

15 MINUTES OF FAME

LUKE19:1-10

1And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. 2And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. 3And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.

4And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5And 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. 6And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

7And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; 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. 9And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. ESV

Introduction

In 1968, the American artist, Andy Warhol, in his preparation for a 1968 exhibition of his work in Stockholm, Sweden, is quoted as saying, “In the future, everyone will be world-famous for 15 minutes” His quote has been watered down to “Everyone will have their 15 minutes of fame.”

“A writer doesn't dream of riches and fame, though those things are nice. A true writer longs to leave behind a piece of themselves, something that withstands the test of time and is passed down for generations.” C.K. Webb

We all know that fame is fleeting. This is especially true in sports and Hollywood, where one day you are front page news and sometime later, no one remembers your name.

I was intrigued by a an article that asked readers to reflect on the following questions:

1. Name the five wealthiest people in the world
2. Name the last five Super Bowl MVP winners

3. Name the last five winners of the Miss America contest
4. Name ten people who have won the Nobel or Pulitzer Prize;
5. Name the last half dozen Academy Award winners for best actor and actress;
6. Name the last 10 World Series winners?
7. Name the 10 Wealthiest Movie Stars in Hollywood

As you reflect on these six questions you quickly realize that fame is fleeting. The article then went on to ask another set of questions.

1. List a few teachers who aided your journey through school
2. Name three friends who have helped you through a difficult time
3. Name five people who have taught you something worthwhile
4. Think of a few people who have made you feel appreciated and special
5. Think of five people you enjoy spending time with
6. Name six heroes whose stories have inspired you?

The point of the article is very clear. The people who have made a difference in your life may not be famous. They may not be known even by your neighbors. But, they are important to you because they are the ones that invested themselves into your life.

As we look at this passage today, I would like you to keep in mind those that were “difference makers” in your life. More specifically, “How can you be a “difference maker” in the lives of others?” I believe the simple answer is to be like Jesus Christ. 2000 years later, His impact is undeniable. Even if people reject Him, they know of Him.

I think we can all agree that Jesus has had more than “15 minutes of Fame.” Therefore, if we want to leave behind an indelible imprint of our lives on the world and make a difference, we should model our lives after Him. After all, isn’t that what it means to be a “Christian? To be “Christ like?”

Would you repeat after me; “I Am To Be a Difference Maker!”

The Gospels are filled with stories concerning the impact on the lives of people that came in contact with Him. Not everyone agreed with Jesus. As a matter of fact, more rejected Him and His teaching than accepted Him and His Gospel.

In the preceding chapters of this gospel, we find Jesus interacting with those with whom He came in contact with. Men, women, and children were welcome to hear His message and teaching. The rich, poor, educated and unlearned were to be found in the multitudes. Jews and Gentiles alike were searching for this young Rabbi, to hear His message and to be healed of diseases.

Would you repeat after me again: “I Am To Be a Difference Maker!”

Every born again believer in Jesus Christ is an important piece of God’s plan. He wants you to make a difference in the lives of your neighbors and in the lives of your family. Those that are in your “sphere of influence” need to see Jesus Christ and you may be the only “bible” that they ever read.

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Jesus and His disciples are on their way to Jerusalem. As they traveled south through the lush Jordan River valley they crossed over into the town of Jericho. There were many people following Jesus and the commotion in the streets drew more people just to see what was going on. Of all the people in the crowded thorough fare that day, Doctor Luke picks one person to focus on. His name is Zacchaeus and he was a Jew (vs 9), his occupation was that of a chief tax collector, he was short and rich.

Zacchaeus either heard all the commotion and wondered what was going on, or he had been following Jesus all along. We are not told, but Luke will recount his story. The Gospel of Luke is the only place you will find this encounter.

There are several important points we can learn from Jesus in this encounter. First of all, He was out among the people. Jesus didn’t stay in His headquarters in Capernaum. He didn’t just sit in a meeting place and wait for the multitudes to find him out. He got out to where the people were.

Zacchaeus is not the first tax collector that we have been introduced to. One of the original twelve was Levi, we know him as Matthew. We are let in on an encounter between Matthew and Jesus where Jesus asked him to “Follow me.” The first thing that Matthew did was to invite Jesus and His disciples to have a meal with him, and he invited all of his friends to meet Jesus.

4And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. 5And 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. 6And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

I can’t help but remember the children’s song that teaches this meeting between Jesus and Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he. He climbed up in a Sycomore tree, for the Lord he wanted to see. And as the Savior passed that way,

He looked up in the tree, and said, “Zacchaeus, you come down. For I am going to your house today. For I am going to your house today.”

I can’t help it. This story is so simple and yet so deep.

