.) I don't think Jesus told Zacchaeus to 'make haste' because Jesus was in a hurry but because he wanted Zacchaeus to act...Jesus wasn't in a hurry, but he wanted Zacchaeus to be in a hurry to hear the words he needed to understand so he could repent." (*Aloha!* [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995], 57.)

Luke 19:9 This day is salvation come to this house

"At a certain point in my life, I realized that, like Zacchaeus of Jericho, I needed to come down from the sycamore tree, where I was merely watching Jesus pass on the road, and let him come into my house. That was when I began to understand the meaning and power of grace.

"About ten years ago, I realized that I needed to learn something. My spiritual life wasn't very satisfying; I wasn't very happy, and I didn't know why...I also realized that there was something cold about my spiritual life. I knew Latter-day Saints, some of them fellow ward members, in whom peace and love seemed to flow like a spring of water. I heard others speak of the Lord as if he were an intimate, cherished friend. But I was not one of them. What was missing?

"...One of my first and most important clues came from a non-Latter-day Saint, C. S. Lewis: 'If I am a field that contains nothing but grass-seed, I cannot produce wheat. Cutting the grass may keep it short: but I shall still produce grass and no wheat. If I want to produce wheat, the change must go deeper than the surface. I must be ploughed up and re-sown.' (Mere Christianity, New York: Macmillan, 1971, p. 168.) I saw that I needed ploughing and re-sowing, and it was quite clear to me who was the Ploughman and the Sower.

"What I needed is illustrated in the story of Zacchaeus. (See Luke 19:2-10.)... Zacchaeus was short and couldn't see over the crowd, so he climbed a sycamore tree that grew beside the road. As Jesus passed under the tree, he looked up, saw Zacchaeus, and said to him, 'Make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.' (Luke 19:5.)

"Zacchaeus did come down to receive the visit of Jesus, and before that life-changing visit was over he said, 'Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.'

"Seeing Zacchaeus' remarkable change of heart, Jesus said, 'This day is salvation come to this house...For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.' (Luke 19:8-10.)...When Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus into his house and his life, he opened himself to an influence that would make of him a different man. As **President Ezra Taft Benson** said, 'When you choose to follow Christ, you choose to be changed.' (*Ensign*, Nov. 1985, p. 5.)

"We may not be privileged, as were Zacchaeus and his contemporaries, to walk and sit and talk with the Master in the flesh, but He nevertheless offers us a companionship as intimate as we could wish for. He said to John the Revelator, 'Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.' (Rev. 3:20.)" (Colin B. Douglas, "What I've Learned about Grace Since Coming Down from the Sycamore Tree," *Ensign*, Apr. 1989, 13-14)

Luke 19:11 they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear

"...the Jews were looking for a redeemer quite different from the Christ. It was a temporal salvation that they desired. It was an earthly kingdom for which they longed. It was not faith, repentance, and baptism for which they sought, but national vindication, the destruction of gentile oppressors, and the establishment of a kingdom of peace and justice." (Joseph Fielding McConkie, *CES Symposium on the New Testament*, 128)

Luke 19:12-27 the parable of the pounds

Joseph Smith gave a key to understanding the teachings of Jesus. He said, "I have a key by which I understand the scriptures. I enquire, what was the question which drew out the answer, or caused Jesus to utter the parable?"

...To ascertain its meaning, we must dig up the root and ascertain what it was that drew the saying out of Jesus." (*Teachings*, 276) This is a good rule of thumb in understanding the parable of the pounds. The reason for this parable was because the Jews 'thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.' The lesson was that the kingdom of the nobleman was not to be realized until he left for a long time. When he was to return, i.e. the Second Coming, those who had acted wisely in his absence would be rewarded, while those who had been rebellious could expect to be destroyed (v. 27).

Bruce R. McConkie

"Christ is the nobleman; the far off country is heaven; the kingdom there to be given him is 'all power... in heaven and in earth' (Matt. 28:18); and his promised return is the glorious Second Coming, when the literal and visible kingdom shall be set up on earth. The ten servants are the members of the Church...Those designated as 'citizens' are the other people in the world, those who are subject to him because he is the God of the whole earth, but who have not accepted his gospel and come into his fold as servants. The servants are commanded to labor in the vineyard on their Lord's errand until he returns." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 1: 572.)

