

Sermon for Children and Adolescents Ministries Emphasis Day

OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

Sabbath, August 1, 2015

By M Dinorah Rivera, Children and Adolescents Ministries Director of the Inter-American Division

Verse: Luke 19:10 (NKJV) – *“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*

Opening Song: *“Walking With Jesus”* (see words and music at end of document)

Closing Song: *“We Have Heard Thy Call Lord Jesus”*, #128, Youth Sing (see words at end of document)

I. INTRODUCTION

Zacchaeus, overcomer of obstacles

19 Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. **2** Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. **3** And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. **5** And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, *“Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.”* **6** So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. **7** But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, *“He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”* **8** Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, *“Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”* **9** And Jesus said to him, *“Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; **10** for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”* (Luke 19: 1-10, NKJV).

Zacchaeus was a rich man in Jerusalem, a man who was dedicated to collecting taxes for the Roman government, but who is better known as the man who overcame obstacles and became a disciple of Jesus. As a chief publican he would have more prestige than Matthew himself, but he had heard about Jesus and was determined to know Him personally. When the moment finally arrived to see Him face to face, Zacchaeus faced three great obstacles:

1. The multitude. It would seem difficult to understand that those who with enthusiasm and fervor followed Jesus were the same people who were to blame for blocking the view for Zacchaeus. They were the ones who did not allow Zacchaeus to see Jesus. What a great lesson we can draw from this fact!

2. His stature. This second obstacle was specific to Zacchaeus. His own nature presented him as a small man in stature. However, he remedied it instantly. He climbed the tree and from there took possession of the best view of Jesus at that time. I'm sure that if Jesus were to enter this place, or if we saw Him walking the streets, we would do everything possible to see Him up close.

3. The call to discipleship. Our Lord called Zacchaeus. Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house. In response, Zacchaeus opened his heart to his Master and received immediate restitution. (*All the men in the Bible*, Zondervan)

II. The mission of the Children and Adolescents Ministries is salvation

The Gospels reveal to us a Jesus that when He was on earth constantly cared for the needy and loved the rejected with no partiality of persons. Due to the friendly treatment without prejudice that Jesus offered to Zacchaeus, he could respond generously with what he had; his response went even further and he offered restitution of what was wrongly obtained.

The tax collector is too small to see through the crowd, but his desire to know Jesus is so great that he exercises creativity to achieve his goal. A sycamore tree is like a short oak tree with a wide trunk and branches. So Zacchaeus had the perfect angle to see Jesus.

Jesus takes the initiative and calls Zacchaeus. He not only calls him but according to the local culture, gives him His seal of love and acceptance and by saying that He must stay in his home. The crowd responds with a sign of awe and skepticism. Jesus takes the opportunity to demonstrate once again the nature of His mission. The attempt made by Zacchaeus has become something more.

Zacchaeus responds by getting down from the tree and receiving Jesus with joy; the joy that comes from a man who has fulfilled the desire of God despite the protests of many around him. We do not know the time that elapsed between the time that Zacchaeus climbed down the tree until he spoke the words, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" but we do know that a rich man touched by Jesus responded in faith, and although he did not need to give as generously as expressed so that God would accept him, he became a man with a heart in the right place with the right priorities in relation to God's priorities. Zacchaeus became an exemplary disciple.

When Jesus said, "today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham (v. 9) it is speaking about the inheritance of this man. The blessing that God granted him had been achieved by faith. Furthermore, Jesus' mission was accomplished, "for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (v. 10)

III. Conclusion

When we talk about Children and Adolescents Ministries and its beginnings in the Adventist church, we talk about the year 1985, when the department was created, and 1995, when its first director was chosen, but the Adventist Church has been concerned with children's ministry since the 1800s.

