

Intro: When we moved to Medford to start Redemption Hill, one of our foundational principles was to recognize the value of reaching just one person. It's tempting to see a city like Boston and be overwhelmed. There are *5 million* people God loves in this city and our heart is to see everyone have an opportunity to hear and respond to the message of Jesus. Why? Because God loves and places an infinite value on each person's soul.

So how would we seek to bring the good news to the entire city? The same mentality. Focus on one person at a time. ☺ One person would bring one person who would bring one more person . . . Over 55 FTGs at least last week. Well over half, roughly 33 that I could count. That's bananas!

Do you recognize the significance of your one life? How will you spend the one life God has given you?

To paraphrase a powerful quote God has used in the lives of many great Christians: "The world has yet to see what God will do with [one life] whose heart is fully committed to him." One Life.

That's why I get excited to think: what happens if God takes more than one life, but 20 lives, 200 lives *fully committed* to him. What would happen in our homes? What would happen in our neighborhoods? In our church? In our city?

"For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to strengthen those whose hearts are fully committed to him." (2 Chronicles 16:9, NIV)

T: We all live one life. . . This morning, as we continue our series called "The Great Reversal," we are going to see Jesus' encounter with one life, the man Zacchaeus.

"The Great Reversal: One Life" Luke 19:1-10

In light of this story, my hope and prayer for each one of us is that we would . . .

The Point: Receive the reversal Jesus brings and join his reversal mission.

Read 1-10.

It is more than a cute story to be read out of a children's Bible, though I would certainly encourage parents to do so with their kids. This is one of the most important stories in the Bible. In a very compact form, we discover the most prominent themes concerning the mission of Jesus. *Verse 10* actually serves as the KEY VERSE of Luke's entire Gospel. *Read 10 again*

T: I have two encouragements for you in light of Jesus' seek and save mission. #1

I. Revel in the reversal of Jesus' mission of Grace. (19:1-7)

As we examine this encounter, we learn that . . .

Jesus seeks all people right where they are.

- Luke provides 2 incredibly important details in verse 2. #1) Zacchaeus was a "tax collector." Tax collectors were despised not only because they worked for the Romans, but even more because they often deceived and robbed others as they "collected" their taxes. Now, you can bring the animosity up a level because Zacchaeus was a "chief tax collector," which probably means he oversaw the work of others who served under him.

- Hey, just in case you missed all the commercials and advertisements; it is Tax Season. It's time to get our billions back, . . . or maybe just pray that we have a little bit of a return to help pay some bills. So get it done or file for an extension. Be a good citizen.
- #2) He "was rich." Contextually, we have to read Luke 19 in light of Luke 18 that just told us of a tax collector (who humbled himself before God) and a rich man (who would not let go of his possessions). To miss this is to totally miss the force of this story. We will come back to that.
- Everyone would have been greatly surprised when Jesus invited himself over to his house. To go in and be the guest of someone and to dine with them was a sign of social acceptance and friendship. It held deeper significance than our dinner parties today.
- I love what Luke records in ch. 7, verse 34: **"The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'" (Luke 7:34)**
- Not an acquaintance or associate. Friend.
- And why was this a distinguishing mark of Christ's ministry? Yes, he loved all people. Yes, he came to reverse the limits of our love, BUT he also knew that the irreligious were often the quickest to see their need for God.
- Those who thought they were righteous felt like they could be good enough for God on their own terms and did not want to listen to Jesus.
- These are the ones who grumbled: "why would he talk to him." "Talk to him, he's going to his house." "Out of all the people in Jericho, he should be the last one to get time with Jesus." "This is crazy."
- **"And Levi [also known as Matthew and one of Jesus disciples] made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?' And Jesus answered them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'" (Luke 5:29-32)**
- Jesus often faced disapproval and criticism from those around him concerning his ministry, but that did not stop him from sharing the outrageous and scandalous grace of his good news with Zacchaeus.
- The love of God is so amazing, so expectation exceeding that it throws us off balance. Jesus was determined to love those no one else dared to love.
- There is not one person in Medford and Greater Boston that is not on the heart of God! The Mission of God is a mission for all people.

