

# Seeking and Saving the Lost

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**Bible Text:** Luke 19:10

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## **Grace Particular Baptist Church**

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Let's join our hearts in prayer this morning.

*Dear heavenly Father, how glorious thou art, how good thou art, how great thou art. Oh, Lord, it is truly good to be drawn here to thy house this day to be with thy people. Lord, I pray that you would send forth thy Spirit with power to come to our souls to stir us up, Lord, from the deadness that lies within each and everyone of us, Lord, that thou would revive us again this day, that you would, Lord, give us ears to hear and a heart, mind and will to receive as thou hast prepared. Bless this hour now Lord with clarity, with thy presence. Lord, may you commune with us. May you abide with us in our souls as it pleases you. Bless this day for thy name's sake, for thy glory and, Lord, may thy will be done and may you be pleased to reveal thyself to thy sheep this morning. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

The apostle Paul said in Romans five, he said:

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”<sup>1</sup>

I thought about that. I have been thinking about that and Paul was speaking at the time about the fall of Adam and how one man's disobedience plunged an entire race of people into a great and mighty fall. But the Lord was greater than that fall for his people. And I think about how real that verse is in my life daily.

“But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”<sup>2</sup>

It abounds so much more powerful. The grace in the new man is so much more powerful than the power of sin in the old man. But yet we feel the power of sin so much sometimes. I speak of what we feel. I can't speak of what you feel.

This morning I want to begin in Luke 19. We have a very familiar passage before us in our text. The main text is found in it. And what a blessed thing it is to be able to say that. It is a familiar text. If it is familiar to your soul this morning it is because the Lord has

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 5:20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

brought it to your soul. It is because the Lord has taught you that, taught you the power in his Word, the power of him in his Word. And I hope this morning as the same thing, as we look at this one that was saved from Pharisaism, that was saved from himself and he was saved by grace.

We begin chapter 19 by reading these words.

“And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.”<sup>3</sup>

You know, we have a lot of chapters in the Word of God that begin that way. We have a lot of chapters in the ministry of Jesus of how he just up and goes somewhere and how he up and leaves and goes to this city that is adjoined to this city and for no reason—well, we think—but the Lord has a purpose. In Jericho two of his children would be found that day, one, blind Bartimaeus which we just left in that account where the Lord gave him sight both physically and spiritually. And now he comes to where this other one is and that is the thing. The Lord must come where we are. He must meet us where we are even in daily life. In our daily lives, in our daily travels in this world we seem to get off in a different direction than what is pleasing to our Lord and he must come and seek us. He must come and bring us back unto himself.

“And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus...”<sup>4</sup>

And, behold. Behold the glory of the grace of God. You know, as I was reading this week and reading a sermon by Philpot and reading one by {?} and reading another one, I learned some things about Zacchaeus. I learned some things about the position of the publican that I didn't know. I will share those with you now. I did not realize that the publican job or position was one that was bought from the Roman government. And you say, “Well, that is strange.” You paid a sum to gain that job. Whatever you charged in taxes was up to you. They didn't set the tax rate as we see in our government today. So as we come to this and we say:

“...there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.”<sup>5</sup>

There is something the Word of God is telling us. Out of all the publicans there at that time who had paid a sum of money to the government to obtain this job, Zacchaeus was the chief one out of all of them. He was the richest one out of all of them. How did they get their wealth? Well, they exacted money from the poor. They put more taxes upon the poor and they put less taxes on the rich for one reason. And that reason was to gain favor with the rich so that the rich would do favors of them in their lives and then they could go on and they could live a very robust and very rich life. And that is why they were hated so much. They were hated so much by the masses because, by and large, the most part,

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<sup>3</sup> Luke 19:1.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 19:1-2.

<sup>5</sup> Luke 19:2.

all the masses were poor. But the rich people would buy themselves a publican. They would put him in their pocket. They would get them to do whatever it was and they would show them favors and Zacchaeus was no different. In fact, Zacchaeus was the greatest one at this. He had cheated his way. He had amassed a great fortune. At this point in the life of all the publicans, the greatest one of them and the most stature that all of them had was named Zacchaeus.

As I told you when we began, where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. It wouldn't be our choice. It wouldn't be our pick. It wouldn't be the one that if we saw how much pain and suffering he brought to the poor, we would say, "No, this one certainly isn't going to be or is saved by grace." But that is our sight. That is what we are allowed to see. But at this time:

"...there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich."<sup>6</sup>

He was richer than all the other men. And then we have this weird, very peculiar saying in verse three.