More and more we see the importance of taking a saving ministry to assist in the integral education of children. Above all, Children and Adolescents Ministries are based on Jesus' ministry on earth where He

1. Blessed and prayed for the children
2. Claimed the children
3. Became friends with the children
4. Participated with the children

The example in the story of Zacchaeus reveals four steps necessary for the salvation of children. Jesus blessed, claimed, befriended and participated with Zacchaeus. That's Children and Adolescents Ministries. Our duty as disciples of Jesus, as the Church of God is to bless, pray, befriend and to participate with the children. Let's do a full spiritual inventory on our alignment with the behavior of Jesus.

Children and Adolescents Ministries need the support of each of the members and officers of the church if we are to fulfill God's mandate. Let us not be part of the multitude that as in the case of Zacchaeus did not allow the children to see Jesus. Let us now allow that they be left to the side due to their short stature. On the contrary, let us lift up high the children upon our spiritual trunk and our strong branches of love so that they can have a better view of our Jesus, so that they can respond to God's call to be His disciples for eternity. God Himself invites children and adults alike to respond to His call of love. What is your answer?

Let's pray. (Ask all the children to come up front and have the adults around them for a special prayer).

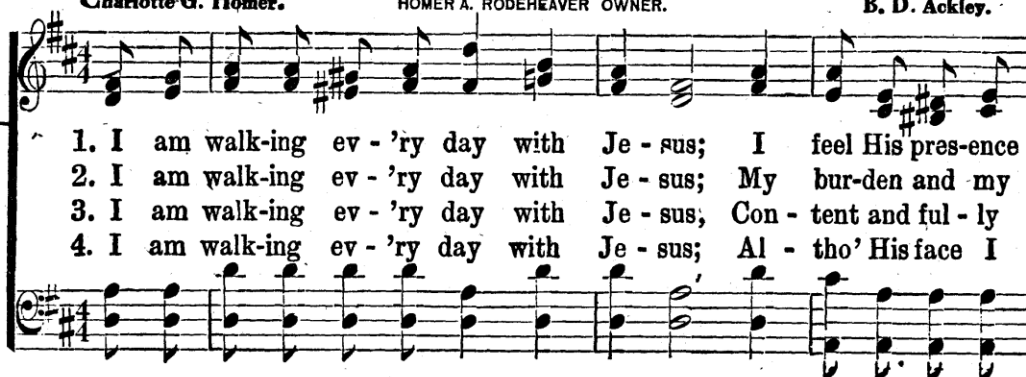
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Walking With Jesus.

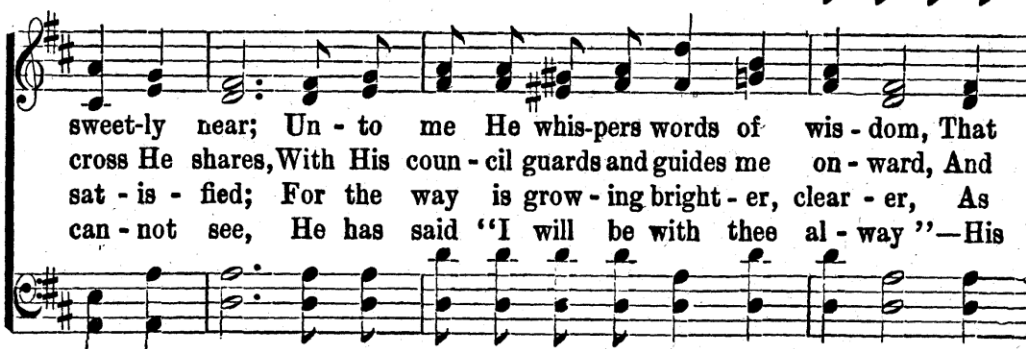
Charlotte G. Homer.

