

Sermon Transcript from September 18th, 2016
Jesus Saves
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I would like it, if you could, turn to the book of Luke 19. We will continue our series on the character of Christ. This morning, I would like to talk about how Jesus saves. Jesus saves. So, let me read to you this really great story in Luke about this really quirky, fun guy named Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1. So, follow along if you have a Bible or a device or whatever you use to read your Bible.

Luke 19:1: "Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short..." I identify with that. I don't know. I just had to stop there sorry.

Some of you guys are like, "Been there. I know. I know this guy already."

"But because he was short, he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus, since Jesus was coming that way.

"When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

"All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'

"Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.'"

That is God's Word. Let's pray.

Lord, I believe that that is such a beautiful summary of what You've come to do. You've come to seek and save the lost. There might be a few of us in here that You're after, that You're going after, seeking to save us, Lord, or to save us again from our folly, from our waywardness and maybe even ignorance or pain or hurt. Or our experience just from last week when we had received communion to this week when we received communion again, there's been a whole world that's happened, a whole almost lifetime that's gone on and there's so many experiences that have gone on in this room.

Lord, we are asking You to come and find us to save us, Lord. Do that this morning. Teach us, by Your word, and I submit all of my mind and heart and capacity and emotion and all this stuff that's going on inside of me to You. And I ask, God, that You would teach us and lead us and minister to us by Your Spirit and make us administrators of reconciliation where we, today, are also a part of the ministry that You're doing. That we would go up to people and pray for them and minister to them. Do all this in the glorious name of Christ. In Your name, amen.

If you are new to the Bible and if you're new to Jesus, you might as yourself as you're reading through the Bible in a year, "Why are there four Gospels? Why are there four of them? Why not just one super-Gospel that tells the story of Jesus like a modern biography would tell the story of Jesus where it starts with His family of origin and His birth and then His life. Especially his teenage years, because we really want to hear about those. And then, as it moves on to His ministry and then His death and so on.

Why doesn't that happen? Why do we get glimpses of it and why does every Gospel tell about the same story but tell it differently? And there are a lot of complex answers to that question. The simple answer that I'll give this morning is that each Gospel writer is telling you the true story of Jesus as they emphasize a different thesis or a different central message about Jesus. Every Gospel writer is telling the true story of Jesus, but they are emphasizing a different central message about Jesus.

For example, last week, we looked at the book of Mark. And we said that Jesus' message in the book of Mark was that the Kingdom of God has come near in Christ. And that was the message. Jesus starts off, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand."

Jesus was bringing in the Kingdom of God. I said that another way of thinking about the Kingdom of God is the rule of God, because we don't think in kingdom language. So, it's like Jesus was bringing in the rule of God. So, wherever Jesus stepped, the rule of God would order or reorder that thing. It would be like we used the example of everything being a frozen winter and Jesus, everywhere He stepped, spring would happen. Like, things would come to life. Cold winter would melt away and life would begin to happen.

And that's how Mark tells his Gospel. Mark says that the Gospel of Jesus is the bringing in or the breaking in of the Kingdom of God. Luke has a different emphasis. Luke's Gospel emphasizes how Jesus came to seek and save the lost. So, Luke emphasizes, "Jesus has come to seek and save the lost." That is the summary of Luke's entire Gospel.

Actually, right here in Luke 19:10 it says this: **"The son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."**

This is almost like a summary of everything that Luke is telling you in his Gospel. And this is Jesus summarizing it. Jesus has come to seek and save the lost. So, Luke's Gospel, if you're reading it, pay attention to the lostness of Luke's Gospel. How he talks about how Jesus goes after to rescue lost people. Actually, in the middle of Luke's Gospel, we have the famous "Lost Parables." The parables of the lost things. If you've ever read this or heard of this before.

In Luke 15, Jesus tells three parables of lost things. He says, the first parable, the Kingdom of God is like a shepherd having 100 sheep and 1 of them goes missing. He loses 1 sheep. So, what the shepherd does is he leaves the 99 sheep and goes after the 1 sheep. He leaves the 99 and goes after the 1. You're like, "That's bad math. You don't leave 99 to go after the 1."

But, Jesus is sharing the heart of God. Like, "There's one lost sheep and I must go find it."