T: Also notice that . . .

Jesus seeks us when we were not seeking him.

- Picture Jericho as Jesus comes into the city: people had heard of his divine teaching and miraculous works. The buzz surrounding Jesus was huge! People were pressing around into see him, hear him, touch him.
- Though Zacchaeus' wanted to see Jesus, it was made very difficult because of the crowds. But he had another challenge, not circumstantial but physical: Zacchaeus was short!
- [[On a side note, and a very personal note, I love all people who are vertically challenged. If we adopt one day... the baby must be in the 85% for height... ☺]]
- So Zacchaeus runs ahead to a strategic spot and finds a sycamore tree to climb up to get a bird's eye view. A sycamore tree would have had a shorter stump and wide branches, making it easy to climb.
- Needless to say, this was unusual behavior for a rich man of prominence. Clearly God was at work in his life to move him to seek Jesus. It seems he was driven by curiosity. He had probably heard reports about Jesus and wanted to find out for himself who he was and what he was about.
- And maybe that's you today: you've had a measure of exposure to Christianity and your curious. Or maybe you have tried so many avenues in life to discover lasting satisfaction, but you keep coming up empty and you are curious if the answer might really lie in Christ.
- Listen: as one theologian said [Calvin]: **"Curiosity is a sort of preparation for faith."**

- Perhaps you are like Zacchaeus, you have significant spiritual curiosity. My hope is that your story will conclude like Zacchaeus.
- Verse 3 tells us Zacchaeus was “seeking to see who Jesus was . . .” BUT there is another seeker in this story...
- Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but not as much as Jesus wanted to see him. I love the irony here: *The one who seems to be seeking is really being sought.*
- Jesus is the ultimate seeker in this passage. He is on the greater quest. If God did not seek us through the person of Christ, all of our seeking would be a joke.
- And consider this: Jesus is in Jericho, but where is he going? Travelogue... Luke 9: “set his face.” It’s chapter 18. Hours later, he’ll be in Jerusalem.
- The Mission of Jesus is a Mission of Grace.
- What should this teach us as a church on our **4th Anniversary?**

In light of our first four years of grace, let’s live each day with humble gratitude and amazement.

- Grace should always move us to humility. Yesterday in my Bible reading, I read 1 Corinthians 4:7, one of my favorite verses, which says, “What do you have that you did not receive?” The answer is: nothing! Everything is a gift from God. What God is doing among us, the kind of community he is building is a gift. We are who we are by his grace.
- And when we see that, it should move us to Gratitude. How often do you stop and thank God for his grace to you? For his grace to our church? He is worthy of our gratitude.
- And don’t miss this: humility and gratitude are the natural result of being overwhelmed by something greater than we could have imagined.
- God’s grace should amaze us and cause us to marvel. He wants us to revel in his mission of grace.

T: Not only should we revel, and take great delight, in Jesus’ mission of grace. We should also . . .

II. Respond in the power of Jesus’ mission of Transformation (19:8-10).

In looking at the One life of Zacchaeus, we see that . . .

1) Salvation always comes through faith in Jesus.

- We covered this last week! Trust. Zacchaeus placed two feet in. He was done with his old way of life, living for himself. He had given his life over to God.
- When Jesus says in verse 9 that Zacchaeus is also “a son of Abraham,” he means that, like Abraham, he was counted righteous in God’s sight through faith. This moved him from being spiritually lost to spiritually found.
- Neither his vocation nor his sinful practices revoke his opportunity for God’s salvation. In fact, this is precisely the kind of person Jesus came to save.
- God’s grace can change anyone. The Zacchaeus story is one of the impossible.
- Let me explain what I mean: In Luke 18, Jesus met a rich, young ruler. Long story short, he would not part with his possessions in order to follow Jesus. Jesus told him to sell all his possessions and give to the poor because that was his idol, what he treasured the most in his life. That’s why Jesus said in 18:25-27 **“How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.” Those who heard it said, “Then who can be saved?” But he said, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”**
- With Zacchaeus – we have the impossible! He is an example of a rich person who is threaded by the grace of God through the eye of the needle.
- You are not beyond the reach of God’s grace! Tanner, “You don’t know my husband. You don’t know my friend. You don’t know me.” Ok., I may not know you, but you may not really know my God!
- God delights to save unlikely people.

