



CORE  
VALUES

Pittsford Community Church

## Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked

### 1) Embraced a non-Jewish lifestyle



## Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked

- 1) Embraced a non-Jewish lifestyle
- 2) He was a tax collector



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- 1) Embraced a non-Jewish lifestyle
- 2) He was a tax collector
- 3) He was a Jew working for Rome



## Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked

- 1) Embraced a non-Jewish lifestyle
- 2) He was a tax collector
- 3) He was a Jew working for Rome
  
- 4) He took from people for his own gain



**Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked**  
**(Same reasons applied to today)**

**1) Embraced an alternative lifestyle**



## Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked (Same reasons applied to today)

- 1) Embraced an alternative lifestyle
- 2) He had a job disdained by people



## Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked (Same reasons applied to today)

- 1) Embraced an alternative lifestyle
- 2) He had a job disdained by people
- 3) He could have chosen differently





## **Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked** **(Same reasons applied to today)**

- 1) Embraced an alternative lifestyle**
- 2) He had a job disdained by people**
- 3) He could have chosen differently**
- 4) He personally attributed to others suffering**



## **Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked** **(Same reasons applied to today)**

- 1) Embraced an alternative lifestyle**
- 2) He had a job disdained by people**
- 3) He could have chosen differently**
- 4) He personally attributed to others suffering**
  
- 5) He was a wee man**



## Zacchaeus: The Man Nobody Liked

*“He wanted to see who Jesus was...”*

- Luke 19:3



***“Many churches have told me that they are very friendly, but usually that is because they now have deep and lasting relationships that are grounded in many years of connection. The newcomers do not have any of that, and the question “Do I belong?” is central to their mind.”***

- David Stark, *Reaching Millennials*



## Zacchaeus and Jesus

***“When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’”***

- Luke 19:5



## Zacchaeus and Jesus

*Often before we are willing to love people,  
we demand that people first change.*



## Zacchaeus and Jesus

***“Jesus said to them, ‘It is not the healthy that need a physician, but the sick...I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.’”***

- Mark 2:17



## Zacchaeus and Jesus

***“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.”***

- 2 Cor. 5:14-15





**Application:**

**For the seeker:**

***Climb the tree***

**For the church:**

***Be the tree***





## **Cultural Relevancy**

The Gospel transcends culture and yet is grounded in it. We are called to be a distinct community within Pittsford for the sake of Pittsford. We desire to contribute to the overall welfare and renewal of this and surrounding communities by expressing and embodying the ethics of God's kingdom. Therefore, we seek to equip the body to respond biblically to cultural issues, and to engage our community with integrity, authenticity, faithfulness, and love (Matthew 5:13-16, Luke 19:10).

Sunday Sermon  
10/30/22  
Series: Core Values  
Passage: Luke 19:1-10  
Title: Cultural Relevancy

Good morning! Please turn in your bibles this morning to Luke 19:1-10. We've been working through our Core Values series as a church – there are 10 of them. If you are interested in more information about them you can pick up this info card at the Welcome Center or you can visit our website. So far, we've worked through our inward values: Biblical Fidelity, Generational Discipleship, Authentic Community, and Personal Responsibility. And today we finish up our outward values: Global Mentality, Missional Strategy, with today's core value: Cultural Relevancy. So, to begin this morning, let's ground ourselves, as we always do, in the truth of scripture. And look together at Luke 19:1-10. Please follow along while read.

**[Read text]**

Since it is Halloween tomorrow, I thought I'd bring with me this morning one of my favorite children's books, "Room on the Broom." Why is it my favorite? Because it's cute and a fun read. But I brought it with me this morning because it's a great lead into my sermon. You see, Room on the Broom is a story of encounter. There's a witch who has a cat, who loses her hat, and through that event meets a dog, who is not a cat, but for whatever reason wants to go with them. Then they meet a bird. Then a frog. But each time there's an encounter the same question is asked, "Is there room on the broom for a \_\_\_\_\_ like me?" That is such a great question when it comes to our value of cultural relevancy.

