

Unlikely Saints

Living the Liturgical Year

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

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. ⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner." ⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." 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."

REFLECTION

On All Saint's Sunday, we are reminded how the memories and virtues of the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us can become our own strength today. Giving thanks for our community of faith helps us point to the people who have encouraged us to live faithful lives. ***Who comes to mind for you of someone whose life continues to shape and form you?***

Zacchaeus, chief tax collector and the main character in today's text, exposes himself to public ridicule by climbing a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus. The crowd's angry response is not surprising when Jesus chooses Zacchaeus to be his host during his stay in Jericho. It is easy to become annoyed when people like Zacchaeus receive grace they don't deserve, but we love to receive grace when it applies to us. ***How can you relate to the crowd's response in verse 7?***

Perhaps Zacchaeus' motivation to be made well and live a more meaningful life was worth his inevitable public humiliation. Jesus' declaration of salvation to Zacchaeus is immediate and without strings (verse 9). ***Would we be so quick to accept and forgive someone like Zacchaeus? Or as Jill put it, would we welcome only the recovered person, or would we welcome them as they are recovering?***

Let's not forget that included in that great cloud of witnesses are unlikely saints like tax collectors, helping us understand that what makes us all saints is not our ability to be saintly, but our willingness to allow God to work through us as sinners. Though our stories may contain events that bring us shame and failure, grace is always available to us. ***Along with identifying who in your life is worthy of imitating, also consider what you are leaving behind for those who will follow you. This week let's share and celebrate not that we have it all together, but that Jesus came to save us - the lost - and no one is out of reach of his friendship.***