

St. Paul's Dorking Small Groups February 24th 2008

'Our Calling – Called Out'

Luke Chapter 19: 1-10



Word: Key points from Sunday's sermon

The story of Zacchaeus helps us to understand what it means to be called out by God. This story reveals how Jesus turns the life of a man upside down, so that he ends up the right way up - standing tall and a servant of the kingdom.

- Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, was wealthy and despised because of his profession.
- Jesus called him by name. (cf. Ps 139:15) **God's call is intimate and personal**, just as it was thousands of years earlier to Abraham.
- Then Jesus said; 'I must stay at your house today'. Jesus by his very action gave him hope. **God's call is always one of hope and not of despair.**
- The crowd didn't realise that Jesus was there amongst them to call out those who were lost.
- Jesus is in the business of transformation and of setting people free.
- Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus had a remarkable and immediate effect; his whole way of life and approach changed. Jesus set him free from the greed that he had been enslaved to. (v.8)

An encounter with the living Lord calls us out to a renewed life. The inward dwelling of his spirit calls us to new ways of living and expressing the life that is now within us, (cf. John 14:23). But he never forces us, just as he didn't force Zacchaeus. It's possible to know the love of God and stand still ignoring the spirit of God calling us into a life of service. In his book 'The Purpose Driven Life', Rick Warren writes: *'If not to God, you will surrender to the opinions or expectations of others, to money, to resentment, to fear, or to your own pride, lusts or ego. You were designed to worship God – and if you fail to worship him, you will create other things (idols) to give your life to'*. Luke's story shows that we can be set free from all these idols to be our true selves.

On the subject of vocation, Archbishop George Carey quotes Father Hughson who wrote: *"Don't trouble because you think you're not fit. Of course you're not fit! The greatest saint is unfit for the service of God; but there is a wise saying that God does not choose what is fit but he chooses. So all we have to do is yield ourselves up into his hands and he will fit us for exactly the service he wants us to give to him. The sense of unfitness is one of the signs of vocation..."*

God is not calling us out to the same ministries; they are different for each one of us and just as valuable as each other. In the book 'A Call to Excellence' Edward Patey is quoted: *'All orders are holy. Plumbers are as much in holy orders as the clergy, serving God and their fellows... Electricians, park-keepers, doctors and secretaries are all working as much with the things of God as the priest with the sacrament.'* The person in the workplace encounters more non-Christians than any missionary ever does!

Zacchaeus was on a destructive path before he encountered Jesus, but he had a magnificent change of heart which brought him freedom and a new beginning. Once he had found Jesus it was apparently the most natural thing for him to make reparation. (cf. Matt 11:28-30) There are many things that can burden us, but an encounter with the God who loves us can set us free.

The story of Zacchaeus shows us that **God is calling each one of us. He knows us personally and by name. He doesn't point the finger at our mistakes. He sets us free to choose to live a new life.** Whatever God has chosen for us to do – we can do it knowing that he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, (Eph. 1: 3,4)



Witness: questions to discuss :

1. Zacchaeus' response to Jesus was both active and costly. Share together what the barriers may be that prevent us from responding to God's call on our lives.
2. Read the quotation from Rick Warren. Where have we seen these principles at work in both the lives of others and our own?
3. Refer to the quotation by Edward Patey. How can we work out our vocation in the world? How can the church help us to place value on all types of work, at home or elsewhere?
4. Can you share any instances where you have known God setting you free and what was the impact?
5. Spend some time praying for one another that we will all recognise and respond to God's call to us today.