

JAN
8-12

ZACCHAEUS

Comfort for the Oppressor

Our natural instinct is often to champion the cause of the oppressed—desiring to see them receive justice against their oppressors. For that reason, Ecclesiastes 4:1 may cause us to pause as it reminds us that the oppressed (with their tears) and the oppressors (with their power) are both in need of comfort. Biblical scholar Kenneth Bailey suggests that we see Jesus responding to both ends of these extremes in the ancient village of Jericho by reaching out to Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus.



THIS WEEK'S DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Read Ecclesiastes 4:1. Are you surprised that Solomon shows concern for both groups of people? In what ways does this make sense? In what ways does it feel uncomfortable to be concerned about oppressors?
- The chapter and verse divisions in our Bibles are often helpful, but they are not inspired and are not always correct. In light of this, how do the stories of a blind man, Bartimaeus (Luke 18), and Zacchaeus (Luke 19) work together, and why is the chapter break unfortunate? Can you think of other places where chapter and verse divisions could possibly limit our understanding?
- How does Jesus respond to Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus? How does His consistent approach to offering comfort help us approach the tension of Ecclesiastes 4:1?
- How does the crowd respond to the events of Luke 18–19, including Bartimaeus's cries for help? Jesus's healing of the blind man? And Jesus's concern for Zacchaeus? How are our responses to others often reflective of the crowds at Jericho?



CHALLENGE

The love of God was perfectly modeled through Jesus. As you interact with family, friends, and others you encounter throughout this week, think about how Jesus's attitude and actions help you reflect God's love to others.



COMMIT TO MEMORY

"For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost"
(Luke 19:10)



PRAYER

Loving Father, it's so easy for my heart to be prejudiced against people because of social status or life condition. Help me to be a reflection of Your great love, which knows no boundaries or limits. Please make me an instrument of that great love to others. In Your Name we pray. Amen.