Series: Kingdom Come

Sermon: Zacchaeus

Scripture: Luke 19:1-10

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This last week I had the wonderful opportunity to go on a short missions trip to meet up with one of the ministers we commissioned out of Trinity. We spent most of our time helping with refugees. It was actually kind of funny. On the way up I lost my voice. Just gone. It was like God said, “I love you Mike, but would you just shut up and listen for a few days?” I did. I heard story after story of people who have lost so much and desperately need help. One example. One of the leaders said they did a “get to know each other” game and a question they asked was, “If you could visit anywhere in the world where would you go?” Rome, Italy, the Swiss Alps? Nope. Without knowing what each other wrote they all wrote, “home.” I’m still processing it all. On the way home I was thinking about what we as people who live in Indianapolis can do to help refugees and immigrants more. What went through my mind was simply this. “We (including me) are so busy there is no way we can fit more in.”

Let me offer a thought.

We as modern Christians, who really love Jesus, are so busy trying to please people who are never satisfied. We are exhausting ourselves trying to live up to expectations that are unrealistic. When we’re finally near burnout, we cut out the wrong groups and give even more to the systems and people that wear us out and can’t deliver real hope and wholeness.

We bail on church to work a few more hours to make the company just a little wealthier.

We skip on prayer to watch another game that we know our coworkers will want to talk about.

We destroy our financial margin to buy yet another expensive toy to try to fit in with people and appease an insatiable socioeconomic system.

Time gone, money gone, energy exhausted.

It’s ironic that the people who have so much can’t ever find enough.

If Satan can’t steal your heart, he will steal your time. Until you become so bitter that you aren’t better and your heart grows cold.

I can see all this happening when people become angry at the church for asking them to do things like give to a charity or serve on a ministry team or join a prayer group. What they actually hate is the conviction that they don’t have enough conviction to break free from what is actually killing them.

Let’s look at Zacchaeus.

Lectio:

Luke 19:1–10 (ESV)

He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” 6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” 9 And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” [[1]](#footnote-2)

Meditatio:

* Jericho was known as a place of sin. Jesus goes into the places of sin.
* Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, probably middle aged and extremely wealthy. He knew deeply the social norms of Rome and what pleased the Empire. He represents a highly successful, well dressed, (likely) well-traveled, valued by Rome professional.
* Something in him is drawn into Jesus. Don’t dismiss this. We should cooperate with spiritual prompts that pull us to Christ.

Oratio:

* Jesus is for everyone, but he will leave no one the same. To accept Jesus is to be changed by Jesus.
* The greatest enemy of spiritual freedom to the busy, wealthy, successful people in Jesus’s day is the same for us. It’s simply that you don’t have time for Jesus.
* To walk towards Christ you will have to walk away from something.

A Poem:

In this bustling modern world, where we tread,

We chase worldly success with hopes widespread,

But often in this insatiable race,

We find no solace, no peaceful place.

For we toil to please the crowd,

In search of their praise, we are bound,

Yet deep within, a longing grows,

To find true peace in our restless souls.

But in the midst of this never-ending chase,

We hear a whisper of amazing grace,

It's the love of Jesus, pure and profound,

A refuge where true serenity is found.

Jesus doesn’t demand, He invites.

To walk into His grace,

You must walk away from this world’s pace.

He defines what is rest.

He defines what is best.

He defines what is play.

He defines what should stay.

To walk into solace is to become alien.

People will think you socially falling.

Some will call you lost.

Some will call you lazy.   
Others will think giving Jesus this much is just crazy.

But its in Him alone your burden becomes light,

In Him alone you find peace from the inner fight.

In selfless love and boundless grace,

You will discover a peaceful, sacred space.

So, let go of the rush, the worldly fray,

For busy Christians, it’s knowing what actually needs to stop that’s the play.

Actio:

* What worldly business or people pleasing is robbing you of being with Jesus and doing His work?
* If you would, stand and let me pray over you!

1. The Holy Bible: English Standard Version (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)