And then, the very next parable is the parable of the lost coin. It tells about a woman who has ten coins and loses one coin. This woman is a bit, almost, senile, because she rips the house apart to find the one lost coin and then throws a party when she finds it that cost probably more than the lost coin. I don't understand it. It's almost senile. Like, if your neighbor goes, "I've lost a coin, but I found it. And I roasted a pig. Would you come over?"

You're like, "What? No. This is really creepy and I'm not going in your house."

But, it almost feels like that the way that Jesus is telling these stories in Luke. Then, the last parable is a parable the lost son. Or, we know it as the prodigal son. The father has two sons. No, notice that it goes from 100 to 10 to 2. The father has two sons and one runs away and the father waits and waits and waits and waits for his son to wake up and come to his senses. And, when the son does, the father goes after him and tackles him and kisses him and puts a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet and throws a party, because his son was lost but now he's found.

When Jesus is telling these stories, He is talking about how when things are lost, it means that God is going after them. When things are lost, God is going after them or God is waiting with desperate anticipation in reuniting with the lost thing. Think about that. When something is lost, God is waiting with desperate anticipation for reuniting reconciliation or He's going after the lost thing. And what Jesus is saying in parabolic language is that when people are lost, it means that God is coming after you.

And these stories are not so much about how things get lost or how people get lost. He's not saying, "Okay. The sheep got lost because the sheep was wandering and he found this and he kept on walking."

He's not telling you how things get lost. He's not telling you why things get lost. He's not even telling you how not to get lost. He's not heaping judgment on lost people. He's saying, these stories are about this: "When things are lost, the character of God is to go after lost things."

By "things," He means people. When things are lost or people are lost, the character of God is to go after them. And Jesus calls these things and these people "lost" because God wants to find them. If God didn't want to find them, they would not be lost, they would be forgotten. Like, we've all lost things in our life. And we've also forgotten about things. And there's a difference between things we lose and things we forget about. The things that we forget about have no real value. We misplace them and we're like, "Oh, I lost that thing. Whatever."

It doesn't feel like a loss to us. And then we find them and we go, "Oh, yeah! I forgot about this."

That's not how we are. That's not what it's saying about lost things. When you lose something of value, you go after them. You turn over the house to find them. You retrace every single step that you have and you think hard, "Where did I last put that thing?"

And you put up signs and flyers. You do whatever it takes. You post on social media, "I lost this thing. If you see this thing, let me know."

If it's of value, you go after to find it. God calls lost things lost because He's going after them. Lost means that you are missed and that God wants you back. So, the summary of this is in Luke 19. It says this: "The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Now, the encounter that leads to this summary of Luke's Gospel is an encounter with a rich, powerful, short man named Zacchaeus. This is like Luke's summary sentence is couched in the story of Zacchaeus. And the story of Zacchaeus starts with curiosity. It says in verse 3 that Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. He was a very curious person. Now, Zacchaeus was, it says here in the text, a chief tax collector. This was not a good profession to have if you were Jewish at this time. It meant that he worked for the Roman government. The Roman government was the occupying powerful force in Israel at the time. It meant he worked for the Roman government, so he was a traitor.

As a Jew working for Rome, he was a traitor. And it says that he was a rich tax collector. Which means the only way to be a rich tax collector was to extort money from your own people. So, you would inflate taxes owed with all the power of Rome behind you and then you would line your own pockets with inflating taxes on your own people. Think of the Sheriff of Nottingham, but the cartoon Disney version. The best version out there on that one. Right? Think of him.

So, he goes to the blind beggar and he goes to the blind beggar and is like, "You owe your taxes."

He's like, "I'm begging. I'm begging."

And he hits the bottom of his cup and grabs the money from the beggar's cup. Like, that's who Zacchaeus is. He's robbing his own people to line his own pockets. It's like that. And there's no doubt that Zacchaeus was hated. And hated people are often hardened people. They have to be hard. To be that rich and make that much money by making people angry, you have to be hardened. So, you're talking about a – and he probably had a short man complex as well, I'm guessing. I think. Just my observation from the text. Just a short guy with a short man complex and whatever.

