
Climbing Into Love (How Bad Do You Want It)

Activating First Love

Pastor Wil Nichols

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Victorious Praise Fellowship Church of God in Christ

2116 Page Rd. Durham NC 27703

WEBSITE: www.VictoriousPraise.org

EMAIL: PastorWil@VictoriousPraise.org, Info@VictoriousPraise.org

PHONE: (919) 957-7500

Sermon: Activating First Love: Climbing Into Love (How Bad Do You Want It)

Lesson Text

Luke 19:1–10 (KJV)¹ And *Jesus* entered and passed through Jericho. ² And, behold, *there was* a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich. ³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. ⁴ And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way. ⁵ 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.** ⁶ And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully. ⁷ And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. ⁸ And 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. ⁹ And 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.**

Introduction

In order to make a paradigm shift from passive love what we become like a ship being tossed in the sea without a sail, allowing the cares and storms of love to dictate who, when, where and how we love, to an active love where our God and our faith determines our love, we must:

- Have Perfected Love (not allowing perfect to be the enemy of good)
- Have Covering Love (that covers a multitude of sins)
- Have Building Love (that has a foundation built for the storms)

Today we will conclude the mini-series on active love by looking at love that climbs.

Let's Now let's Juxtapose "Falling in Love" vs. "Climbing in Love."

In our lesson text we see three things that keep us from Active First Love:

- SURROUNDINGS: Luke 19: ³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, ...
- SELF: Luke 19: ³ ... because he was little of stature.
- SOCIETY: Luke 19: ⁷ And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

Because of these forces constantly working against us, to achieve first love, we have to want it bad enough to rise above our obstacles.

Paul taught us that we must be risen in Christ by seeking those things above us.

Luke 19: ⁴ And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see him: ...

Zacchaeus wanted Jesus (Love) so badly that he was willing to climb above his surroundings, self, and his society; rising above the cares of life, personal limitations, and the detractors.

Series and Sermon: Activating First Love: Climbing Into Love (How Bad Do You Want It)

(To climb into love we must Look Up, Move Up, Rise Up)

I. Love That Climbs Over Your Surroundings (Look Up)

Luke 19: ³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press,

What do you do when your surroundings prevent you from getting the fullness of God's Love?

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but his circumstances blocked him! To get to Jesus, is to get to his love – But what do you do when your surroundings block you from getting to him?

One of the first challenges we all face when it comes to life and love is our plight in life!

"Plight in life" refers to a person's difficult, challenging, or unfortunate situation or circumstances.

- It speaks to phrases like, "The Hand you're dealt," "Your cross to bear," "Station or Season in Life," "Wilderness or Valley Experience."
- It deals with one's Predicament, Hardship, Difficulty, Trouble, Adversity, or Affliction.

Psalms 34: ¹⁹ Many *are* the afflictions of the righteous: ...

Exodus 3: ⁷ And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

But if we will be honest, there are times that we get sick and tired of hearing about seasons, or stations, and crosses, and paths! "Why am I always on this path, this situation, this plight?"

Psalms 73: ² But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. ³ For I was envious at the foolish, *when* I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

To Rise About Your Surroundings, You Must Change Your Focus and Look Up!

Luke 19: ⁴ ***And he ran before,*** and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that *way*.

He took his eyes off of what was blocking him, and saw a solution and ran after it.

We are not our circumstances, we are not our surroundings; so stop focusing on them and rise about them.

God's love is always above our surroundings, so change what you're looking at.

Psalms 121: ¹ I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. ² My help *cometh* from the LORD, which made heaven and earth. ³ He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. ⁴ Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. ⁵ The LORD *is* thy keeper: the LORD *is* thy shade upon thy right hand.

Colossians 3: ¹ If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ² Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

“When you want it badly enough, you will change your focus and look up!”

II. Love That Climbs Over Your Self (Move Up)

Luke 19: ³ And he sought to see Jesus who he was; ... because he was little of stature.

What do you do when what’s blocking you from God’s love is you?

The truth is most of us tend to blame others for many of our failures – “They are against me,” “People are blocking me,” “People are just hating and sabotaging my destiny.”

Now just because you’re paranoid, don’t mean that people aren’t out to get you.

- Psalm 69: ⁴ They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head: they that would destroy me, *being* mine enemies wrongfully, are mighty: then I restored *that* which I took not away.
- 1 Peter 5: ⁸ Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

Yes people are out to get us, and yes the enemy is out to destroy us, but in reality, we can be our own worst enemy.

It’s not that our surroundings are too big, or our enemies are too powerful, like Zacchaeus, we come up short; we have limitations!

Romans 7: ¹⁸ For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but *how* to perform that which is good I find not.

Romans 7: ²¹ I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Jeremiah 17: ⁹ The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

To Rise Above Your Limitations, You Must Change Your Position and Move up!

Luke 19: ⁴ And he ran before, **and climbed up** into a sycamore tree to see him:

How do we rise above ourselves, our failures, our sins, and our limitations?

We can’t stay where we are, we must change our position in God!

2 Corinthians 5: ¹⁷ Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Romans 12: ² And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

“When you want it badly enough, you will change your position!”

III. Love That Climbs Over Your Society (Rise Above Detractors)

Luke 19: ⁷ And when they saw *it*, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

When we are challenged, how bad do we want God's Love?

- When our Surroundings say no, we must change our Focus and look up!
- When our Self says no, we must change our Position and move up!
- When our Society says no, we must change our Destiny and rise up!

We live in a world where society has already determined our destiny! If we were born poor, society says we will end up poor. If we were born in struggle, we will end up in struggle. If we were born a sinner, we will end up a sinner.

People are detractors that will try to keep you from your God given destiny, but how bad do you want it!

"We can't go back and change our beginning, but we can start today and change our ending!"

"Our current plight is not our final destination. God specializes in bringing people from pain to purpose, from struggle to strength, and from adversity to victory."

Romans 8: ¹⁸ For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Matthew 20: ¹⁶ **So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.**

Hebrews 11: ⁶ But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Philippians 4: ¹³ I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

2 Corinthians 2: ¹⁴ Now thanks *be* unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, ...

1 Corinthians 15: ⁵⁷ But thanks *be* to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: Climbing Into Love (How Bad Do You Want It))

Lesson Text

- Luke 19:1–10

Sermon Outline

- I. *Love That Climbs Over Your Surroundings (Rise Above Life)***
- II. *Love That Climbs Over Your Self (Rise Above Limitations)***
- III. *Love That Climbs Over Your Society (Rise Above Detractors)***

Questions: (What was your main takeaway from this message?)

I. Getting to Know “Me”

1. What is one thing you feel grateful for today?
2. How do you find peace in stressful times?

II. Into The Bible

1. In Luke 19:8-9, Zacchaeus promises to restore fourfold anything he gained dishonestly, and Jesus calls him a “son of Abraham”. What do these statements reveal about Zacchaeus’ identity and response after encountering Jesus?
2. Looking at Luke 19:8-10, what connections do you see between repentance, restoration, and salvation in this passage?

II. Life Application

1. Of the three points in the lesson, which creates the biggest challenge to your reaching your God-given capacity to love? a) surroundings b) self c) society
2. What are some practical steps you can take this week to rise above your limitations?