- Lost? I feel fine... I don't feel lost. Listen, the Jesus levels the playing field and says everyone is lost apart from grace. He compares us to sheep who wander away, never to return, if not for the shepherd. We go on our way. We do our own thing. We do not live for God and that leaves us spiritually lost.
- I hope you receive that today, not as a cruel word but a kind word. Doctors get paid to give a proper diagnosis so that the proper remedy can be prescribed.
- The work of Christ in his life, death, and resurrection is our remedy.
- Jesus did what we could never do (live a perfectly pleasing life to God), which enabled him to be our perfect sacrifice on the cross, doing what we would never want to do, take the judgment we deserved for our sin. That's salvation. Trusting in Christ as our mediator, our substitute.
- We must see our need for God, trust in the work of Jesus on our behalf, and turn to God in complete trust and commitment.
- AND "Jesus meets us right where we are, but he refuses to leave us that way."

2) Salvation always brings transformation.

- Look back at *verse 8*: I'll give away half of my possessions to the poor. This was no small commitment. On top of that, he says he is willing to pay what have been the maximum penalty of the law, four or five times the value of that which was taken.
- There is a radical change of character. Zacchaeus stopped stealing from people and started serving people. Look at his transformation:
- Like the rich young ruler in Luke 18, \$\$ was once his idol. He lived for money. Greed controlled him because he treasured money more than people and certainly more than God.
- It was his *functional Savior*. Money gave him meaning, gave him motivation to live, provided his ultimate satisfaction and comfort and identity.
- But now, Jesus became all of that to him and more.
- When the gospel grabs hold of someone's life, everything begins to change.

The Mission of Jesus is a Mission of Transformation. What should this teach us as a church on our **4th Anniversary?**

In light of our first four years, let's be fully committed to Jesus transforming power in us and his global mission for us.

- Our mission is a church is "to glorify God by living out his mission as a community transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ." How do we light God up? Point to his greatness? live out his mission. In community. And we, as a community, are consistently experiencing his transformation.
- What happens when we become even more loving as a church to those around us? The light of Christ shines brighter. It becomes more compelling and attractive.
- What happens when we sacrificially serve others counting them more significant than ourselves. The light of Christ shines brighter.
- What happens when we see our joy and generosity increase, while our selfishness and anxiety decrease? The path of Jesus becomes more compelling and attractive to those who see our lives.
- How do you need to be transformed? Jesus brought transformation to where Zacchaeus needed it the most. He will do the same for you if you allow him to.
- And I love the example of generosity here.
- We want to be a generous church. The vision was never to start a church that exists for ourselves. We want to play a part in starting other churches around Greater Boston and all across the world.
- One thing I loved about Easter last week and seeing 341 people come together, is that it is a sign of continued growth, which means the potential to work, and serve, and give of our time, talents and treasures to those in need and God's mission around the world in places like Toronto & India continues to increase. We want to love, build, and grow as a church so that we can give more and more away.
- When God transforms us and brings us into the life of Christ and the life of his seek and save mission, our duties turn to delights, our "haves" turn to "gets"

- I don't *have* to pray. I *get* to pray.
- I don't *have* to give. I *get* to give.
- I don't *have* to adjust my calendar to serve others in and outside of the church. I *get to do that* and a 1,000 other privileges.
- I don't *have* to tell others how Christ changed my life. I *get* to and there's nothing better than seeing people like Donna, and Jesse, and Angela and Filipe (you want me to keep going?) experience the transformation of Jesus' mission!

Conclusion:

You have one life. We all have one life. How will you spend it? In humble gratitude? In amazement . . . daily experiencing God's transformation *and* daily engaged in God's powerful mission?

Jesus invites all of us to receive his great work of reversal and joining him in his reversal mission.

Let's pray!