Anyway, that doesn't mean that Zacchaeus wasn't curious. He heard Jesus coming through town and he heard that Jesus was coming through town and he just wanted to see who this guy was. Simple curiosity. Maybe this simple curiosity was something like a powerful person who admires another influential person. He's like, "This guy's influential. I'm powerful. I want to get a glimpse of who this guy is."

But, Zacchaeus' curiosity shows us something. Zacchaeus' curiosity shows me something that I have found to be true the more people that I know, and it is this: lost people, like Zacchaeus, have these momentary glimpses or momentary realizations of their lostness. Lost people, somehow, somehow through circumstances of life, will wake up to the fact that they're lost and where they realize how far off they are from who they wanted to be. Where lost people long for the day when they will be reconciled with people that they've lost. Or how long it's been since they started working for the change they wanted to see in their lives. Or when they ask if there's anything in this world beyond the consumption of food and things and stuff and people. Or if there really is a God out there who loves them.

Lost people are curious about what it would be like if they were found. I've found that to be true. It's like that song that I quoted to you a couple months ago off The 1975 album, the song "If I Believe You."

The lead singer says, "And if I believe you, will that make it stop? If I told you I need you, is that what you want? I'm broken and bleeding and begging for help. I'm asking you, Jesus, show yourself."

Like, maybe Zacchaeus was humming that song as he was trying to get a glimpse of Jesus. Like, that sort of thing was going on in his heart. And this, I think, I believe this is

what happens to lost people. They have this sort of resonate song in their heart going, "What if I was found? What if I was brought home?"

But, he couldn't see Jesus because he was too short, and this is very funny, you guys. This is Bible humor, and you should laugh when you're reading this. You're like, "Okay. That was pretty funny."

Like, he really wants to see Jesus, but the crowd is in the way. He's too short. It almost has this childish quality to this whole story. Like, you would almost imagine Zacchaeus trying to push through people and people are like, "Zacchaeus, I know who you are. Get away."

And he would just get knocked over and he would try to climb over somebody and they push him down. He'd try to crawl between their legs and they would close their legs. It's that sort of thing. He's trying to see Jesus and he can't get through the crowd. And they probably know who he is and they're like, "You're not going to get ahead of me here. You're not going to do it."

It's not just funny – it is funny – it's ironic. It's ironic because, in some crowds, Zacchaeus stands pretty tall. He's the chief tax collector. He's someone to be feared. But, in this crowd of everyone trying to see Jesus, he's not tall enough. But, Zacchaeus is determined. So, he goes ahead a bit and he climbs a tree. He climbs a tree. Now, this might seem cute. Like, "Oh my gosh. This is so cute. What a funny story. Climbing a tree to see Jesus."

I mean, it is cute. It's a great story. But, the reality is that men of his stature didn't run in public, let alone climb trees like little children. They just didn't. Men didn't, especially men of his stature. They didn't do this. Have you ever been to a Warriors game or seen a Warriors game and, right after Stephen Curry shoots his tunnel, pre-game, warm-up shot, you have all these kids that are hanging over the rails yelling at him to sign their gear. "Sign my hat! Sign my thing!"

Okay. So, you have this scene. It's super cute. Stephen starts and he signs all these kid's jerseys and whatever. Can you imagine if our mayor was right there? Like, if Mayor Ed Lee was hanging over he rails next to kids, "Stephen! Sign my hat!" and like freaking out and screaming and all these kids are like, "Get away!" He's like, "Get away! Stephen!"

Screaming. You'd go, "That... okay. That's okay for kids to do that and some very weird adults. But, men of his stature do not do that."

It would be on the news. You know it would be on the news. And it would be like, talk about humiliating. This is weird. This is what was going on here. Like, men of that stature didn't do that sort of thing. They didn't climb trees, hang on to trees to see Jesus. That is not what happened. So, with things like this, the biggest barrier to coming to Jesus is often our pride. It's often our dignity. We don't want to be one of those Christians who cries and sways to music with your hands in the air singing songs that would not make the radio or whatever. Like, I don't want to be that. I'm not going to be that. I'm not going to be that Christian. I don't want to let go of my dignity. I will not.

