

## Luke 19 1-10

There is nothing like being ambitious, I am going to condense years of study of gospels to a couple of hundred words. So I begin with a personal question. Is Luke's gospels a *Living Voice* in you? Is it a force that is dynamic and changing at your core? Things that grow push other things out of their way. Have you seen weeds pushing their way though cracks in pavements?

We are in fact part of the living and dynamic energy of the gospels and I'll try to explain how. We are approaching the end of our reading of the year Luke. Scholars treat this gospel as a two-volume work. The book of Acts is accepted as the second part.

Each of the gospels was written by an Evangelist with a particular point of view. Apart from scholars investigating what was written, the question of **why it was written in a particular way** is significant. Luke uses **journey** as the major theme of his gospel. Time and place are inserted to keep the story moving.<sup>1</sup> Luke uses the geographical journey from Galilee to Jerusalem as a sub-theme. But there is more to the theme than meets the eye.

Luke links back to Old Testament prophecies. God's history was written there and Luke aims to deeply open the new moment when all hopes will be fulfilled. Luke's writing aims to show old promises have been fulfilled, and the glory of God will be revealed to Jew and Gentile. That is to all humankind. So the story drives forward but links back. Wow! What an agenda!

Do you get that the significance of the task of a gospel writer it is to reveal all? But there is even a bigger agenda and that includes you and me!

Luke uses his story telling to insist that God has worked through the history and events of the lives of men and women. The journey that

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<sup>1</sup> Malone, Francis. *The Living Voice of the Gospel* p69

began in Nazareth does not end at Calvary. The events in Jerusalem the resurrection and ascension begin another journey.<sup>2</sup> This time Jesus isn't in person but is present through the Spirit. This is where we come into the story. **We are part of the story because the Spirit is dynamic in us!**

I was a teacher of Godly Play for many years and the Old Testament story of the Ten Commandments was told as The Ten Best Ways To Live, at the conclusion of the story the story teller asks and where are the stone tablets now? The children ponder and offer suggestions then the story teller brings out the surprise answer. They live in you! As you grown and learn you will pass them on; bring them to life. I couldn't think of a better way to explain how the theme of journey becomes a living theme in Luke's Gospel. Every story has been included with this particular "spin" but the driving theme is journey.

You and I are on a journey into God. The path is not always straight forward. There are stops and starts there are roadblocks I spoke of some of those last week, but' we are called forward **by the Spirit**.

I briefly return to Zacchaeus in the words of the children's song the wee little man who climbed the sycamore tree in order to see the Lord. Jesus knew he was up there and he went to gave him clear directions. 'Come down for I am coming to dine with you tonight'. The bystanders the religious gate-keepers are shocked. 'Look he associates with sinners.' Biblical scholars agree that Jesu's voice in Luke's gospel brings a message for the world. The writer of Luke was not a Jew. He was Gentile writing in a Gentile world.<sup>3</sup> Does the enormity of this project hit you?

We like Zacchaeus, are on the journey to God and that journey is open to humankind.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid P73

<sup>3</sup> Ibid P74

What does it mean for us to be part of God's project? The deep theological journey is ingrained in each of us from our baptism. The message of the whole Lukan gospel is that God seeks out the lost. Pardon peace and reconciliation are offered to us. We need to stay the course in our journeying in the Spirit. I return to my opening question. Is the voice of the living gospel alive in you? Is the ember smouldering? What might you do to breathe life into it?

You could try some internal work of your own. Is he calling you as he did to Zacchaeus are you listening? Why is it important to pause and listen? I constantly hear the fearful cry that we have no renewal in the church. I suggest that what we need to do is shift our gaze from the broad horizon because that feels threatening. Our task is to look at our own call to regeneration.

Jesus teaches that prayer is how we respond to God. Prayer is concerned not with me but with God. The essential act of prayer is to stand unprotected before God. We wait on God to call to us. It is through **the power of the Spirit** that the dynamic life of the gospel is breathed into us.

The Spirit which can be sensed powerfully through the dynamic growth of our Christian tradition. There are highways and by ways but the Spirit leads us to our own understanding and explanation of the mystery of God's ways among us.<sup>4</sup>

I've told you today that you are part of the dynamic. What does that mean to you? Are you ready to embrace that opportunity and allow it so shape you? We are about to enter Advent a wonderful time to reflect.

Will you like he make a mighty effort to glimpse him only to find that he is waiting for you calling your name and inviting you into his

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<sup>4</sup> Op Cit p243

heart? With Advent around the corner, I am inviting each one of you to set some time aside to think about your relationship with the Spirit. Come and join me in my Advent offering. Make a commitment and think on what it means to play your part in the sweep of the story of the salvation of humankind. You see, we don't have to worry about the future. We need only focus on our individual part.

AMEN

### Reference

Malone, Francis J SDB *The Living Voice of the Gospel* Collins Dove  
Blackburn Victoria 1986