

Outcasts Part 6

The Faith of Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1-10

Memory Verses: Luke 19:10

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

No one likes to feel othered. Do you know what I mean about othered? It's what people do to those who don't fit their view of normal. If you don't believe what they believe then you are an other. If you don't live like they live, you are an other. If you don't do what they want you to do, you are othered. I'm sure that at some time in the last year, last month, last week, or even last day, you've found yourself being othered; maybe to a small degree, or maybe in a very real and hurtful way.

I love that when I come to Stone Creek Church I don't feel othered. When I come here I get to be me. My mistakes, my style, my race, my politics, none of that matters when I'm with my faith family. You, my brothers and sisters, love me for who I am, and I thank you for that.

And why are we not othered here? Because we all know a fundamental truth about life; we are all on the same level playing field before Christ. We've all sinned, we've all fallen short, and if we've repented and placed our faith in Christ, we've all been forgiven and made a child of God. There truly is amazing grace here!

In the past weeks we've looked at those who had been othered in Jesus' day. John the Baptist, The Twelve Disciples, and the women who followed Christ, all found a place to belong, a place where they no longer felt like an other, at the feet of Jesus.

Today we want to turn our attention to another outcast, another person who had been othered by society. Zacchaeus. You may know of his story from your childhood. "Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and a wee little man was he, he climbed into sycamore tree to see what he could see." Right? Can you guess why Zacchaeus may have been othered? Could it be because he was short? I have a feeling that Zacchaeus had been made fun of and othered his whole life because of how short he was. Perhaps that is why he became a tax collector; he was already seen as an outcast, so he might as well make some money while he was at it, right?

If only someone would have accepted Zacchaeus for who he was. If only someone had been sent to tell him the good news of salvation in Christ. Perhaps he could have found a place to belong.

And that's exactly what happened. Look with me in **Luke 19:1-10**. You can just tell that Zacchaeus was unloved and uncared for. No one in the crowd would let him through. No one would let him get close to

Christ. So he has to climb up into a tree. I can see this being a little embarrassing. In those days they wore tunics. Climbing a tree could reveal a lot about a person if you know what I mean. But Zacchaeus doesn't care anymore about being embarrassed, he only cares about one thing, seeing Jesus.

It's interesting here to note that because Zacchaeus couldn't come to Jesus, Jesus came to him. You know what we call people who go to those who can't get to Jesus on their own? We call them missionaries. In this moment we get a glimpse of Jesus the missionary, who's mission that day was to find Zacchaeus and let him know that he is loved. Today's sermon only has one point and it is this... **If you want to be like Christ, go to those who have been othered and show them that they belong in the family of God.**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing we need to recognize this morning is that **Zacchaeus' Response To Jesus Shows A Faith Which Repents**. Look with me starting again in **Luke 19:5-8**. Jesus calls up to Zacchaeus and tells him that he must stay at his house. Notice, this IS the call of Christ. The same call that he gave to the disciples when he told them to lay down their nets. The same call he gave to Matthew when he called him out of his booth. The same call he gave to the woman at the well when he told her of the true living water. And the same call he gave to Mary Magdalene when he cast out her demons and forgave her sins.

How does Zacchaeus respond to this calling? It says he hurried to Christ and received him joyfully. Here's the thing, and I know I've said it many times, but when someone who is aware of their sinfulness and when someone is sick of being on the outside of the kingdom, sees that there is a place for them in Christ, they run to Him as fast as they can, and after receiving him they are filled with more joy than they can express.

Question; **has there ever been a time when you ran to Christ?** Has there ever been a time in your life when you were so sure of your sin and failure that you knew that no one else could fix you other than Christ and so you ran to him as fast as you could? If not, perhaps today is a day to run to Him. And I promise you, when you do you will find a joy like you've never known before. Notice that Zacchaeus life immediately transforms. Notice that he doesn't just sit around and think, okay, that was a fun experience, now what. No, he knows what to do. He immediately sells half of everything he has and gives it to the poor. He immediately pays back those he's stolen from four times more than what he took. **Zacchaeus bankrupts himself of his earthly wealth because he has found eternal wealth.**

The point is simple, we know that Zacchaeus has a genuine faith in Christ as his Lord, because his life shows it. He immediately repents and is transformed from who he used to be to who he was always destined to be.

He was an outcast; othered because of his size and because of his profession, but now none of that matters because he has found where he belongs, In Christ! And at that point, all of those who were in Christ became his brothers and sisters. At that point, Zacchaeus finally had a family. **If you want to be like Christ, go to those who have been othered and show them that they belong in the family of God.**

The second thing we need to recognize this morning is that... **Jesus' Resolve For Zacchaeus Gives Us A Mission To Reflect.** Look with me again at **Luke 19:5 & 9.** Isn't it clear that Jesus loves this man. That Jesus doesn't look down on him because of his size or his sin. Instead Jesus cares for him so much that he chooses his route specifically to come and see Zacchaeus. Notice in **verse 5** how Jesus already knows his name. This is something we all know but often take for granted. Jesus knows our names. Jesus knows everything about us. And Jesus is the one who loves us more than anyone else could ever love us.

I love how Jesus chooses his route specifically for Zacchaeus. It shows that Jesus had a mission and his mission was specific. He knew where he had to go and he knew who he had to speak to. **Do you have a specific mission?** Of course we are all called to love everyone with the love of Christ and share the Gospel with them... but what is your SPECIFIC mission? Who is your Each One Reach One? Do you know their name?

Also notice in **verse 9** where Jesus tells Zacchaeus that he is saved, he also adds that Zacchaeus is a son of Abraham. These are probably the words that Zacchaeus had been longing for forever. For so long now Zacchaeus has felt othered; put outside of his tribe of Israel, but now Jesus assures him, you are now more of a child of Abraham than you ever were before. You aren't an other, Zacchaeus, you are a part of this family! **If you want to be like Christ, go to those who have been othered and show them that they belong in the family of God.**

Application

So what does the story of Zacchaeus mean for us today? I think it all boils down to **verse 10.** Jesus CAME to SEEK and to save the lost. Jesus had a specific mission to come to Zacchaeus. He had a specific mission to come to you! And just as he sought Zacchaeus, he has sought you too! Jesus is the missionary. **Jesus is THE missionary of God! No distance is too far for him, not soul is to lost for Him.** When it comes to Christ, we are all "others," but he has come to let us know that we can find a place to belong in Him. **If you want to be like Christ, go to those who have been othered and show them that they belong in the family of God.**

You are also called to be a missionary! And, you have two routes you can take. You can be a local missionary or you can be a foreign missionary.

As a local missionary you will have a specific and strategic mission to reach your neighbors, co-workers, and friends. In remaining in the states you will support foreign missionaries strategically through your prayers, your finances, and your correspondences. You will be on mission while supporting missions.

And if by chance you have an overwhelming calling that you can't shake, perhaps you will be called to the foreign mission field to reach people like Zacchaeus in the hard to reach places of the world. It is our desire that God would call people out of Stone Creek Church to go and be missionaries to the unreached. Is God calling you to that this morning?

Conclusion

God has given us some amazing missionaries that we support. This morning I want you to be able to hear from them. And as we close this morning I want to give you an opportunity to pray for them and write to them. We have multiple stations setup around this room where you can pray for specific missionaries and local agencies. You can pick up a prayer card for them if you don't already have one and then you can write a short note in a card for them that we will send out to them tomorrow. When you are finished at each station you are free to be dismissed.