And maybe you're here and you have no kneeled in like four years of being at this church. You're like, "I did that my first three years and I cried on the carpet. I haven't been there in four years. I just don't do that. I have dignity now. Like, I remember when I was going through that much stuff in life where I would actually kneel before God. But, not anymore. I have too much dignity for that."

The thing, the biggest hurdle, the biggest barrier in coming to Jesus is often our pride and our dignity. We don't want to be that guy or that gal who is so in need of Jesus that we kneel or that we admit that we don't have the control, we don't have the power to control our change. We don't have the power to change. We don't have it. We don't want to be that. Our pride and our dignity get in the way of that.

So, I mean, say what you want to about Zacchaeus, he was willing to look childish to get to Jesus. I mean, I just imagine him hugging a tree limb. Like, "I just want to get a glimpse of Jesus. Last week, we talked about people crossing barriers to get to Jesus and they didn't care what barriers they had to cross to get to him. This is another story of that. And what happens next is often what happens next when we come face to face with Jesus. Zacchaeus gets way more than he bargained for. He just wants to get a glimpse of Jesus, and then Jesus points him out, calls him by name and invites himself over to his house.

That's what He does. He's like, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately."

Just when you say "Zacchaeus" he's like, "Okay, how did He know my name? And He just called me out in front of a crowd."

"And I must stay at your house."

I imagine everyone looking up at him. Zacchaeus is holding onto some big limb on a tree and he's hanging there and he's looking like a kid. Just a short man in a tree. And looking at Jesus and Jesus says, "I'm going to stay at your house today."

And he gets way more than he bargained for. He's like, "I was just here to get a glimpse of you and now you're coming over."

Jesus' invitation here to stay with Zacchaeus is the only time Jesus invites Himself into someone's presence or on their premise. This is the only time in the Gospels that Jesus invites Himself over, and it's right now. "I must come stay at your house today."

And Zacchaeus welcomes Jesus gladly. But, look at what the crowd does. Look at what the crowd does.

"All the people saw this and began to mutter."

So, people saw that Jesus was going over to his house, that He had gone over to his house we don't really know the timing here. Either at that moment they saw or the fact that it really happens and Zacchaeus got down the tree and then they went over to his house. But, all the people saw this and began to mutter.

"He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

Now, whenever the crowds or the religious leaders mutter in the Gospels, something interesting is always happening. It's like a clue to tip us off to there's more beneath the surface here. There's something else going on here. And what's going on here when the crowd begins to mutter like, "Oh my gosh. I can't believe that Jesus has gone over to his house to stay."

I mean, this was actually language of going to stay at his house for an extended period of time. He wasn't just going over for a meal. He was going over for a meal and to stay at Zacchaeus' home. What is this clueing us in to? What happens here as soon as Jesus asks to stay at his home is that the hostility of the crowd shifts from Zacchaeus to Jesus. So, the crowd doesn't like Zacchaeus. I mean, he's a chief tax collector. Everyone knows him. Everyone despises him if you're a Jew. It goes from, "We hate Zacchaeus," to, "What the heck, Jesus?"

It goes to despising Jesus. They are mad at Jesus for eating and going to live with such a person. Now, I'll say this next thing and I don't mean this to offend anyone per se. I just want to show you how offensive this act might have seemed to the crowd at the crowd's point of view. When we read the story, we're not offended by it really. I'm not offended by it. We're like, "Oh. Jesus goes over to a sinner's house. That's awesome. I love Jesus. He hangs out with sinners."

But, when you actually look at it from the crowd's point of view, it's scandalous. Oftentimes we take the side of the marginalized, but we forget that all of Jesus' meal times were scandalous. And this is what it's like: it's as if, during an anti police violence march in Charleston, Jesus stops and says to a police officer, "I want to stay at your home."

And not just any police officer. A police officer with a track record in the community of abuse towards the black community and extorting the small businesses of that community. And Jesus is stopping to ask this police officer, "I want to stay at your home."

Now, do you like what Jesus did? Most of us are like, "No. Oh, that's what He did? Are you kidding me? That is not okay."

There was a movie that came out a couple years ago called "The Equalizer" with Denzel Washington. This movie's bad. And Denzel, basically the same thing. Goes into cops that are exploiting a poor community and extorting them. All you want to happen is Denzel to

beat them up, to say it nicely. And he does, and it's awesome. If Denzel walked up to them and said, "Hey, can I stay at your house and can we hang out and can I show you mercy?"

