

Purpose

- Learn more about the ministries of Jesus
- Learn about Zacchaeus
- Learn about Nicodemus

Materials

- Bibles
- Handouts

Background Information**MORE OF JESUS' MINISTRIES**

Another incident in the early ministry of Jesus is the story of the woman at the well. This comes from John 4: 1-42. As Jesus approached the town of Sychar in Samaria and sat down by Jacob's well since he was tired and thirsty. A Samaritan woman came to get water from the well and Jesus asked her to give him a drink. Since the woman was Samaritan and Jews do not talk to Samaritan let alone a man speaking to a woman she was shocked. When she questioned Jesus why he spoke to her, he replied that if one asked God for a drink he would be given living water. When questioned further Jesus replied that whomever drinks of this well will get thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water given by Jesus would never thirst again. Jesus told the woman he was aware that she had had five husbands and the man she lived with was not her husband. After listening to Jesus the woman believed and went out into the town to repeat what Jesus had told her. The disciples were amazed that Jesus would bother with a Samaritan woman, but Jesus explained that God wanted all to believe on Him. This woman continues to follow Jesus and do as he commanded.

The transfiguration of Jesus is recorded in Matthew 17:1-13, Mark 9:2-12, and Luke 9:28-36. Soon after Jesus first predicted his death he went up into the mountains with Peter, James and John. Right in front of them Jesus was transfigured His clothes became shining white, whiter than they would be if someone bleached them. Jesus had already told the disciples that he was the Son of God, but this was God's way of validating the fact. Beside of Jesus appeared Moses and Elijah. The three were talking together but God's voice could be heard. Peter volunteered to make three shelters, one for each of them. He probably said this because he was frightened and didn't know what else to say. Suddenly a cloud

surrounded all of them and then they heard God voice claiming that Jesus was truly his son. Just as suddenly the cloud, Elijah and Moses disappeared and Jesus led the three disciples down the mountain. Jesus told them not to tell anyone what they had seen until after Jesus was raised from the dead. The disciples had heard from the law that Elijah would come first, so they asked Jesus about that. Jesus told them that Elijah had already come so they figured it out that Jesus was talking about John the Baptist. They felt that John was really Elijah come to pave the way for Jesus.

In John 7:10-52 we are told about Jesus visiting the temple during the Feast of the Tabernacle. As Jesus was traveling around Galilee he stayed away from Judea (Jerusalem) because he knew that the Jews in that area wanted to kill him and it wasn't time for that to happen. His disciples didn't understand that so they kept after him to go into Judea. When it was time for the Feast of Tabernacles the disciples coaxed him to go to Judea. They wanted him to show off with his miracles. Jesus told him that it was not his time so that they should go on ahead. They did go on, but Jesus secretly left for the Feast. When he mingled among the crowd many wondered about who he was. Halfway through the Feast Jesus went into the temple courts and began to teach. They were all amazed that he was so smart about the law when he had not been studying at the temple. When he was questioned about who he was, Jesus replied that they knew him if they would only believe. When the crowds began to talk about this man who was teaching the law the Pharisees and the chief priests became fearful and sent the guards to arrest Jesus. Even though the guards were sent to seize Jesus they did not lay a hand on him. Eventually they each left and went their own way because it was not time for Jesus to be arrested and tried.

We hear very little of Jesus' family. We do hear about Mary, his mother, but after the incident of Jesus in the temple when he was 12 we hear nothing about Joseph. In Mark 6:3 we are given reference to Jesus' brothers and sisters. There is a lot of confusion about his peers but here it tells us his brothers are James, Joseph, Judas and Simon. This would give him 4 brothers. There is also a reference to 3 sisters. Their names do not appear to be mentioned anywhere.

ZACCHAEUS

I am sure you know the song about a man called Zacchaeus and how he met Jesus. The story of Zacchaeus is found in Luke 19. As Jesus was passing through Jericho he spotted a grown man up in a tree trying to see Jesus. Jesus did not know then but the man was Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. We all know that tax collectors were hated and feared for the power they had. Tax collectors frequently collected more than was necessary so that they were frequently very rich. Zacchaeus was a very short man (don't you comment, I think short is good). He heard that this man Jesus was coming into town so he was curious about him. Because he was short and not able to see over the crowds of people, Zacchaeus climbed

a tree so that he could see. When Jesus reached the spot Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus and ordered him to come down from the tree and take him to his house. The people were shocked because they considered tax collectors as sinners and evil people. Why was Jesus associating with sinners and even going into their homes? Zacchaeus was so overwhelmed that he promised Jesus that he would give half of his possessions to the poor. He also promised to find anyone he had cheated and pay them back four times the amount he had cheated them. At that point Jesus said that because of Zacchaeus' promise and his belief he would be granted salvation and eternal life.

NICODEMUS

Another familiar name from the Bible is Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. The Pharisees were the Jewish ruling council. In the middle of the night Nicodemus came to Jesus. Nicodemus asked Jesus if he wasn't the Son of God because no one else could do the miracles that Jesus had done. Jesus told Nicodemus that no one could enter the kingdom unless he is born again. He answered how can an old man enter into his mother and be born again. Jesus explained that he had to be born of the spirit and water. When Nicodemus asked how that could be Jesus asked how can you not understand this when you are Israel's teacher. Jesus went on to explain that whoever believes in him is not condemned but has earned eternal life. During the course of Jesus' response to Nicodemus lies John 3:16. That is probably one of the best known verses in the Bible. We hear nothing further of Nicodemus in the Bible so we don't know what his reaction is.

We are stopping our study of the New Testament here. We will come back to the Gospels later when we study the betrayal and death of Jesus. .

Procedure

- Handout 19-1 and 19-2 are just for fun.