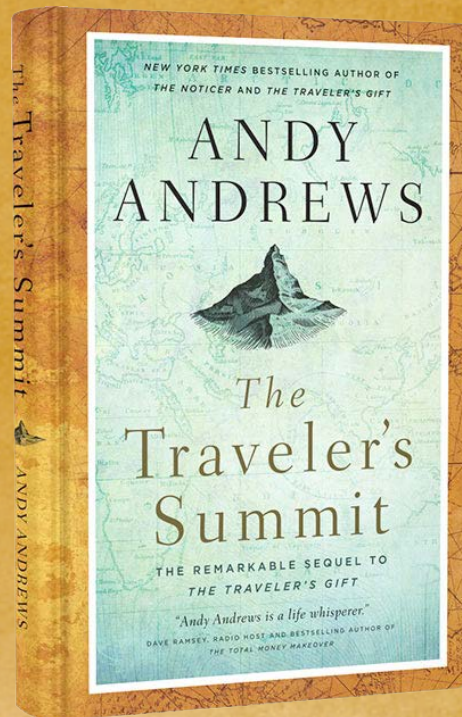


GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU: WORDS TO SAVE HUMANITY

A SIX-PART SERMON SERIES *by* DR. ALAN W. MCBRIDE

PART TWO OF SIX: SEEK WISDOM



based on

The Traveler's Summit

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I. THE CROWD AND ZACCHAEUS

This second message/teaching in the series follows the discussion of some of history's brightest and best as told in the book The Traveler's Summit. This wonderful story by bestselling author Andy Andrews provides an interesting window into the personal choices we all must make as God's children in order to make a difference for Christ and join with Him to save humanity.

A. The Crowd's Role

In following the action, teaching, conflict, and majesty of Jesus' grace in His earthly ministry through the Gospels in the New Testament, many individuals, and some real characters, play large and small roles. Many of our churches have Sunday school classrooms or small group study areas named for them. I even know of a large church that has named the many parking areas servicing its congregation after the Apostles. ("Honey, didn't we park in James?")

However, there is a character in one of Jesus' most prominent healing and teaching events in the four Gospels who will never get a nameplate on a door at your church or mine—**the crowd**. The crowd gets no respect and little notice for the role it plays in carrying out God's plan through His son, Jesus.

The crowd followed after Him to be fed loaves and fish and to receive healing for ailments. The crowd gathered on hillsides to hear Him teach with authority. It was also the crowd that reveled in Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem at Passover week. In less than five days, the crowd also demanded His crucifixion.

I. THE CROWD AND ZACCHAEUS

B. The Crowd's Function

There are several very important functions the crowd plays in the dramatic unfolding of Jesus' fulfillment of the Kingdom of God. The crowd serves as a witness. For the words of Jesus' ministry to be remembered, transmitted, and protected until the time of writing by the Gospel chroniclers, it took the efforts of many people retelling and listening repeatedly to what Jesus said and did. The crowd was a preserver of these rich truths of Jesus.

The crowd serves as a backdrop for gauging the level of commitment of persons to enter into belief in Jesus. In a concentric circle, the crowd held the outward position of onlooker and recipient of mighty acts and teaching with little commitment to change their lives. Closer in, and more committed, were the 70 to 120 followers comprised by persons who were more intimately acquainted with Jesus. There was a contrast provided by the crowd for this closer circle of followers. The crowds would come and go, but this group was nearly constant in travel and attention after Jesus. The 12 disciples were the closest in companionship and were often the buffer between Jesus and the clamor of the crowd as He rested, ate, and especially when He acted in personal ministering acts of healing.

PERSONAL NOTES:

I. THE CROWD AND ZACCHAEUS

C. The Crowd as Encourager of Bold Action

One more part the crowd played was as an encourager of bold action. The woman with a hemorrhage, needing healing, reached in from the crowd as Jesus' passed and was freed from a debilitating infirmity. Another time, a crowd feared a man possessed by demons. Their ruckus attracted Jesus' attention. He delivered the man from the devil. But the action of the crowd I love most is when it forced Zacchaeus to climb a tree.