First of all, I don't think anyone would watch that movie. I wouldn't watch it. I'd watch it and go, "Denzel. I mean, come on, man. You can't do that."

But, this is exactly what Jesus does. I mean, this is not a political statement. It's not an anti-police statement. It's a pastor trying to get the congregation to feel what's going on in this invitation. We would probably say, "Jesus, what are You doing? You have come to preach the Gospel to the poor. He's not poor. To the oppressed. He's the oppressor. To the weak. He's the powerful. You can't do that to him. You're here for the poor, the weak, the oppressed. Not him."

But, Jesus shows him mercy too. Jesus shows this tax collector mercy. And what happens in the story is that Jesus takes the scorn and the hatred that's directed towards the tax collector onto Himself. They hate the tax collector, but then all that scorn goes right to Jesus. And what we're told about the Messiah in the book of Isaiah is that is exactly what the Messiah will do. The Messiah will take the scorn that's heaped upon us and take it upon Himself. Read Isaiah 53. That is what's going on there. All the scorn and the shame and the despising that belongs to us in all these different ways that we oppress and all these different ways that we enslave and all these different ways that we hurt people, all that scorn is directed to Jesus.

If you've been a part of the church for any length of time, you are used to the Gospel going to the oppressed and the poor and we hear that all the time and we agree and we love that and that is so beautiful about Jesus. But, Jesus Himself pushes the boundaries to whom He shows mercy. He pushes the boundaries even beyond what you and I would allow or even want. He shows mercy to an oppressor. A person who lives and works from the center of power to exploit the weak. Jesus shows him mercy. What a Savior. He goes after him.

Jesus says, "This man is lost. And by lost, I don't mean forgotten. I mean that he is loved and I want him to be found. I want Zacchaeus to be saved."

So, Jesus goes to be the guest of that kind of sinner. We would call him a sinner, but not the good kind of sinner. We would call someone who extorts like that not the good kind. Not the kind that you and I would want Jesus to go and save. But, Jesus does. And look how Zacchaeus responds to Jesus. Zacchaeus says, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

What happens here is repentance and restitution. Repentance and restitution. I think we understand repentance. We talk a lot about repentance in the church. We don't talk that much about restitution; about making wrongs right. Zacchaeus is so deeply changed by the mercy of Christ that not only does he say, "I repent," but he goes, "I will make it right. If I have cheated anyone out of anything." That assumes that he has. It assumes. He's repenting. But, not just repentance; restitution. He wants to make it right. He gives half away. And giving half away under Jewish law is way more than is generous. It's borderline insanity. You do not do that. You can be generous. You can give away a percentage. But, if you give away half of what you have, that's insanity.

He says, "I'm going to give away half of everything I own. Not just my money in my savings. Not money in my third savings account. Everything I own, I'm cutting it in half and I'm giving it to the poor. And then I'm paying back four times the amount for the extortion that I've caused."

That's double the penalty. When you extort, you had to pay, by law, twice the amount. He said, "I'm going to put myself under a double penalty."

And here's the point: when Zacchaeus lets Jesus in his home, he lets him all the way in his home. All the way to the deepest parts of his life where he had done the deepest wrong and where the deepest healing needs to take place. And when Jesus gets there, when Jesus gets into the deepest part of Zacchaeus' heart, then Zacchaeus is free, then Zacchaeus is saved.

And then Jesus uses this word here. I love this. When Zacchaeus says, "I give it all. I'm going to give half. I'm going to make it right," Jesus says, "Today salvation has come to this house."

Salvation has come to this house. Meaning not just his home, but his life. Like, Zacchaeus, today, is showing signs of being regenerated. A new heart, a new life. "Salvation," Jesus says, "has come to this house."

And look at the signs of salvation. When there's salvation that happens in our lives and when the saving power of Jesus gets ahold of us, there becomes financial promiscuity. Like, we're just promiscuous with our money. Like, we get so close to the generosity of God that God makes us generous. It's like we can't keep our wallets in our pants. It's like, "No. I've got to give. No, no, no. I've got to give. No, no. God has done such a... I'm going to get it. Who has need? I'll give."