"...he sought to see Jesus who he was."<sup>7</sup>

Not who man makes him to be, not in what idea he had in his mind, not in something that he heard. He sought to see Jesus who he was. And I ask you, dear ones, when you come to the house of God and you come to worship the Lord in Spirit and in truth, do you seek the Lord in who he is? Not in how you were brought up to believe he is, not in what you hear, not in what you read, but who he really is.

And we say, "How is it that one like Zacchaeus who was a chief publican, who was a rich man, how did we get to this that he sought to see Jesus who he was?"

And many will speculate. They will say, "Ok, regeneration must have took place." And they do this all the time. You can read different commentators. You can read the theologians and they argue about Zacchaeus and when the Lord revealed himself to him and they will argue about Paul. Paul must have been regenerated on the day he was knocked off the horse.

The problem with that is Lord said, "Why do you kick against the pricks?"

We don't know when the new birth occurs in the child of God. We don't. It will be hard pressed for us to mark that moment and that time the Lord gave that to our souls. Many of us in here, like myself, may be able to say, "I don't know when that occurred." I believe it occurred. I believe it came with power, but that very moment and that very time, I don't know.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Luke 19:3.

The Lord told Nicodemus that is the way the Holy Spirit moves. He moves as the wind. He comes with such power. And for Zacchaeus we see the same thing. There is a reason he sought to see Jesus who he was. Now we can argue and say he had heard about the miracles, he had heard of all that Jesus had done and he was curious. Maybe he was. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that he sought to see Jesus who he was. That is quite a mouth full.

Sometimes I know that when I pick up a book or when I go to read and I see a sermon that I want to read or I start to read, I seek to find Jesus of who I believe he is, of who I have formed him, of who the Lord has formed him in my soul to be. I don't want to seek. I don't want to hear of a Jesus that saves the whole world or died for the whole world for the sins of the whole world. I don't want to see a Jesus that is sorrowful and is sitting there and has no power to save. But sometimes those ideas we have about him and his divine sovereignty, we, because of our limited knowledge, we put a limitation upon the sovereignty of Christ.

And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press,  
because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a  
sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.<sup>8</sup>

Now that last little certain part there:

“...he was to pass that way.”<sup>9</sup>

Do you ever think about that when you come to the Lord's house, that where two or more are gathered in my name I will be there in the midst of them? Do you realize that if there are just two or more in this room now gathered in the name of Christ he is here with us? As you came here today did you seek to see this Savior? Did you seek to know and did you know that he is to pass that way this day? This way today? He comes in the power of his Word. He comes through the preached Word and he comes to your soul. And he is faithful to do that to the people of God and them only.

And as Zacchaeus ran, he climbed up into this tree, this sycamore tree to see him because he was to pass that way. Well, what a joy. We sing that blessed hymn, *Pass Me Not, oh Gentle Savior*. When you sing that hymn, sometimes we just sing hymns because they are sung. But, boy, when the Lord brings that to your soul that you are crying out to him, “Lord, don't pass my soul today. I am in dire need of reviving in my soul. I am in dire need of you, Lord, today to breathe life upon me.” It is not just that we sing that. We say, “Lord, don't forget me.” Lord, come, for I know that I am in need to see my Savior. I am in a great desire to know him.

But that desire comes from above, too. We don't talk about that.

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<sup>8</sup> Luke 19:3-4.

<sup>9</sup> Luke 19:4.

“And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.”<sup>10</sup>

There is a soberness in that. There is a soberness to know that the Lord is passing that way today. He is passing through these doors. He is passing among us.

Sometimes I know we take it for granted. We think of the things that are coming in our day and maybe even in our summer, the things that we look forward to. And maybe we don't realize that the Lord is in our midst today. The Lord comes with healing in his wings. The Lord comes with peace for our souls. The Lord comes with love to shed abroad in our hearts.

“And when Jesus came to the place...”<sup>11</sup>

The place where this good Samaritan must come, the place where one of his children is in need of a Savior.

“And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him.”<sup>12</sup>

He looked up and he pulled his child out of all that mass of people. He saw him because of sovereign election. He saw him because his Father sent him there to find his lost sheep. And as he saw him standing in that tree or sitting in that tree, he looked up and he said to Zacchaeus in one of the great gospel commands which, as I have said many times I believe that the Lord's commands are his enablements. And when the Lord speaks it to your soul it is not will you do it. It is how fast you do it. And that is all the power of the Lord in the measure of the Holy Spirit that he gives. And we see that with Zacchaeus.