Sometimes, we don't need a mountain top to gain a summit with God when a sycamore tree will do.

PERSONAL NOTES:

II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - LUKE 19:1-10

A. Verses 1-10

¹ Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

² Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.

³ And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature.

⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way.

⁵ And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house."

⁶ So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully.

⁷ But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner."

⁸ Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

⁹ And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham;

¹⁰ for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

PERSONAL NOTES:

II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - LUKE 19:1-10

B. Four Things About the Story of Zacchaeus

What an amazing passage for God to bring us to see in our personal summit! There are four things which immediately jump off the page about this passage and Jesus' purposes in this scripture for you and me. There are obvious clues to Jesus' goal for this summit with us. They are found in the geographic and social contexts of the events happening between Jesus and Zacchaeus in the midst of the crowd.

First and foremost, this meeting occurs in Jericho. Just northwest of the Dead Sea in the southern portion of Israel, it was the first place Joshua and the Children of Israel conquered as they moved across the Jordan 2,000 years before Jesus walked the streets among the crowd.

They were instructed to take the city and its inhabitants in a most uncommon form of siege. Literally, God instructed Joshua to tell the Hebrews to walk around the walled city of Jericho a total of 13 times in seven days, blow trumpets, and shout. This uncommon form of siege showed that their reliance was to solely rest on God and His wisdom to accomplish what God had promised the Israelites. It was in this city, symbolic of God's promise, that Jesus came to meet Zacchaeus.

Secondly, the Luke 19 story, in our day, is relegated to a delightful part of the Children's Division in Sunday School classes and Vacation Bible School. Certainly, children should learn of this incredible personal summit between Jesus and Zacchaeus, but adults should not set its importance aside.

If we assume the knowledge of this account in Luke is fit only for children, then we overlook the truth that the greatest content of the good news of Jesus Christ is easy enough for children to understand. The church often over-interprets God's Truth in scripture when God laid "nuggets" on the ground for all to pick up.

Third, Jesus knew his name. Whether someone in the crowd whispered Zacchaeus' name to Jesus when Jesus asked about the guy in the tree, or there was supernatural knowledge Jesus brought to bare in knowing his name, it does not negate the fact that Jesus stopped and called him by name out of the crowd.

God cares for each of us and is neither too busy nor too big to pause when we are seeking Him to meet us more than halfway. The fact of knowing his name and the desire to spend the evening with Zacchaeus at his home sends a clear message—God desires to have personal summits with each of us.

Finally, I wonder what really prompted Zacchaeus to climb that tree? Luke's account indicates he was a man of short stature and the crowd prevented him from seeing Jesus. Did he just want to know what Jesus looked like, get more information about the "Good Teacher"? Was he seeking to gain knowledge, or was Zacchaeus actually seeking something more?

II. A SUMMIT WITH GOD'S WORD - LUKE 19:1-10

C. The Difference Between Knowledge and Wisdom

In the book we've been reading, *The Traveler's Summit*, the author draws an important distinction for us to understand: gaining knowledge and gaining wisdom are two very different things.

In our culture, there seems to be a quest for knowledge. We are only in the second decade since the formalization of the Internet. We exist now in what Marshall McLuen called the "information age." This current age is marked by the ever-increasing ability of persons to access information. No longer limited by what could be printed in column-inches in a newspaper, information has gone digital. Listen to this report from the *David Institute*:

- The number of songs available on iTunes – over 3.5 million
- The number of books on Amazon – over 4 million
- The number of blogs available online – over 60 million
- The number of entries on Wikipedia – over 4 million
- The number of user accounts on Facebook – over 500 million
- The number of videos on YouTube – over 6.1 million

When information technologists are honest, they must confess there is now more information than we can digest. But remember...there is a difference between information (knowledge) and wisdom.