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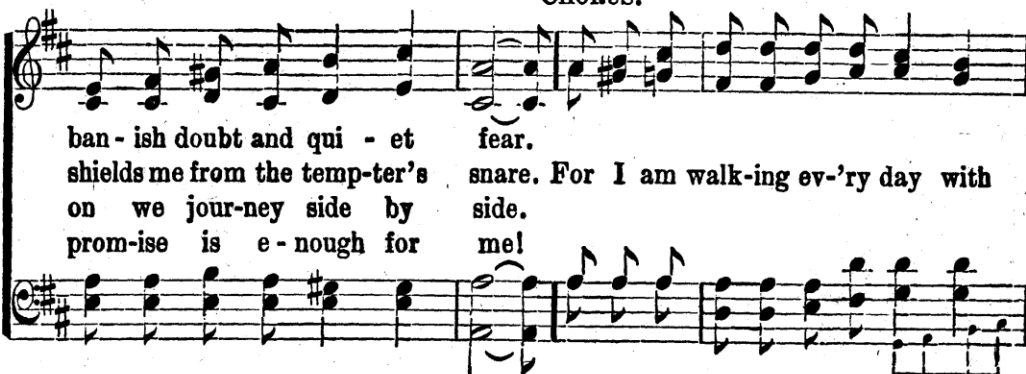


1. I am walk-ing ev - 'ry day with Je - sus; I feel His pres-ence
 2. I am walk-ing ev - 'ry day with Je - sus; My bur-den and my
 3. I am walk-ing ev - 'ry day with Je - sus; Con - tent and ful - ly
 4. I am walk-ing ev - 'ry day with Je - sus; Al - tho' His face I

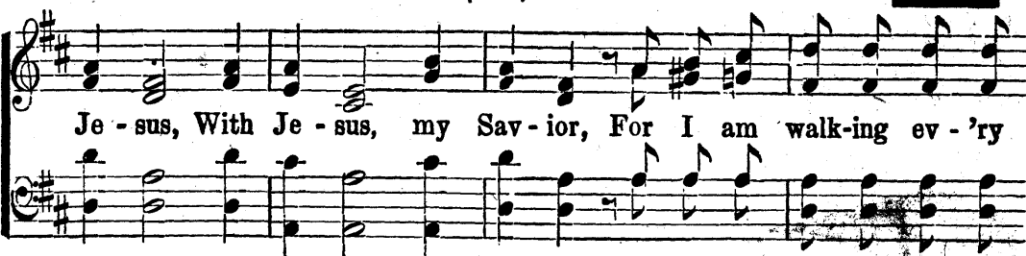


sweet-ly near; Un - to me He whis-pers words of wis - dom, That
 cross He shares, With His coun - cil guards and guides me on - ward, And
 sat - is - fied; For the way is grow - ing bright - er, clear - er, As
 can - not see, He has said "I will be with thee al - way"—His

CHORUS.



ban - ish doubt and qui - et fear.
 shields me from the temp-ter's snare. For I am walk-ing ev-'ry day with
 on we jour-ney side by side.
 prom-ise is e - nough for me!



Je - sus, With Je - sus, my Sav - ior, For I am walk-ing ev - 'ry



day with Je - sus, I'll go with Him, with Him all the way.
 with Him all the way.

WE HAVE HEARD THY CALL, LORD JESUS
AND OUR HEARTS RESPOND WITH JOY;
WE WILL PLEDGE THEE OUR ALLEGIANCE,
FOR THY CAUSE OUR ALL EMPLOY

CHORUS

THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD FOR THE MAN OF GALILEE!
THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD FROM ALL SIN AND SELF SET
FREE!
EV'RY TALENT PLEDGED IN SERVICE NOW AND THRO'
ETERNITY,
THE YOUTH OF THE WORLD FOR THE MAN OF GALILEE!

WHERE-SO E'ER THY CHALLENGE LEADS US,
WHAT-SO E'ER SHALL BE THE TEST,
ONLY MAKE IT KNOWN, DEAR MASTER,
AND WE PROMISE THEE OUR BEST.

EV'RY TALENT THOU HAST GIVEN,
NOT FOR HIDING, BUT FOR USE;
ALL OUR TIME IS OF THY LENDING,
TO BE SPENT AS THOU SHALT CHOOSE.

WHAT-SO E'ER WE ARE OR HAVE LORD,
SHALL BE SUBJECT TO THY WILL;
TRUST US WITH THY GREATEST, TASK, LORD,
AND WITH PRIDE OUR HEARTS SHALL THRILL.