

# MORAVIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Devotional Notes

May 2013

## Theme: Following in Christ's Footprints

On the cold dark evenings this winter I have enjoyed watching a rerun of the 'Time Team' programmes on the Yesterday channel. I never watched them when they were first broadcast but, being interested in history and historical research, I have been fascinated by what has been unearthed from many different periods in the past in farmers' fields and wooded areas, on river banks and barren moorland, under people's back gardens and grassed areas surrounding stately homes. Many artefacts have been unearthed which tell us something about the people who lived there over many centuries, the sort of things they did, what they ate and drank and what was important to them in their time. This is all part of our heritage, and has made me wonder what relics of the past I have walked over in my lifetime, without ever knowing that they were right there under my feet!

Jericho is a place which I am sure conjures up many memories for us, even if we have never been there. Much excavation has been done at this ancient site, where the Israelites under the leadership of Joshua besieged the town and the walls came tumbling down, although no remains of walls from the 13<sup>th</sup> century BC have been found there. The city which Jesus entered on his way to Jerusalem had been built up more recently a little to the south of the ancient site, as the winter capital for King Herod who had equipped it with very fine buildings. The modern city of Jericho is on a slightly different site from both the previous towns. In the time of Jesus Jericho was on one of the main trade routes from the east and was an important customs centre, so a lot of people passed through the city, and there were probably many customs officials and tax collectors like Zacchaeus living there. **Please read Luke 19:1-10.**

I'm sure most of us wait to be invited out to tea, but here Jesus invited himself because he had something special to offer Zacchaeus, and the tax collector was in no way affronted by Jesus' forwardness. Although he must have been very surprised, stunned even, we are told that he hurried down from the tree he had climbed and was happy to welcome Jesus into his home. Quite the opposite of the rich young man we read about last month, without being prompted Zacchaeus offered to share his fortune with others less fortunate than himself, and to pay excessive restitution to anyone he might have wrongfully defrauded. What a difference the end result of this incident was. A man who was shunned by his own people because of the job he did for the Romans collecting taxes, now found acceptance with the Son of God. He received forgiveness and salvation, was restored to his place in the Kingdom of God and could move forward in his faith and his life. However, this did not please anyone else who witnessed the scene, as they felt Zacchaeus was unworthy to receive such attention and generous gifts from Jesus.

Hilary Smith

For discussion:

1. We can easily judge people by the sort of jobs they do (or indeed whether they have any job at all), the clothes they wear and the things they do (or don't do). Jesus welcomed all who came to him, forgave them if they were truly repentant, and in this passage says he came in order to seek out such and offer them salvation. How easy or difficult do you find it to show such compassion and concern as you follow in Christ's footprints today?
2. When you feel you have strayed from what God requires of you, do you find it easy or difficult to accept God's forgiveness and assurance that you are restored to a full relationship with him?