Luke 19:14 We will not have this man to reign over us

Bruce R. McConkie

"How literally this prophetic part of the parable was fulfilled! But a few days hence and the Jews would be proclaiming, 'We have no king but Caesar,' and 'Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.' (John 19:15, 21.) Then after the Nobleman's ascension to heaven these same 'citizens' would continue to exhibit violent hostility against his infant Church." (*Doctrinal New Testament Commentary*, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965-1973], 1: 572.)

Luke 19:15-20 thy pound hath gained ten pounds...thy pound hath gained five pounds...here is thy pound

This parable is very similar to the parable of the talents as recorded in Matthew 25:14-30. However, there is a significant, notable difference. In the parable of the talents, one servant is given five talents, a second is given two, and a third is given one. According to their several abilities, the wise servants produce in turn, five more and two more. In the parable of the pounds, each

servant is given the same amount of money-only one pound. This is not a situation in which the nobleman gave more to one than the other. They all started with the same amount. Yet, one servant is able to produce tenfold and the second fivefold. The lesson may be that while each of us is given different gifts and abilities (as represented in the parable of the talents), we have all been given the same privilege in the kingdom of God (as represented in the parable of the pounds). To all of us the Lord has given the gospel of Jesus Christ, with the scriptures, latter-day prophets, and the saving ordinances of the temple. Some of us take advantage of what we've been given and produce tenfold. Some of us take advantage and produce fivefold. Others of us take these great blessings for granted, waste away the days of our probation, and will have nothing to show the Lord upon his return.

Ironically, what the Lord has given us is worth so much more than one measly pound! The question becomes, what will we do with this great privilege and responsibility while he is gone. Will we be productive in his kingdom? When he returns, will he call us a "ten-pound servant," a "five-pound servant," or a 'wicked servant'? The decision is ours-and so is the kingdom (DC 35:27) if we will only act as these wise servants did.

Joseph Fielding Smith

"Now, it is a self-evident truth, that if we do not use the talents given us *now* and do not exercise the *responsibility* we have received in this life, that we will not be prepared or worthy to exercise authority and have responsibility *there*. If such authority is given us here and we have refused to use it, then we surely could have no right to the reward and cannot receive responsibility and power there, for responsibilities then will be many times greater than now. Here we prove ourselves through service as well as through obedience to the law of the Gospel. It is not sufficient that we be *good*, that is, that we do not violate the law, and only observe the regulations required of laymen in the Church. He that does nothing is good for nothing, and there should be no laymen in the Church. The Lord said to the Church of the Laodiceans: 'I know thy works that thou art neither cold nor hot...So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth.' (Rev. 3:15-16)" (*The Way to Perfection* [Salt Lake City: Genealogical Society of Utah, 1949], 221 - 222.)

Luke 19:21 I feared thee, because thou art an austere man

The wicked servant always has an excuse. Often, he will even blame the Lord. He views the Lord as "austere" only because he is not willing to do that

which he is supposed to do. Those who are obedient view the Lord as loving, merciful, and kind.

James E. Talmage

"It is not fair to blame the Lord, even in thought, because he gives us warning of what is to come. It is most irrational and illogical so to do. He, with his omniscience, knows what is to come to individuals and nations, and he gives warnings. Many of us take that warning to be an expression of divine determination to punish and to afflict.

"Well, others besides the Lord are subjects of ill-directed blame sometimes. I have suffered from it. On one occasion I undertook to warn a merry party of intending picnickers not to set out on their jaunt, because a storm was coming, a violent storm. I had consulted the instruments that told of its coming. But they knew better and they went, and they came back in some fashion. I wish you could have seen them. But the tragical part of it was they blamed it all on me." (*Conference Report, April 1933, Third Day-Morning Meeting* 109)

Luke 19:40 I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out

Hugh B. Brown

"Agents of the scribes and Pharisees who were lurking in the crowd were disturbed and scandalized as the jubilant multitude shouted in harmony: 'Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord, . . . glory in the highest.' (Luke 19:38.) To their learned ears and suspicious hearts such words of adulation to an impostor were bordering on blasphemy, and they admonished Jesus to rebuke his disciples, but instead he justified their enthusiasm by saying: 'I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.' (Luke 19:40 Luke 19:40.) This was an assertion of his right to be called the Christ. All who read the story must be moved by the matchless, majestic courage of the man. He could have turned back to the home of Lazarus and Mary and Martha, his usual abiding place in Bethany. But he voluntarily chose to do his Father's will to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man...And so began the most eventful week in history." (*The Eternal Quest* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1956], 392.)