I could fill our entire time this morning about how the Lord has been moving in our family this past year. Specifically, how the Lord has been using my wife, Becky. This is a God story. Just a few weeks ago, my wife was invited to have a conversation with a woman we both know. This woman is going through a cancer journey as well. And we haven't kept in touch with her, but by ridiculous coincidence (also known as divine providence) Becky and her reconnected again at the cancer center. In that conversation she wanted to talk about faith. She's had some experience with the church growing up, has heard about Jesus, but she is not a Christian, not really connected. But here's the interesting part: Recently, she and her partner started listening to Christian music. They even went to a Christian concert, where they heard the gospel, and were given the invitation to become Christians and follow Jesus. They have even started exploring different churches.

God has begun tugging on her heart, and she wants to see who Jesus is. But there's an issue. She's a lesbian. Now I don't know if it's always been that way, but I do know that she has had relationships of this kind in the past and her current relationship is no different. But God has begun to draw her.

And when she met with Becky, her question was, "Is there room on the broom? Is there room for me in the family of God?"

**Phase 1: Zacchaeus**

Our passage this morning is about a well-known biblical character who was looking for an answer to the same question. His name was Zacchaeus. Now let me give you some insight into Zacchaeus for a minute.

Zacchaeus lived in Jericho. This was not the Jericho of OT times, this Jericho had been rebuilt by Herod the Great. But to the faithful Jew, Jericho still carried some baggage. It was not a neutral place. Much like Vegas ("Sin City") is not a neutral place for many Christians today. Not only did Jericho carry with it the stigma of Jewish history – as a barrier to the deliverance of God's people from Egypt's oppression – it now stood as a place of that represented the oppression and influence of Rome. It was a place where kings vacationed, a place that embraced a largely secular culture.

That didn't sit well with the faithful Jew, as many were awaiting a Messiah who would once again free them from oppression. Zacchaeus had chosen to live there. This meant that he outwardly, and mostly likely inwardly, embraced a non-Jewish lifestyle and wasn't anti Roman rule. Strike one in the mind of the Jew.

Strike two was that Zacchaeus was a tax collector. This meant he was viewed as the scum of the earth. This was one of the most hated professions of the time. It meant that he worked for the Roman government. He was on the enemy's team. That made him the outcast.

More than that, he, himself, was a Jew. Strike three. He chose to side with the enemy. Therefore, he was seen as a traitor to the Jewish people. He was not only adding to the problem, but actively a part of the problem, oppressing his own people. Jews didn't just have a low opinion of Zacchaeus. They actually hated him.

But even more than all that, when tax-time came, tax collectors made their money by overcharging the people and then pocketing the difference. Strike four. Price gouging was a common practice even in bible times, and it says that Zacchaeus was a wealthy man.

Now let's spend some time here, so we can sit in this reality for a moment.

Who are the Zacchaeus' for us today?

**We need to understand that** Zacchaeus embraced an alternative lifestyle. He wasn't a good Jew. He didn't follow closely the Jewish faith or God's law. He embraced and was engaged in practices that were sinful before God. Do we know anyone like that? People who don't have the same political or moral convictions as we do? People of other races? Cultures? Faiths? The LGBTQ community?

Zacchaeus also had a job that was distained by people. What jobs do we have a very negative view of today? Politicians? The Adult entertainment industry? Big business executives?

Religious workers? Who is it that, looking at them, we have a hard time not viewing them with judgment and hostility?

**Third,** Zacchaeus came from a background where he should have known better. You see, in our minds, maybe there is some room for grace for the person who never had a chance due to their upbringing. But what about the person who grew up hearing truth and then rejected it? Who knows the laws of God and chooses against them? It's often much harder to embrace with love or extend grace to that person.

**And then** there was the personal offense side of it. Understanding might be given to the person who is a passive bystander, but Zacchaeus was the one who hurt people. Took their money.

Contributed to their hardship/oppression. What about people who are actively hostile?  
Personally offending? Working against?

That was Zacchaeus. He is the shining example of the person that we have a really hard time with. An outsider in every sense of the word and undeserving in matters pertaining to God.

And if that's not enough, on top of all of that, Zacchaeus was a wee man. What a jerk! He wasn't some strong imposing figure that intimidated everyone around him and struck fear into the hearts of his adversaries. No, physically one looked at him thinking to themselves, "I could break you." And yet there he was compensating for his shortness by hiding behind the power of Rome. Untouchable and smug in all of his weeness.

Question: Does Zacchaeus deserve God's love? Could Zacchaeus ever receive God's acceptance? Or maybe the most important question: Would Zacchaeus ever want a relationship with God? Ever desire to experience an encounter with him?

I believe our default is often to say, "no." He doesn't deserve love but judgment and justice. He shouldn't receive acceptance, at least not until he changes his way. He's too far gone to ever be interested in things of the Lord. He's too wrapped up in his own thing to ever care about God's thing. He's too wealthy to see or to understand his own need.

But don't miss verse 3. It says, "**He** (yes even he, even Zacchaeus) **wanted to see who Jesus was.**" Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming. He had heard the stories. He had encountered the people that encountered the person. And thought to himself, "I wonder what he's about." He wanted to see Jesus.

The bible tells us that God draws all people to himself. And when God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ, it's not surprising that Jesus drew people to himself. People long for life, long to be filled. There is a desire among many to see who Jesus is.

Back to the woman Becky met with, her question was, "Is there room for me in the family of God?"

David Stark in his book *"Reaching Millennials,"* talks about the concept of the church's "front door" and creating a space for those outside the church to come explore and to find a place in the church. In that, he makes this statement, "**Many churches have told me that they are very friendly, but usually that is because they now have deep and lasting relationships that are grounded in many years of connection. The newcomers do not have any of that, and the question "Do I belong?" is central to their mind.**"

That was this woman's question, "With all of who I am, do I belong? Is there any room for me among the people of God?"

And no doubt, that was Zacchaeus' question as well. He, too, wanted to see who Jesus was. But would there be room for the Zacchaeus' in Jesus' world?

**Phase 2: Jesus**

Let's see (v. 4). So Zacchaeus climbs the sycamore tree because he was vertically challenged. And (v.5) ***"when Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.'"***

Now this response of Jesus tells us a lot. The Greek word he uses here is "speudo"—it's where we get our word "speed" from. It means "hurry!" Jesus says, ***"Hurry and come down. I MUST stay at your house today."***

I love that word must. "I MUST stay at your house." This is not Jesus saying, "For the second time now there's no room for me in the inn and now I have no choice, I MUST, stay with you." It tells us that Jesus had a desire to be there, and to be there with Zacchaeus.

It's like how people visiting the area say, "I need to visit Wegmans while I'm in town." There's this sense of "while I'm in town, I must do this. Because, like, it's awesome and I really want to do it."

That is what Jesus is communicating to Zacchaeus, "Zacchaeus, I'm here to see you, and I really want to be here with you."

Jesus engaged Zacchaeus, an undeserving and hated outcast, with relationship and value. Jesus cuts through all the stigma, all the baggage, and sees the person - a person who is hungry for a relational and accepting gesture. **And make a note: this was before Zacchaeus did anything to indicate repentance or change.**

Beloved, hear the truth: ***Often before we are willing to love people, we demand that people first change.***

We adopt the mindset of, "Leave your life of sin, and then God will accept you."

In the case of the woman with Becky, the law-adhering Christian might say, "If you want to follow Jesus, you need to get out of your homosexual lifestyle. Then you will be accepted by God. Anything less is just pretending."

**Listen: That is not the gospel, and that is not the picture of love that we see from Jesus.**

Now, don't get me wrong. According to God, homosexuality is a sin. What that means is, it is a practice contrary to what God intended for human sexuality. And because we value biblical fidelity here at PCC, we will never compromise God's truth. But the gospel of Jesus Christ is not "get rid of all your filth and then come to me," but ***"come to me and I will give you rest."***

Speaking with the woman caught in adultery, Jesus first said, "Neither do I condemn you." Then he said, "Now go and leave your life of sin."

But here's the rub. Even as Christians, many of us still operate under law and not grace. That's the tendency we see in verse 7 as people mutter about Jesus showing love to Zacchaeus. It reveals a lack of understanding of God's grace – underserved favor: in him we are fully loved, accepted, valued, secure.

I love what the gospel of John says about Jesus, that he perfectly walked in this tension. It says that he came, "full of grace and truth." Fully loving God. Fully loving others.

Jesus said, ***"It is not the healthy that need a physician, but the sick...I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."***

It is unfortunate today that many people think that the church is inaccessible to them. A place only for perfect people. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The church is a place for healing and encounter. The imperfect and the broken and the outcast and the sinner, encountering the presence, the love, and the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

And it's then, as we encounter the love of Jesus, that we are compelled by his love to leave our lives of sin.

This is what Paul says in 2 Cor. 5:14-15, ***"For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again."***

In other words, Jesus Christ, in a great act of love, died for all of our sins. God's law required the blood of a pure and spotless lamb be shed as payment for the sins of the people. The bible tells us that Christ, the Lamb of God, who had no sin, became sin for us. He chose to lay himself down, to suffer the wrath of God's holy judgment on the cross as the eternal payment for sin. To die, and be buried, so that he could trade to us his righteousness and then give to us new life, his life in the power of his resurrection.

This is a gift he has made available to all people. And for all who receive it, the bible says they become children of God, part of God's family, eternally secure in him. That is the love of Christ. And it's this love that compels us to follow him. How could we despise one who has given us so much? Therefore, I choose to honor him with my life.

**Would you give your heart and life to the one who loves and accepts you this morning, and let today be the beginning of a beautiful journey of transformation with him?**

### **Phase 3: Climb the tree**

**In Closing**, if you are here or listening this morning and you are asking the question, "Is there room for me?" I assure you, Jesus' answer to you is "yes." Follow Zacchaeus' example and climb the tree. Put in the work to see Jesus clearly. The crowd often gets in the way of giving us a clear picture of Jesus. Whether it's society, or our social circles, or social media. What we often get is a distorted picture of the real Jesus.

Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was for himself, so he climbed the tree. Seek God. Read his word. Pray. Get to know the real Jesus.

And because he did that, Zacchaeus encountered Jesus. We have no idea what Jesus said to Zacchaeus during his time with him, but it changed his life.. He encountered Christ and the power of the gospel so powerfully that it began to transform him. Jesus never forced Zacchaeus to do anything. Rather, it was the love of Jesus that compelled him to follow Jesus and in that, began to make some changes in his life that were honoring to the Lord.

And it all started because he climbed the tree.

### **Phase 4: the Church**

But now then follows an exhortation to the church. Be the tree. Be the tree that people climb to see Jesus. At the end of our passage Jesus makes two important statements: ***"This man is a son of Abraham."*** (9) This is a value statement. He is saying that even the Zacchaeus' of the

world are not beyond the scope of God's love and acceptance. To be the tree, we must understand that all people are deeply loved by God. We need grace for that.

The second statement Jesus made was, ***"For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost."***

(10) This is a purpose statement.

To be the tree we must also understand why Jesus came, and that all people are on a journey. Many of those that God is drawing are beginners at church and Christianity. We need grace for that too. So that, like him, in the power of the Holy Spirit we can engage the outcast with relationship and value.

The tree's job is to lift people up so they can see Jesus clearly.

That's why here at PCC we have adopted the Core Value of "Cultural Relevancy" because ***"The Gospel transcends culture and yet is grounded in it. We are called to be a distinct community within Pittsford for the sake of Pittsford. We desire to contribute to the overall welfare and renewal of this and surrounding communities by expressing and embodying the ethics of God's kingdom. Therefore, we seek to equip the body to respond biblically to cultural issues, and to engage our community with integrity, authenticity, faithfulness, and love (Matthew 5:13-16; Luke 19:10)."***

Is there room in the church for the outcast? I hope so. That is why Jesus came – not to condemn but to save. But, like Zacchaeus, it's his kindness that leads us to repentance. His love which compels us to live for him. This is the power of his Gospel.