Just a thought. It must have been an odd sight, seeing a rich, prominent man scrambling up a tree in his \$1,000 suit to get a better vantage point.

Have you ever heard the saying, “Couldn’t see the forest through the trees?” Many times when we are in a crowd, that is all we see, a crowd. We don’t make out the individuals that make up that crowd. I have some personal experience here. I have been in stores or restaurants, doing my thing, when suddenly somebody will just walk up say, “You just ignored me. I said hello, but you just kept walking on by.” I had to admit, that among all the people, I did not see them.

In this story, Jesus and his disciples are going from point A to point B. From Capernaum to Jerusalem...one foot in front of the other...just marking the time until they get to their destination. BUT, Jesus saw a small man in a tree that was straining to see him. The Holy Spirit was working on Zacchaeus and Jesus picked him out of the mass of people.

It is important that we understand this key point in evangelism. We must be out among the people and secondly, we must care for those people. I don’t know of anyone who likes being treated as a number. I like it when someone who is waiting on me uses my name.

I was at a restaurant lately and when I was paying for the meal, the waitress said, “Thank you Mr. Crowder for dining with us today. I enjoyed waiting on you.” She used my name...I wasn’t just another patron of the restaurant, I was Mr. Crowder. I made a mental note that the next time we eat there, I am going to ask for that waitress.

Our church has always been known as a friendly church. We are quick to meet the guests and to smile and shake their hand. What if we looked for people you do not know and befriend them. Ask them to sit with you. Show them that you care. Our guests sometimes feel awkward being in new church surroundings. A smile, handshake and encouragement could be exactly what they are longing for!

Illustration: I heard about an incident that occurred while Thomas Jefferson was Vice President of the United States. One night Jefferson went to a prestigious hotel in Baltimore, dressed like a farmer. The manager of the hotel thought Jefferson’s appearance would discredit his hotel. The manager turned Jefferson away, not knowing who he rejected. Later that evening the hotel manager discovered that he

had turned away Thomas Jefferson. Immediately he sent a note to the famed patriot, asking him to come back and be his guest. Jefferson replied by instructing his messenger as follows: “Tell him I have already engaged a room. I value his good intentions highly, but if he has no place for a dirty American farmer, he has none for the Vice President of the United States.”

Would you repeat after me; “I Am To Be a Difference Maker!”

Jesus lived a Life With Purpose

Jesus was always involved with people. His life was an example of someone who was involved in the lives of others. His travel was always with purpose. The towns they went through was with purpose. The places He chose to teach, was chosen with purpose

Jesus treated most of the people He met with three “R’s”. Respect, Relationship and Response.

Respect - As a whole, the Jews hated the tax collectors, and in many cases, rightly so. Jesus could have snubbed Zacchaeus. Instead He showed him respect.

Relationship – Jesus wanted to spend some time with Zacchaeus. He wasn’t a number or face in the crowd. Jesus was interested in him as a person. Someone who needed salvation. Our first step in leading someone to the LORD, is building a relationship. There are always barriers when you begin a new relationship with people.

Jesus had to overcome barriers in meeting Zacchaeus.

- There was the distance barrier. Zacchaeus was up a tree.
- There was the alienation barrier. Zacchaeus was condemned by other people.
- There was the guilt barrier. Zacchaeus felt guilty for his past life.
- There is the dress barrier. Many people think you have to wear a coat and tie to attend church. Many people are alienated by ministerial dress. Religious dress and uniforms creates a barrier with people.
- There is the perception barrier. Many people have misconceptions about Christians, and especially pastors. I do not tell people I am a pastor. I want them to discover I am a man before they find out I am a pastor.

8And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; 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. 9And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

The third “R”, is Response. Once Jesus took away all the negative aspects of their encounter, he could talk to him about his spiritual life. It is then that the Holy Spirit can love that person to salvation.

Jesus was Committed to His Purpose

Sometimes we can get our priorities all out of kilter. We don’t keep the Main Thing, the Main Thing.

- We get hung up on the institution.
- We get caught up in bills and budgets and lose sight of the most important thing.
- We get hung up on preferences in music, schedules and polity.

Jesus purpose in talking with Zacchaeus was to introduce him to salvation. Not to preach to him on all his sins that must be changed in order for him to be saved. NO! Jesus gave him salvation, and the Holy Spirit made the changes in his life. “...*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.*”

Would you repeat after me; “I Am To Be a Difference Maker!”

Can you shout with me, “I Want To Be A Difference Maker!”

Conclusion

What this world needs to see is a people who closely represent Jesus Christ. The world needs to see “Difference Makers.” What is it that you wish to leave behind?

Oh that we could all say, “I Am A Difference Maker.”

Bob Crowder