

August 18, 2020

Stand up to the machine...

...with love.

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Zacchaeus was in cahoots with the Roman Occupation. As chief tax collector, he was a Hebrew who agreed to support the Romans and to help them collect the oppressive taxes. In Jericho, he was not a favorite of the people.

When Christ came through town, the people would not let the little man get up front to see him. They squeezed him out, forcing him to climb a tree. As Jesus approached, the options were before him:

- 1. Ignore him as the rest of the crowd had done*
- 2. Point his finger at him in quiet condemnation*
- 3. Verbally call him out as an oppressor of the people, demanding that he abandon his post, repent and repay.*
- 4. Invite himself over to his house and show him love.*

The people could not believe that he chose number 4. They muttered at the thought of it. How could this guy show love to a man that he ought to have condemned?

We live in a time where opportunities abound for Christians to fight against culture, political agendas, and a myriad of behaviors by ungodly people. What is our best weapon with which to fight? What tactic do we use?

If we believe in the power of the Gospel to transform, then that is our tool. If we believe that love is a better language than hate or condemnation, then this is our means. See also John 3:16-17.

Consider this: "Fight in the prayer closet. Love in the flesh."

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against the unseen powers of darkness.