

LESSON 10



Zacchaeus and Jesus

RESTITUTION

Scripture Texts: Proverbs 28:13; Ezekiel 33:15; Matthew 5:23-24; Luke 19:8-9; Matthew 6:14-15; Acts 19:18-19; Matthew 3:8

We must ask forgiveness of those we have wronged. We must make right all of our wrongs that we can. We must forgive those who have wronged us. We must get rid of sinful things. Salvation can never be complete until one has made restitution. It takes meekness, which only the grace of God can supply, to approach an enemy to confess guilt. It takes bravery to return stolen goods, pay obligations, clear up deceptions, break habits, etc. But God gives strength. It is part of salvation.

MEMORY VERSE: *Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance. Matthew 3:8*

The Standard Under the Law

Proverbs 28:13 **He that covereth his sins shall not prosper**—will never progress spiritually. Nor will he be successful in covering his sins. **Whoso confesseth**—To whom should he confess? First to God, then to the ones he has wronged—**and forsaketh them**—quits sinning with no intention to ever sin again—**shall have mercy**—God will forgive. This was the standard under the old Law, so much more now is it true.

Ezekiel 33:15 **If the wicked restore the pledge**—fulfill promises and obligations. **Give again that he had robbed**—repay stolen goods. We must clear up deceptions and any other things brought to our minds by the great gift of memory. We must straighten up past sins. **He shall surely live**—be saved.

Matthew 5:23-24 **If thou bring thy gift to the altar**—This refers to the Old Testament offering of sacrifices in worship. They were brought directly to the priest who placed the offering on the altar of sacrifice. **Rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee**—that you have wronged him— **leave there thy gift . . . be reconciled**—make right the wrong—**then come and offer thy gift**. Do not attempt to offer any service or praise unto God when you have ignored the knowledge of wrong to God or your brother. God cannot accept and bless one who is in sin against another.

A True Example

The word, *restitution*, means the act of restoring anything to its rightful owner, making good an injury or damage. (Literally—to put back.)

Luke 19:8-9 **Zacchaeus stood**—Strong feeling urged him. What feeling? Sorrow for sin. Repentance brings a sense of obligation to right one's wrongs. God requires that one do so as far as is possible. **Behold, Lord,**—He laid bare his desire and purpose from his heart—**half of my goods I give to the poor**—a righteous turn in his life—**if I have taken . . . by false accusation**—perchance I have at some time or another, and as soon as I am made aware of it—**I restore him fourfold**—making right past wrongs. What feeling caused this? **Godly sorrow** (2 Corinthians 7:10-11). This was not an old practice but a new purpose. He was announcing to the world, not boasting. As he walked with Jesus, conviction and repentance were doing their work. It does not take long when one yields to the Spirit's

working. Now Jesus, Who sees one's heart, pronounced the work complete—**This day is salvation come. Forsomuch as**—because—**he also is a son of Abraham.** (See Galatians 3:7.) Zacchaeus believed God as Abraham did; his faith took hold of Christ. It was working.

A Clean Break With Sin

Matthew 6:14-15 If ye forgive—forgive any who have wronged you—**your heavenly Father will also forgive you**—as you treat others so God will treat you. Here again we find the law of sowing and reaping coming into the message. **If ye forgive not . . . neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.** Before we ask forgiveness from God we must be willing to forgive others. An unforgiving spirit is sin. It will keep forgiveness from us. (Read Matthew 18:23-35.) We must forgive whether the offender asks it or not. We cannot do this in our own strength, but God will enable us.

Acts 19:18 Many that believed . . . confessed, and shewed their deeds. The church in Ephesus was flourishing. The Spirit was working. Sins were being owned and forsaken.

Acts 19:19 Many . . . which used curious arts—sorceries, magic, enchantments, etc.—**brought their books . . . burned them**—got rid of their tools of sin. We do not hate sin enough unless we want to destroy its tools, sever all connections with it, and shed all influences toward it from ourselves and homes. There is a part in restitution which Christ must do, a part which He will not do, and a part which He expects us to do. Turning to righteousness may mean destroying cards, liquor, tobacco, furniture, books, magazines, music, clothing, and other articles. It may mean cleaning out desk drawers, the refrigerator, and the shelf behind the door. It may mean changing habits, haunts, and associates. It will mean a complete break and separation from the world.

Wait on God's Leading

Matthew 3:8 Bring forth therefore fruits . . .—do the acts that fit with repentance. Let the Spirit lead you as to the time to act. God uses restitution in a greater way than just for the one who makes it. The very fact that restitution must be made does not mean that it has to be done right now. If one goes when *he* feels that he should he may accomplish little. Pray about it; let God know that you are willing to do it when He sees fit. Then God will prepare the other party for your coming; that heart will be softened. God will make it plain that now is the time, and a great message will be preached by your coming.

It takes bravery and grace to make restitution. Christ in the heart gives a humble, Christ-like spirit. Restitution brings a special blessing that nothing else brings.

JUST A THOUGHT

**You cannot have the *joy* of the Lord without
the *love* of the Lord.**

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.

It is revised and posted here with written permission from
(c) Bible Paths Publications, PO Box 299, Keithville, LA 71047