Luke 19:41 when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it

David O. McKay

"According to tradition, when these words (Luke 19:41-42) were spoken, Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives, opposite a point in the walls surrounding Jerusalem a few yards south of the Gate Beautiful. From this spot one may behold a beautiful view of that historic city.

"It is wonderfully picturesque, with its quaint, flat-roofed houses, church towers, and mosque domes covering the four hills on which Jerusalem is built. The view is impressive even now; it must have been inspiring when Jesus beheld it in all its Herodian splendor.

"But it was the inhabitants of the city, not the beautiful buildings or the commanding view that the Savior saw through tear bedimmed eyes when he cried: 'If thou hadst known . . . the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.' ("Luke 19:42 Luke 19:42.) He saw the people divided into conflicting and contending sects, each professing more holiness and righteousness than the other and all closing their eyes to the truth." (*Conference Report, October 1944, Afternoon Meeting 78.*)

Luke 19:43 **thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round**

"In the spring of 70 (A. D.)...Titus ordered a siege wall constructed around the city to starve out its defenders-a tactic that was particularly effective because many supplies had been destroyed in the previous months of fighting." (Galbraith, Ogden, and Skinner, *Jerusalem: The Eternal City*, 214-215)

James E. Talmage

"The warning to all to flee from Jerusalem and Judea to the mountains when the armies would begin to surround the city was so generally heeded by members of the Church, that according to the early Church writers not one Christian perished in the awful siege (see Eusebius, *Eccles. Hist.*, book iii, ch. 5)...As to the unprecedented horrors of the siege, which culminated in the utter destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, see Josephus, Wars vi, chaps. 3 and 4. That historian estimates the number slain in Jerusalem alone as 1,100,000 and in other cities and rural parts a third as many more. For details see Josephus, Wars ii, chaps. 18, 20; iii, 2, 7, 8, 9; iv, 1, 2, 7, 8, 9; vii, 6, 9, 11. Many tens of thousands were taken captive, to be afterward sold into slavery, or to be slain by wild beasts, or in gladiatorial combat in the arena for the amusement of Roman spectators.

"In the course of the siege, a wall was constructed about the entire city, thus fulfilling the Lord's prediction (Luke 19:43), 'thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee,' in which, by the admittedly better translation, 'bank,' or 'palisade' should appear instead of 'trench.' In September A.D. 70 the city fell into the hands of the Romans; and its destruction was afterward made so thorough that its site was plowed up. Jerusalem was 'trodden down of the Gentiles,' and ever since has been under Gentile dominion, and so shall continue to be 'until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' (Luke 21:24.)" (*Jesus the Christ*, 545)

Luke 19:43-44 thine enemies...shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee

"The Romans brought their machines against the wall...yet did the Romans overcome them by their number and by their strength; and, what was the principal thing of all, by going cheerfully about their work, while the Jews were quite dejected, and become weak. Now as soon as a part of the wall was battered down, and certain of the towers yielded to the impression of the battering rams, those that opposed themselves fled away...when those that came running before the rest told them that the western wall was entirely overthrown...they fell upon their face, and greatly lamented their own mad conduct; and their nerves were so terribly loosed, that they could not flee away...

"So the Romans being now become masters of the walls, they both placed their ensigns upon the towers, and made joyful acclamations for the victory they had gained, as having found the end of this war much lighter than its beginning; for when they had gotten upon the last wall, without any bloodshed, they could hardly believe what they found to be true; but seeing nobody to oppose them, they stood in doubt what such an unusual solitude could mean. But when they went in numbers into the lanes of the city with their swords drawn, they slew those whom they overtook without and set fire to the houses whither the Jews were fled, and burnt every soul in them, and laid waste a great many of the rest; and when they were come to the houses to plunder them, they found in them entire families of dead men, and the upper rooms full of dead corpses, that is, of such as died by the famine; they then stood in a horror at this sight, and went out without touching any thing. But although they had this commiseration for such as were destroyed in that manner, yet had they not the same for those that were still alive, but they ran every one through whom they met with, and obstructed the very lanes with their dead bodies, and made the whole city run down with blood, to such a degree indeed that the fire of many of the

houses was quenched with these men's blood." (Josephus as taken from *Latter-day Commentary on the New Testament: The Four Gospels*, by Pinegar, Bassett, and Earl, p. 285-286)