“And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus...”<sup>13</sup>

Because it is personal. It isn't, “Hey, man, in the tree. Hey, you up there. I don't know who you are. But do you want to come follow me today?”

That sort of Christ is very prevalent today. He doesn't seem to have a personal relationship. He just came for everybody. He came for everybody to save everybody and he hopes everybody will come to him.

But the Lord when he comes to his people, he calls them by name and it is because they are familiar to him. And they are familiar because of love and they are familiar because the election of grace.

“And he made haste.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Luke 19:5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

He tells him to hurry, Zacchaeus. There is a difference in your life today. There is something that is happening in your soul right now that is going to turn you from the life that you have been living. Grace is going to come where sin abounded. Grace is going to come with such a powerful influence and a powerful power upon your soul that you won't be able to resist it.

Zacchaeus made haste and came down. Come down, Zacchaeus. Come down from your position of being the chief tax collector. Come down from being your position of a rich man. Come down from being the ... from the position of being someone who was well looked upon by those who have power, those things you so desire to keep in this life.

The apostle Paul said, "I had them all. But now I count them as dung that I might win Christ."

Well, what about you, Zacchaeus? Make haste. It is power.

"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house."<sup>15</sup>

There is communion. Today the abiding is not going to be with sin. It is going to be with grace and it is going to be with the Lord Jesus Christ and it is going to be with the vine and the branches and it is going to be with love. It is going to be with something you never felt in your life and it is going to be with some kind of power that has turned you from darkness.

"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house."<sup>16</sup>

And there is the command of the gospel. Today I must abide in your soul. No more will ye be able to live the life that you have lived. And we will see that. We will see what transforming grace is here in a moment. No more will you be able to walk the way that you walked, because that is what grace does.

You say, "Does that mean we don't sin anymore?"

God forbid. Of course we do. But it doesn't have a rule over us. And the practice of it doesn't have a rule over us. But I don't want to get ahead of myself.

"Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house."<sup>17</sup>

And, gee, what a surprise. He made haste. What else could he do? Do you want to look out the creature? You want to say Zacchaeus this day decided to choose Christ? I tell you he had no choice. He made haste in the day of the Lord's power. He didn't think about

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<sup>14</sup> Luke 19:5.

<sup>15</sup> Luke 19:5.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

what it would cost him. He didn't think about his stature. He didn't think about his position. He didn't think about all of his riches. That is what grace does. He didn't think of all the so-called friends that he had. He made haste. There is an urgency when the Lord reveals himself to the lost. There is an urgency to find Christ. There is an urgency to have communion with him and it all comes from abiding. It all comes from the power of Christ saying:

“...make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.”<sup>18</sup>

“And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.”<sup>19</sup>

He left everything. At that moment he left everything. He left everything he had worked so hard to build his life for. It didn't mean anything to him anymore. That is what grace does. It transforms the one who is lost. It brings him into the fold under the arm of the shepherd, under the power of the shepherd. Under the love and the nurturing of the shepherd. And the shepherd becomes his life. And he has revealed what he is. He has revealed that he is the sheep, a lost sheep.

“And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.”<sup>20</sup>

But, as always, there is going to be them that don't understand. And not only that don't understand, that then are going to attack grace, who are going to attack grace and we are going to exalt free will. We are going to attack what you say grace is and what Christ just revealed what grace was.

“And when they saw it, they all murmured.”<sup>21</sup>

How can this be that you would pick that one to come to his house? We know this is the one that exacted all these taxes upon us. We know that this is the one who has made these back room deals with the rich. We know that this one is a wicked man. And furthermore, what has he done for you? What has he done for Christ to further the kingdom of Christ? What has he done in all of his good works to show you that he is worthy of this grace?

You know, I heard that this week. I heard that definition of grace this week, that grace is the act of life that is given and then you go and you lay up all your treasure in heaven and the Lord will not receive you unless you do. Does that sound like grace to you? And as you look around the room you don't see those two that used to come. And if the Lord don't speak it to your soul and if the Lord doesn't abide in your soul you are left right here in verse seven questioning grace, questioning, but what did he do? What merit did he do? Why is it that he is not... why are you going to his house?

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Luke 19:6.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Luke 19:7.

“And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.”<sup>22</sup>

How can you do such a thing? Because you don't know what grace is. You don't know what transforming grace is.