In *The Traveler's Summit*, the author creates an insightful conversation between David Ponder, Winston Churchill, Joan of Arc, and President Abraham Lincoln. Winston Churchill says, "We can be knowledgeable with another person's knowledge"...Indeed, we can receive a transfer of information from any number of sources... "but we can't be wise with another person's wisdom." All the knowledge we can contain doesn't naturally lead to our being able to effectively use it to gain wisdom. Churchill goes on, "The wise seem to be full of doubts." Joan replies, "Not doubts...open...searching." President Lincoln adds, "I believe that it is the *search* that is the secret of a wise person."

III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

A. Zacchaeus' Search

Zacchaeus was open and searching for something previously beyond his grasp until Jesus came along. I believe he was seeking wisdom by availing himself to what information he could gather from Jesus as He passed by in the street. There was obviously something to Jesus Christ beyond mere knowledge.

There is proof in this passage that the tax collector of Jericho sought more than knowledge, out of curiosity. See what he did in response to being with Jesus:

“Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”

III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

B. Your Search

Clearly, Luke did not record aspects of their conversation in the oral tradition from which the Holy Spirit inspired him to write. The details are not included because the results are far more important. Jesus arranged a summit with the tax collector because He knew that Zacchaeus was open and searching. He was seeking the wisdom embodied by believing Jesus Christ as Savior.

Today, God calls you to a personal summit to lead you to find out for yourself what it is you are seeking. He wants to know if you will see wisdom in the approach Jesus used with Zacchaeus as he cooperated with Jesus.

The wisest person there ever was, Solomon, wrote in the Proverbs, "Wisdom calls aloud outside; she raises her voice in the open squares, she cries out in the chief concourses, at the openings of the gates of the city...I will pour out my spirit upon you; I will make my words known to you." Proverbs 1:20-23

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

C. Seek Wisdom in Christ

Zacchaeus was in the street and heard the call of wisdom and sought after it in Jesus. Jesus said, "Today, salvation has come to this house, because he (Zacchaeus) is also a son of Abraham." Literally, by referring to Abraham, the father of salvation by grace through faith, Jesus meant that the tax collector had found the wisdom based in faith in Jesus Christ.

When he climbed into the sycamore tree, Zacchaeus was not merely seeking knowledge about Jesus. He already had enough knowledge of Jesus and his ministry and mission. True wisdom comes through what choices are made based upon the knowledge we have. He sought wisdom by being linked to Jesus through a personal faith relationship which bore immediate fruit—he committed to changing his life and repaying those from whom he had extorted money as a tax collector.

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

D. God's Priorities for You

You may not have climbed up a tree today to reach your place of summit with Jesus, but God is certainly arranging a personal encounter with you regarding your willingness to seek His wisdom. He wants you in this summit to consider His priorities for you in seeking wisdom:

1. When you choose to seek wisdom by searching with openness, the Holy Spirit will draw you to a relationship with Jesus based upon faith in Him as Savior, God's sacrificial son.
2. Then, seeking wisdom from God and using the knowledge you gain about God and His purposes, you will be drawn to a higher level of commitment in cooperating with God to bring about His purposes.
3. God's wisdom will lead you to activities and attitudes that will allow you special influence in the lives of others.

PERSONAL NOTES:

III. GOD'S SUMMIT WITH YOU

E. Prayer for Wisdom

As we know, Gabriel challenged the Travelers in *The Traveler's Summit* to answer this question: "What does humanity need to do, individually and collectively, to restore itself to the pathway toward successful civilization?"

They offered up the first element of what will be a two-word answer to save humanity—**Restore Hope.**

Hope is restored when we trust completely in the One who is hope. Along with hope, they added **Seek Wisdom.** Jesus is calling you in this moment to use the knowledge He has given you to be turned toward seeking and cooperating with Him. Will you choose decisively to seek wisdom in Jesus Christ? In this wise choice, you will be part of His move to save humanity.

Allow me to pray for you in this summit with Jesus Christ:

"Lord Jesus, I choose today to be truly wise by turning to You and You alone. I know enough about You to use this knowledge to be open to how You will guide me into wisdom. Change me and change my world, my family, my friends, all the people with whom I come in contact.

I choose to make a difference to save humanity. To do this, I choose to allow You to make a difference in me.

Amen.

PERSONAL NOTES:
