



LIFE GROUP SERMON NOTES

“Out on a Limb”

Ps Kore Bendix – January 22, 2017

WARM-UP (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. *No right or wrong answers.*

1. Do you lose your “keys” often? How do you react when you do?
2. If you could have a name that reflects who you are, what would be your name? Why? (Ex. Just one, funny one, lion...)
3. What’s the craziest story you’ve ever heard about what a guy has done to pursue a girl?

He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 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.” So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” 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.” 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.” Luke 19:1-10

WORD (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at bethelbrentwood.org/media.

Many times we don’t value the gift God has given us, because we don’t even realize how far he went to rescue us from the sin we were in. The story of Zacchaeus is a great example of the extent to which Jesus is willing to go to seek us. The way Jesus pursued Zacchaeus and extended him his acceptance, he is willing to do for us as well.

1. **No Exceptions to His Acceptance:** In the above story, we are told that as Jesus was passing through Jericho, Zacchaeus was “seeking to see who Jesus was”. This pursuit may have been birthed out of curiosity, or genuine interest in knowing who this teacher-miracle maker-people transforming person was. Yet, the most astounding part of the story is not that Zacchaeus was seeking Jesus, but that Jesus was seeking Zacchaeus.

Jesus sought Zacchaeus despite the fact he already knew who Zacchaeus was. He knew that his name meant “the just one”, and he knew Zacchaeus behavior didn’t match his name, yet Jesus was willing to accept and restore his life. Jesus knows who we are, yet he pursues us. Jesus knows that there is not consistency between the person we say we are and the person we really are. Yet in the same way he did

with Zacchaeus, he doesn't ask us to clean our house before he would step in. The transformation power is in Jesus, not within ourselves. Salvation is a Person we ought to meet, not some rules to keep.

2. **Jesus Takes Messes And Makes Ministry.** Somewhere between verse 7 and 8, Zacchaeus got convicted. Conviction led to repentance which resulted in salvation. We know this by the way he responded to Jesus calling. He committed to restore anything he had stolen plus 400% restitution. The law only required 120% return in cases of stolen goods - he's giving a 400% return - this response isn't about law but love. Surely the process of giving refunds would create moments of explaining WHY he was acting in this way. This gave a great opportunity to witness the transforming power of Jesus. Our greatest wounds don't have to be WEAKNESSES we carry but WINDOWS through which God's power is seen.

3. Jesus Restores our Identity: SOUGHT FOR SONSHIP

When the people heard Jesus was going to Zacchaeus house, they murmured about Jesus' decision, saying Zacchaeus was a sinner. Yet Jesus told them, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." No matter how low Zacchaeus had fallen, Jesus saw him as a son of Abraham and didn't identify him by his sins. Salvation came to Zacchaeus not as a process, or through principles, but in a PERSON.

Jesus does the same for us. He doesn't call us by our sins, but by the identity he gives us as children of God.

PERSONAL APPLICATION (10-15 minutes)

Choose an item below to discuss, or introduce another related topic for discussion.

1. Which ways did Jesus seek you to lead you to salvation?
2. How can you let your life be a window through which others can see Jesus?
3. How has Jesus changed your identity?

PRAYER (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as any other requests you may have.

- Thank the Lord for all he has done to seek and save you.
- Pray for a person you know that needs to meet Jesus. Pray that God may use you to be their "sycamore" tree which supports them in order for them to be able to see Jesus.
- Thank the Father for calling you his son, for not identifying you with your sins but with His Son.