I don't know about you today sitting in that seat. Maybe you have got that idea, too. Maybe you think that grace means you are not going to sin anymore. Maybe that... maybe you think that grace puts you above sin. I heard that this week. Maybe that is what grace is to you, that God made a difference in your life and now you go and you live this holy life and you look down on everybody else, because everybody else seems to be in bondage because they sin. And, you know, the key word in that verse to me is all. They all murmured. There is a big number in that three letter word all. There is a lot of people, a lot of {?}, a lot of free will people sitting there saying, “Lord, you can't do it this way. You can't be the Lord if you do it this way. Do you know what we have done for you? And you are going to come to the house of this wretch? Do you know what he has done to us?”

What does grace do? You know, I used to read this when Zacchaeus stood and gave his answer and gave his testimony, I used to think that Zacchaeus did these things, that they were past tense. I used to think that that is why this story never made sense to me. How can you be so rich? How can you have this position? How can you do this and you give everything away? That is not what it is saying at all.

See, something has happened in the soul of Zacchaeus. Something has transformed his soul and he stands up when the accusation comes. And when it comes this man is a horrible sinner. And he doesn't say he is not a sinner. He is confessing that he is a sinner. And he says:

“And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor.”<sup>23</sup>

I am going to give to the poor. They can have it all. It doesn't mean anything anymore, anything to me anymore. What a difference the contrast here between Zacchaeus and the rich young ruler that came to him who went away sad because he had such great substance. And Zacchaeus says, “I am going to give up to half of all that I have away.”

“...and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation...”<sup>24</sup>

Which I have, the law says I am to restore him two fold, the law does. But the law didn't come to the soul of Zacchaeus. Grace did. The gospel did. And Zacchaeus said:

“I will restore him fourfold.”<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Luke 19:8.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.



That is twice as much as the law required. Why? Because he is saved by grace. That is the power of the gospel. You think you are saved by the law? You think doing the law is going to save you? Zacchaeus says no, no it is not.

How can one in such a position as this be turned to know so much about Christ? How can he know so much about the gospel here in just transforming seconds and minutes? He sought to see Jesus who he was. Wow.

“And Jesus said unto him, This day...”<sup>26</sup>

This moment. And I want you to look for an offer here of salvation in what Jesus says. We hear a lot of that. Oh, he wants to save him. You think this is wants? This is salvation.

“This day is salvation come to this house.”<sup>27</sup>

I have come to seek and to save my child and I have done it. I have done it before the foundation of the world and this is the moment in the time of his life that is revealed here.

“This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.”<sup>28</sup>

Do you think that is the son of a Jew? Do you think he is talking about a son of the law? He is talking about a son of faith. He is referring to the faith of Abraham. And now we have said all of that to come to our focus verse today.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”<sup>29</sup>

And that is where we begin. Are you lost today? I don't say that as some Arminian minister. I don't say that as, you know, whether we believe that we are lost or not, it doesn't matter. We are lost. In respect to our sinful condition, we are lost. We will not seek him. We will not seek his goodness. We will not... when ... I cannot emphasize and never will be able to emphasize. I hope the Lord emphasized it to your soul what the fall really means. You lost all communion with the Lord and his Son. You lost the image of God. You lost any desire or any inclination to want to be with him, to have him to rule over you, to have any kind of communion with him. That is how far the fall fell. No desire, no will, no affection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, see, when you read this verse, that is a good thing. Because he came to seek, those. I have run into some this week that told me they are not those. They are not lost at all.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Luke 19:9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Luke 19:10.

They don't know what lost means. They don't know why you would even talk about being burdened of sin.

You know, there are some mighty powerful ministries—and I use that term very loosely—in this country today, 20,000 people in Houston, Texas every week for what? We don't want to hear about sin. We don't want to hear about the devil. We just want a psychology lesson. And that is what they give. And you think, well, that is in Houston. No, it is not. Go to Publix. Go in the work place. Listen to people just mention that you are a sinner, if you mean it. People are going to look at you the same way they did to Zacchaeus. Oh, Lord, you don't want to go there. He is a sinner.

Are you a sinner today? No, the fall was mighty. Isaiah puts it this way in Isaiah 28:8. He says:

“For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean.”<sup>30</sup>

He was saying that in reference to Israel and their backsliding and their idolatry. But, oh, how experiential that verse is, how spiritually understood that verse is. That is what we are. Our tables are full of vomit and filthiness and there is no place clean.

