

Week 3

Sunday

This is the fourth week of our series, “Good News.” The word *Gospel* means news that brings great joy and so we are awakening or re-awakening our appreciation for the Good News. The Good News of the Gospel is that Jesus has come to seek and to save lost humanity. Jesus has come not to condemn the world; it was already condemned. Jesus has come to save it. But Jesus did not just come to seek and to save the world — he came to seek and to save you.

It doesn't matter what you have done in the past. It doesn't matter the ways in which you have been lost or are lost right now, Jesus comes for you. He comes to seek and to save you. He calls you by name and wants to help you out of your situation.

Is there an area of your life where you feel lost? Let Jesus know about it. Share it with him and ask him to help you find your way.

Monday

At that time, Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and also a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature.

Luke 19:1-3

Jesus is walking through the town of Jericho on his way to Jerusalem. His intention, as Luke notes, is to simply pass through. He has no intention of spending any amount of time in the town because he has resolutely determined he is going to Jerusalem.

Zacchaeus hears that Jesus is in the town so he runs ahead and climbs a tree just to get a glimpse of Jesus. Wealthy people didn't run in that culture and they certainly didn't climb trees. These actions tell us how desperate Zacchaeus was for something more out of life. He was wealthy but his financial success didn't bring him happiness. His profession as a tax collector had isolated him from friends and family. He felt lost in life.

Like Zacchaeus, we can turn to money or other material things for meaning but they leave us hollow. We feel lost and unfulfilled as we chase after the wrong things. This hollow feeling draws us back to Jesus and reminds us he is our greatest need.

Invite Jesus into your heart today. Tell him that your greatest need is for him.

Tuesday

So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. *When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house."*

Luke 19:4-5

Zacchaeus just wants to see Jesus, but Jesus exceeds his expectations. This is the Good News of the Gospel. God exceeds our expectations. Zacchaeus had only wanted to see Jesus, but Jesus sees him. It would be like going to a concert or a sporting event. And all you want is to see an artist perform or a player play and then you get taken back stage or into the locker room to meet them personally.

Jesus had only planned to pass through the town on his way to save the whole world, but here he stops for just one person. He notices Zacchaeus and gives him his undivided attention. The greatest expression of love is attention — because when you pay attention to someone, you're giving them your time, and your time is your life.

Jesus stops to pay attention to Zacchaeus and then he calls him by name. The sweetest sound to anyone is the sound of their own name. But this would have been even sweeter for Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was probably called a whole bunch of names — cheat, traitor — and far worse. He heard those whispers. But now Jesus calls him by his real name. Interestingly, his name means "pure one or righteous one."

No one else saw the good in Zacchaeus, but Jesus did. You might feel like no one sees the good in you. You might hear the whispers of negative names as people try to define you by your past failures and mistakes, but Jesus does not. Jesus sees the good in you and the potential for greater good.

Thank Jesus today that he knows your name. Allow yourself time to feel his love and attention for you.

Wednesday

When they all saw this, they began to grumble, saying, "He has gone to stay at the house of a sinner. But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I shall give to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone I shall repay it four times over."

Luke 19:6-8

People grumbled and complained that Jesus went to be with Zacchaeus who was a sinner. But that is precisely who Jesus came for. He came to save sinners. He came to save people who had wandered far from God. Jesus accepted Zacchaeus as he was. This didn't mean he accepted everything Zacchaeus had done. Then, when Zacchaeus felt Jesus' acceptance, he changed.

We mistakenly believe that once we clean up our act, God will accept us and love us. But it is the other way around. We experience God's love and acceptance and then we change. Don't wait to clean up your act before coming to Jesus. Don't wait until you have stopped sinning to go to Jesus. Go to him now. Experience his love and acceptance and trust that he will give you the power to change.

Thank Jesus that he loves and accepts you as you are and gives you the grace to move away from your sins.

Thursday

And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house because this man too is a descendant of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and save what was lost."

Luke 19:9-10

Zacchaeus, who had sold out his countryman and family for the love of money, gives away half his possessions to the poor and vows to pay back any money he extorted from others. He didn't do this because Jesus judged him but because Jesus accepted him and loved him. Zacchaeus knew that his heart would follow his money. In ancient accounts of discipleship, a radical response with possessions was a sign of devotion to a Master. It still is.

Jesus responds by saying that salvation has come to Zacchaeus' house. Before, Zacchaeus had chosen money over a relationship with God and others. Now, he puts God and people first. He has found his way and is no longer lost.

We all get lost from time to time. We wander away from God. Our hearts are prone to wander. The Good News of the Gospel is that God sent his Son to help you find your way, to find your way back to him. Thank Jesus that he wants to help you find your way when you are lost.

Friday

Before the Lord the whole universe is as a grain from a balance, or a drop of morning dew come down upon the earth. But you have mercy on all, because you can do all things; and you overlook people's sins that they may repent.

Wisdom 11:22-23

The whole world to the Lord is small. It is like a grain of sand or a drop of dew. God reigns over all the earth and yet he is intimate. He has mercy and love for every person. When we get lost, he meets us with love and mercy.

When we lose our way, we are tempted to think God is mad at us. But that's not true. It is a lie. God is not mad at you when you are lost; he just wants you to be found.

Pray for the grace to remember God's mercy and to extend that mercy to others. Consider signing up to serve at Christmas Eve at the Fairgrounds as a way to express God's love and mercy. Go to <https://www.churchnativity.com> to volunteer.

Saturday

The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

God is our refuge and our strength,
an ever-present help in distress.
Therefore, we fear not, though the earth be shaken
and mountains plunge into the depths of the sea.

The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

There is a stream whose runlets gladden the city of God,
the holy dwelling of the Most High.
God is in its midst; it shall not be disturbed;
God will help it at the break of dawn.

The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

The LORD of hosts is with us;
our stronghold is the God of Jacob.
Come! behold the deeds of the LORD,
the astounding things he has wrought on earth.

The waters of the river gladden the city of God, the holy dwelling of the Most High!

Psalm 46