

International Sunday School Lesson

FOR APRIL 22, 1973
 LESSON TEXT:
 Matthew 16:13-18;
 John 20:24-31;
 Acts 26:25-28;
 Romans 10:5-12.

Great theologians have held widely differing views on the resurrection; atheists have scoffed; agnostics have argued the subject. It is not, therefore, surprising that the early church made faith in the resurrection of Christ a commitment of the basis of Christian confession!

In passing, one may reflect on the irony that faith (in something) is essential to everyone. Even the atheist finds solace in his faith in unbelief! But—beyond that, what has he?

How futile it would be for one to live, to love, to suffer, to rejoice—if one believed that the end of all that suffering, that loving, were the grave! How much more satisfying it is to look to a life beyond that with which we are presently involved, knowing that to God, the Father, and to Christ, the Son, we are persons of individual worth! For individual, sinning man, Christ suffered insufferable indignities. And did so gladly—even unto the cross! In the face of such proof of His faith in mankind, can we do less than believe?

Perhaps, in the story of Zacchaeus, we can find the strength to acclaim Christ as Lord!

Zacchaeus had an undeniable reputation, by Christian standards. Rich, in an era when riches were achieved at the expense of the multitude, Zacchaeus nevertheless identified himself with Christ. Fully aware of the risk to his livelihood, of the charges that would be leveled against him of being a traitor and a hypocrite, he nevertheless sought Christ!

Small of stature, he surrendered his dignity sufficiently to climb a tree, that he might behold the Lord. And how precious our sense of dignity is to the individual! (Only when we are cornered, can we appreciate our innate sense of individual worth—and how we react when that dignity is threatened!) Zacchaeus, however, so earnestly sought the Lord that personal dignity was abandoned! He sought Christ, knowing instinctively that Christ sought him!

And through His ever-present Spirit, Christ seeks all of us! To those who have the courage of commitment, He is ever-present and approachable. He sees us through the eyes of love—and He cares about us—deeply and irrevocably!

Christ, the Savior of mankind; there is no more noble title than that! For Him, there was no nobler calling. For us, there is no greater compulsion to a responsive faith than that He died that we might live!

We cannot hide our needs from God; we cannot hide our innermost thoughts from Him. Through Christ He calls us to a new life...to a spiritual rebirth. Like Zacchaeus we must respond to that call—promptly, joyfully, publicly, and without reservation. Salvation is proffered to all men, regardless of race, color, or creed; it knows not the boundaries of riches or of poverty. It is ours, through Christ, for the taking!


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ingles

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CRISCO 79¢
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