That is what being lost is. But, you know, we lost our understanding. We lost the ability to understand who God is in that fall. You can come to me or come to anywhere and just say, “Yes, I have a knowledge and I can seek him and I can find him.” And do you know what? The Lord God in Psalm 14 said:

The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The LORD looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.<sup>31</sup>

You know, natural man will rebel against that. We will not accept the fact that we are lost. It is not something we understand with our carnal or our reasoning and our understanding. You think about that in your own life how you try to reason with yourself that things are always better than they seem. Things are going to better. Things are better. Maybe that is how you justify yourself.

We have lost all love, too and lost all affection for our Lord. Romans 8:6-7 says:

“For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Isaiah 28:8.

<sup>31</sup> Psalm 14:1-3.

<sup>32</sup> Romans 8:6-7.

That is us in our fallen state. That is this old man we carry around with us. Don't deceive yourself. He ain't getting better and he is never going to get better. Praise God for the new man. Praise God for himself in the child of God. Praise God for the earnest of the Spirit. Praise God that he constructed a way that even though part of us that we walk around in is so filthy the greater part of us in him has wiped all that filth away. And he won't leave us there to try to understand that. He doesn't leave us there to try to make any logical sense of it, because it doesn't. He comes with power. And he comes with a power to your soul to tell you that your sins are forgiven, to tell you that you were lost, but now you are found.

I spent a lot of hours in this life lost, lost in my understanding when I get in the way, lost in my love when my love gets in the way and lost in my will. You know, we always want to think our will is free. We always want to think that we have a will that is just as great as our creator's. But, you know, I always have one verse to combat that. Jesus said it in John 5:40.

“And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.”<sup>33</sup>

And, you know, when the Lord says that to your soul, that you won't come to him, and then you go out in your life and you realize that that is the truth, you live your life and you get caught up in the things of the world and you get so easily swept in with the what is going on in the world or the events in the world and the events in your life and all of the sudden your communing time with the Lord is gone and the next day comes and you are feeling lifeless and you won't come to him. You won't come to him that we might have life.

Oh, it is so easy to make those kind of verse. Oh, yes, that is the lost. That is the non elect. They will never come to him. It is true. I guess you come all the time, then, huh? I heard a lot of that this week. No, we are lost. The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And praise be to God that he does it over and over again. He comes and he puts me around his neck and brings me back into the fold. Do you know what? If he has to break my leg that is good. It may be painful, but it is good.

The Son of Man is come. That is the second thing I want to look at in this verse. The Son of Man is come. He came down and condescended for us, for his people. He came to be a mediator. He came that we might have life. We have been reading through Job at night with the children. Job is under such ... if all that the Lord's hand wasn't enough, the three friends and their appointing the law to him has been very, very grievous to Job's soul. And while he was under that attack in Job 9:33 he said:

“Neither is there any daysman betwixt us.”<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> John 5:40.

<sup>34</sup> Job 9:33.

He couldn't see his mediator. He couldn't see... that is what a daysman is, one that stands between him and God. He says:

“Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both.”<sup>35</sup>

That is what I need. I can't come to the only Father without this mediator, without the veil being rent by his mediator, without this way and this truth and this life of this mediator. And Paul said in Timothy:

“For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”<sup>36</sup>

Yes, the Son of Man is come. And I love to hear that when it comes to my soul, because when that power comes and my deadness is gone and I am revived again by the power of the Holy Ghost, I know the Son of Man is come. And what does he come to do? He come to seek and to save. He comes to seek me as we have just heard in that song because I won't seek him. We may think it is us seeking him, but it was him seeking us all along. He is our seeking merchant man. He is the one who comes to find his pearls and he comes to our soul and he comes and he saves us from the guilt of sin by applying his blood. He comes to save us from the filth of sin by impressing upon our soul that if he washes us not we have no part with him. He comes to save us from the love of sin, because he sheds his love abroad in our hearts. He comes to save us from the power of sin because he looses us from its dominion. He shows us that he has put it under his feet. He has set us free in himself and the bondage of that sin is gone.

And last, but not least, he comes to save us from the practice of sin by keeping us. It is the Son of Man who did that. It is the Son of Man who does that. And make no mistake about it, it is not Moses. The law will never save you. The desiring to keep the law will never save you. But the one who did perfectly he is the one who seeks and saves.

“For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”<sup>37</sup>

*Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, may your name be glorified. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.*

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> 1 Timothy 2:5.

<sup>37</sup> Luke 19:10.