

Journeying to the Cross: Jesus and Welcome

Luke 19:1-10 || Pastor Shawn Gendall || 21 March 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: When was the last time you climbed a tree and why did you do it?

Worship: [Psalm 98:1-3](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation to you?*)

Sermon Summary for [Luke 19:1-10](#) (*Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (v10). Here, Christ offers one of the clearest declarations of His mission and of the Gospel. In this story of Zaccheus, we are offered a picture of this, where we can see how Jesus welcomes the outsider and the stranger. Through it, we learn to see ourselves as Jesus does – but also to see others as He does. We can accomplish this by asking how does Christ seek and how does He save.

How does Jesus seek? First, by seeing (v3-5). Jesus saw Zaccheus when all around him would've rather ignored or scorned him. Christ sees and values us too, however lost we might be. And we must learn to see ourselves as He does: as beloved, as people who matter, whose name He knows. The liberating impact of living in the light of God's love and grace is recognizing that our Savior's devout, personal love for us is true for others as well. This is the way of the people of God – from Genesis 18 when Abraham welcomed the stranger to Matthew 25 where Christ Himself says that when we welcome a stranger, we also welcome Him.

Jesus also seeks us by calling us (v5). To be welcomed – to be invited – is to be seen and to be told that we matter. It's worth asking ourselves: How many people does it take to make someone feel accepted and welcomed? Only one. This invitation to Zaccheus proves this – but with the added beauty of knowing that it is God who calls and welcomes and says that we matter. May we know this. May it change us. And may it be a call to do likewise.

Lastly, Jesus seeks us by entering our lives (v5). Christ yearns for our healing – for our hearts and minds and world to be redeemed – all of which can only be attained in and through Him. The story of Zaccheus is ultimately one about grace. May we hear our Lord's call as Zaccheus did, so we might experience His grace. And may we extend it to those we encounter, because they too are beloved by our Father. This is also a call to ask ourselves a tough question: If this story were to happen today, are there people we wouldn't want Jesus to come to as He did Zaccheus? Who would cause us to grumble as the crowd did because we thought them undeserving of Christ's attention? And do we really think those people have forfeited the grace of our Savior? Because by seeing Zaccheus as He does, our beautiful Savior is inviting us to do likewise.

How does Zaccheus respond to Jesus? First, he receives (v6) Christ. This was his reflexive response to grace. Will we do the same? Will we welcome Jesus into our hearts with joy so that we might walk in His way? Second, Zaccheus repents (v8). This is the fullness of Jesus's welcome. More than just seeing and calling Zaccheus, He welcomes him into this new life of repentance, of new meaning, and of how he defines his identity.

It's worth noting that Zaccheus would have otherwise been unknown to history. We don't know anything else about him. But the power of his story is just that: that one afternoon he heard his name spoken by Jesus. May that be true of all of us – that our fundamental identity would be rooted in Christ – so that we might come to say, *“I have a Savior King who knows my name, who called me, who entered into the household of my life, who gave me another chance, who saw me for what I could be in Him. He pronounced salvation over my household. He called me when a stranger...and invited me to live a new life where I learn to welcome the other in the way He welcomed me.”*

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

How does Jesus welcome? He sees.

- Describe Zacchaeus. What lengths did he go to in order to see Jesus? What do you think motivated him?
- Jesus looks up, sees Zacchaeus and addresses him by name. How does Jesus know Zacchaeus' name?
 - Describe when you realized that you are seen and known by Jesus.
- Tell stories of how you are learning to see yourself and others – neighbors, strangers, and/or those not like you – as Jesus does with love and compassion.

How does Jesus welcome? He calls.

- Jesus invites himself to Zacchaeus' home. Why “must” He stay with Zacchaeus that day?
- What was Zacchaeus's response to Jesus coming to stay at his home?
 - How do you respond to Jesus coming to stay in your home and life?
- What does this passage teach us about being invitational, accepting and welcoming or others?

How does Jesus welcome? He enters our lives.

- Discuss the thought that Jesus' welcome includes an imposition and pursuit into our lives.
- What had taken place for Jesus to say, “Today salvation has come to this house”?
 - What does this teach us about true repentance?
- How could you use this story to explain Jesus' life mission as stated in v10, “The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost”?

Prayer

Ask Jesus to awaken your heart and give you eyes to see your neighbor the way Jesus saw Zacchaeus with welcome, love, compassion and grace.

For the weekly Prayer Guide to use personally, with your group, or family click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Generous Hospitality

We are turning our attention to Generous Hospitality, which includes being generous with our presence/ attention, caring for others by listening to them, being generous with our story, being vulnerable, and being hospitable with our time, home and workplace. Though this means we have the opportunity to show hospitality to just about anyone, it boils down to living out Christ's commandment to love our God and to love our neighbor [Mark 12:30-31](#).

Over these next few months, we're challenging ourselves and all CGs to a common goal: making a concerted effort to know and care for those living closest to us. Our literal neighbors. To truly live out “the greatest commandment.”

As a resource, we are recommending *The Art of Neighboring* ([site](#) | [book](#)). It challenges us to get to know the eight households closest to our own. This alone would make a huge difference in our neighborhoods and is a wonderful way to practice generous hospitality. And this challenge is only a starting point; we hope that as we embrace it, we are motivated to find creative, purposeful ways to know and care for those God calls us to love. Let's all begin by asking: *Which of my immediate neighbors should I introduce myself to today? How can I offer friendship to them?*

Some suggestions:

- Make a list of the 8 households that are closest to your own. As a first step, commit to learning their names.
- Add Neighboring videos (CG leader has videos) and discussion to your regular sermon discussion..
- Step away from sermon discussions to read and discuss the book and work together to put it into action.
- A good time to start would be after the **Generous Hospitality Seminar on March 27th. Register [HERE](#)**