Like, when someone is financially promiscuous, you're like, "Something's changed."

When we're sexually promiscuous, everybody's like, "Oh, yeah. Yeah. Who's not?"

But, when someone becomes – there's a lot of nervous laughter. There was. Really weird nervous laughter. When someone becomes holy in their sexual laugh but promiscuous in their financial life, you will look at someone like, "Salvation has come to this house. There's something. You've changed. Something has happened."

And this is what happens to Zacchaeus. He becomes free. He's like, "Take my stuff. I'm free. It doesn't own me anymore. I'm free and I want to make it right."

And that's the second thing, too. When the saving power of Jesus gets ahold of us, there's a need to make things right. You don't move on and say, "Well, that thing I did, it's covered under the blood of Jesus. Move on."

No. I mean, yes, but no. Some of us have to call people whose lives we wrecked and do everything that we can to make it right, because you've wrecked peoples lives. And you don't have to do the whole preachy thing. Just, "I want to say I'm sorry. I'm sorry for what I've done to you. I'm sorry for that. I feel like I did a lot of damage and I want to ask for your forgiveness."

They might not offer it. They might say, "I don't forgive you." They might say that. They may say, "Well, I don't forgive you."

And that's something that you have to seriously, honestly bring before God. But, there's that change that happens where I want to make it right. What do I do to make this right, because I want to make restitution? I don't just want to repent and go, "Oh, I can just move on? You're saying that Jesus gives me a free start where I can just forget my past and then move on? All the damage I've done and just move on all happy-go-lucky?"

No. Make it right. But please, understand the order of grace in this story. Understand the order of grace. This is very, very important. Does Zacchaeus say, "I'm giving away everything," and Jesus says, "Okay. Now I'll come home with you."

That's not what happens. Jesus says, "I'll come home with you," and Zacchaeus hasn't even really repented. He's on the tree still and Jesus says to Zacchaeus, "I want to come home with you."

And Zacchaeus hasn't even repented yet. I mean, the evangelical thing to say here is, "We have to invite Jesus into our lives." But here, Jesus invites Himself into his life. Zacchaeus doesn't go, "Jesus, would You come stay with me? I'm going to invite You into my heart."

No. Jesus was like, "Hey. I'm coming over."

And Zacchaeus is like, "Okay. Let's do this. That's awesome. Come over."

Jesus does not say, "If you clean up your life and stop extorting and cheating, I will come live with you."

Jesus says, "I'll come live with you," and Zacchaeus says, "Okay. I'll stop cheating."

"I'm going to come live with you."

"Okay. I'll stop. I'm changed. Bringing the life of God and the salvation of God in, I'm changed."

That's what's going on here. That Jesus says, "Despite your sin and your past and even your present, I want to be with you," and that changes Zacchaeus. That itself, that grace, that mercy, that seeking and saving the lost, that going after this person that you and I would probably not go after. You and I would probably go after the sexually broken people. You and I would probably go after the poor and the oppressed. But, this oppressor we probably would not go after. But, Jesus goes after him and it changes him and he repents, he opens up his wallet and his life to people, he becomes hospitable to Jesus, he makes restitution.

I feel even saying that sits pretty heavy in this room. I think that some of you guys think that once I become a Christian I just cut my ties with all my old stuff and move on. And I believe even God is inviting Himself into your life in a way and He's like, "Go make that right. Because you've been changed by the Gospel, go make that right. As much as is in your power, go make that right. Because, what you did there, you did a lot of hurt and a lot of damage in that person's life."

But, as we kind of close here, let's imagine an alternate ending to the story. Let's imagine how it could have gone. It could have gone something like this: Jesus comes over the Zacchaeus' house. Zacchaeus hosts Jesus. He thinks Jesus is great. Thinks that Jesus is a wonderful dinner guest; a fun conversationalist. Has some very interesting things to say about spirituality and life with God. And, after a couple days, Jesus leaves and Zacchaeus says by to Him at the door and says, "Jesus, we should do this again sometime. I feel like I'm a better version of me when I'm near You. You bring peace into my house. Thank You. Goodbye."

