

More About Jesus, Week 12: Jesus Saw Individuals (Luke 19:1-10) by Paul Hammons

If you've ever been present when an "important" person walks into a room, you know what it's typically like. A political figure, actor, athlete, or some other well-known personality enters surrounded by handlers who direct him where he needs to go and show him who "matters" in the crowd, at the same time keep everyone separate and anonymous.

The last thing you would expect standing in a crowd like that would be for the man to stop, look at you, call you by name, and say "I want to come eat dinner at your house today."

Zacchaeus experienced that feeling in **Luke 19**. We're introduced to him in v. 2:

He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature.

As a tax collector, Zacchaeus was an outsider in the city, and the fact that he was rich indicates that he likely was not honest in all his dealings. Of all the people in the crowd, he was the last who would expect to be recognized and greeted by the man being hailed as the son of David, the king of Israel.

But he wanted to see Jesus, and that made him important enough for Jesus to not only speak to him, but to come to his house and eat with him.

As a result, Zacchaeus pledged half his goods to the poor, *"and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."* And Jesus said to him, *"Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost"* (**Lk 19:9-10**).

So often in the gospels, we see Jesus noticing people in crowds - people who would have been of no consequences to most others. In **Luke 8**, Jesus was on his way to heal the dying daughter of the ruler of the synagogue of that town, but he stopped the entire crowd to address a single unclean woman who had touched his garment. He didn't stop to rebuke her, or even to heal her - she had already been healed. In singling her out from the crowd, Jesus compelled her to confess her actions, and he then praised her publicly for her faith.

Jesus noticed and praised the widow in **Luke 21** as he sat in the temple courtyard watching the people give their contributions, recognizing the extraordinary nature of her gift:

"This poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." - **Lk 21:3-4**

Jesus did not see a mass of humanity in the crowds who followed him. He saw individual sheep who needed to be gathered back into the fold. As he described it in Luke 15:4: *“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it?”*

Each sheep has inherent value to God. The Good Shepherd saw that as he walked the earth, and he sees it today even as he rules in Heaven. As he told the apostles:

Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows. - **Lk 12:6–7**

Jesus, our high priest, sees us in the crowd of humanity - even in the crowd of his church. Paul wrote: *“The Lord knows those who are his”* (**2 Tim. 2:15**). Jesus assured us, *“I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me.”* And not only does he know us, but he laid down his life for us. (**John 10:14-15**)

We don't have to battle for Jesus' attention. He invites us into the throne room of God and stands by each one of us interceding on our behalf whenever we call on the Father in prayer (**Heb. 4:15-16**). We can pray with confidence that he knows our needs greater than we do, because he knows us as part of his own body (**Eph. 1:23**).