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His Life is a Wonderful Life

If Jesus Christ walked down your street where you live today, who would he want to stop and visit? This is a good question to think about.

You and I might reason that he would want to stop and visit the person on your street that is living the holiest life, or perhaps the person who is most involved in the Church. It stands to reason from a human point of view that God would want to visit only good people. But is this an accurate way of reasoning? The Bible does give examples of Divine visits. Luke describes one such visit:

Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. When Jesus came by he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today" ~ Luke 19:1-5, NLT.

It is important for us to understand what kind of person Zacchaeus was. Zacchaeus was a tax collector in the region around Jericho for the Roman Empire. As a tax collector he collected the taxes due to the Roman government. He also collected an extra amount of taxes for himself. He became very rich doing this. He was perhaps the most disliked person in town. Because of this kind of behavior he had the reputation of being a swindler.

Let us continue on with the story:

Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled. Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost" ~ Luke 19:6-10, NLT.

Zacchaeus reminds me of the character Henry Potter from the Christmas movie *It's a Wonderful Life*. You've probably seen this movie.

Try to imagine Jesus visiting the movie's fictitious town of Bedford Falls. Imagine Jesus walking down the middle of the street with the entire town turning out to see the Lord and Savior of the world. Imagine Jesus, as he walks down the middle of the street, acknowledging Henry Potter. Imagine the reaction of the people as Jesus informs Henry Potter that he will be a guest in his home on that day.

Henry Potter was the meanest person in town. He was the richest person in town. The entire town would have been astounded that Jesus would want to visit "old man Potter." I can see this happening in this fictitious town. I can see Jesus visiting "old man Potter" and reconciling him to God. I can see Jesus reaching where no one would reach with the love of God.

In the movie's fictitious town of Bedford Falls "old man Potter" was a social outcast. No one wanted to include him in their life. What would Jesus do? Jesus would reach out to Henry Potter and

include him in his Divine Life. This is exactly what Jesus was doing when he went to visit Zacchaeus.

During the time of Jesus' earthly ministry, sitting down and eating with a person implied acceptance of that person. No one in the community wanted anything to do with Zacchaeus. Jesus was reaching out to Zacchaeus in order to include him in His life.

As a matter of fact, Jesus includes the entire human race in His life. Let's talk about that for a moment. When Jesus died on the cross, the entire human race died with Him (2 Cor. 5:14). When Jesus was raised from the tomb, the entire human race was raised to a new life in Him (1 Cor. 15:22). Paul talks about this in his letter to the church at Colossae:

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth. For you died to this life, and your real life is hidden with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is your life, is revealed to the whole world, you will share in all his glory. ~ Colossians 3:1-4, NLT

Jesus Christ is our life! We live our lives in union with Jesus Christ! Jesus sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven. This is why it is so important for us to consider heavenly things more so than the things of the earth.

Let us consider and think about the things of heaven. Let us consider the will of the Father concerning us, the human race. Listen closely at what Paul taught the Church at Ephesus concerning this very issue:

All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding ~ Ephesians 1:3-8, NLT

The Father has reached out through the Son to all humanity in order to adopt all of us as children and include us in the fellowship of the Trinity. Do we see the reality of this? We are all children of God by adoption. We both belong to Jesus and we are brothers and sisters of Jesus.

One reason Jesus went to visit Zacchaeus was because he realized that Zacchaeus was his brother and he wanted to spend some time with his brother—even though everyone else in the community considered him to be a swindling con artist. The same would be true of Jesus visiting the fictitious town of Bedford Falls. Jesus would want to visit Henry Potter because he would consider Henry Potter his brother and an adopted child of the Father.

Now let us think about the question that we began with. If Jesus came walking down your street where you live—who would he want to visit? The truth is that he would come walking down the street thinking about how he has family in every home. He would want to stop and see everyone—because he loves everyone and all the people on your street are his brothers and sisters and adopted children of the Father. His grace is wonderful grace. His life is a wonderful life. ~ *Mark Nelson*