End of story. Imagine that alternate ending. I think that might sound familiar to some of us. I mean, that's basically how we treat Jesus. "Jesus, You for a couple hours on Sunday. Oh, man. It was so good. I sang these songs and I prayed these things. Well, that was great. You made me feel a lot better. Well, see You later. Thanks for hanging."

That's it. That's the alternate ending. That's not what Zacchaeus did. Jesus comes close to Zacchaeus and Zacchaeus brings Jesus all the way in. Not just to his house, but to his heart, his gut, his center. He brings Jesus all the way in. I also want to point out what Jesus said to Zacchaeus. I think this is important. If I've earned any of your listening trust, listen to this: Jesus says, "Come down immediately. I must stay at your house today. I must stay at your house today."

I want that word "today" just to sit for a second. Today. I must stay at your house today. The clarity that you have today is not guaranteed tomorrow. The proximity that you have to Jesus today is not guaranteed tomorrow. The invitations of Jesus right now are not guaranteed tomorrow. And here is why I say that: because of human nature. We get good at whatever we do. If we ignore the light, we will get really good at ignoring the light. If we ignore the invitation of Jesus, we will get really good at ignoring the invitation of Jesus. And, eventually, we can't even hear the invitation anymore.

Soon enough, we are no longer singing, "And I'm asking You, Jesus, show Yourself." We stop singing that. But, if we respond to the light, there is more light. It says in Hebrews, "Today, if you hear His voice, turn. Today, if you hear His voice, turn to Him."

There is something about the immediacy of what Jesus is calling Zacchaeus into. Because, Zacchaeus might not have that opportunity tomorrow. If he doesn't say yes to the invitation of Jesus, that invitation could go away and it could look like Zacchaeus is just not climbing up on the tree the next day and just going, "Yeah. I've done that. Not today. I'm too busy today. I'm not going to climb the tree today. Yesterday, maybe. Today? No."

If, today, you hear His voice. If, today, you are sensing the invitation of Jesus in whatever capacity and whatever that looks like, respond to that. So, I want to sit with this question for just a second. In what areas of your life do you sense Jesus inviting Himself into? What areas of your life do you sense that Jesus is inviting Himself into? In the book of Revelation, Jesus is talking to the Church when He says, "I stand at the door and I knock and whoever opens I will come in and I will eat with them and they with me."

I do believe that Jesus is wanting to invite Himself into people's lives today. It's not us going, "I'm going to invite Jesus into my heart." No. Jesus is like, "I want into this thing and I want in all the way and I want you to take me in all the way to the deepest part in

all these areas that you're pushing me out of and all these areas that you don't want me in. I want into those areas. I want into your life and into the very fabric of your life and the way that you live your life and I want all the way in."

Because, when Jesus comes in, He brings salvation to those places. He saves us from these things. So, as we close, I just want to sit with that question for a bit. If you would, bow your head with me as we just sit silent for just a second.

Holy Spirit, come, Lord. Lord, I believe that there are all these invitations that are happening right now. Ways that You are asking in and I sense that some people in here feel like this is super silly. Like, almost they feel juvenile right now like it's high school youth camp on the last night of camp. Like, "I'm not doing this again. I'm not going to go there. I know. I bring Jesus in and I have this emotional thing and it's juvenile. I'm not doing it anymore. I'm sick of it."

I just really sense that's going on right now and in some people's hearts right now just the absolute childishness of this whole thing. And I want to pray, right now, for that childlike, even childish sort of faith of Zacchaeus that would throw aside our dignity and throw aside our pride for a second and just open our lives to, "Yes. I will receive You with joy, Jesus. You want in? You can come in and receive You with joy."

So, Lord, we want to say "yes" to the invitations of Christ today. Holy Spirit, I pray You would minister and make us ministers right now. I pray that we would respond to You. If it's been too long since we've opened areas of our life to You that have just been calloused, I pray if we hear the voice of God today we would not grow hard. Our hearts would not grow hard.

Spirit of the Living God, fall on us right now. We ask for salvation to come in. I ask, if anyone here, Lord, they're not "saved," meaning they have not received Christ, they have not said "yes" to the invitation of Jesus or whatever or however they would say that or phrase that, I pray that today they would. That today salvation would come.

So, Lord, I pray that we would respond to You now. In Jesus' name, amen.