

Weekly Sermon Discussion Guide

April 7, 2019

Labels

LUKE

Luke 19:1-10

EXPLORING THE SERMON

- What did you hear?
- What did you think or feel about what you heard?
- What is one thing you can take away from the sermon this week?

KEY VERSES

²A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵When 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." ⁶So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁹Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Luke 19

DISCUSSION AND REFLECTION

As Jesus enters Jericho in this passage, the grumbling of the religious leaders continues to grow louder, as they watch Jesus' every move looking for reasons to rebuke Him. Known as "the city of palm trees," Jericho was a rich city and an important center of trade. Zacchaeus is a wealthy Jewish public official who, working under the protection of the Roman government, is seen as a traitor who easily profits off his own Jewish people.

As Zacchaeus tries to glimpse Jesus entering Jericho, both the growing crowds and his small stature make it difficult. The fact that Zacchaeus resorts to climbing a tree, assuming the dignity and pride held by a chief publican as himself, suggests tremendous foresight and determination just to see Jesus. According to Judaism, publicans were not counted as God's people who would benefit from the Messiah's coming. **What do you think prompted Zacchaeus to humble himself and go to such lengths to see Jesus? What can this teach us about how hard we are willing to work to pursue knowledge of the Lord?**

In this passage we see many labels. **How are these labels from ancient Jericho similar to those which divide our society so vastly today? Why is it easier than ever to separate ourselves from others when we let labels define our perspectives?**

SOCIETY'S LABELS

Chief tax collector
Rich
Short
Sinner

JESUS' LABELS

Zacchaeus
Son of Abraham

Jesus doesn't do anything extraordinary or miraculous with Zacchaeus. He simply connects with him, regardless of the label placed on Zacchaeus by society. He invites himself to Zacchaeus' house, just as he welcomes and guides those by grace who seem to be furthest from it. **Discuss what it would look like if we model Jesus, and approach all people the same way, regardless of their labels.** As Thomas said, "people don't care what you know until they know that you care." **What would it look like if we prioritize building relationships over taking sides? Why is it not "wishy washy" to follow Jesus and learn from each other?**

Lord, we give you thanks that you look at us equally as your sons and daughters. Help us, with your grace, to nurture the relationships with those whom you have placed in our midst, and to welcome others. Amen.