

“Shimmying Up the Sycamore”
by Rev. John C. Tittle

Scripture Reading: *Luke 19: 1 - 10* NRSVue

He entered Jericho and was passing through it. ² A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. ⁵ 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.” ⁶ So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. ⁷ All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” ⁸ Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” ⁹ Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

1. What jumps out at you about this passage?
2. What is the significance of the meaning of Zacchaeus’ name in this story (Innocent, Clean or Righteous)?
3. Who are our chief tax collectors today? How do we look down on them and crowd them out today? How can we look up to them? Eat with them?
4. There are themes of looking and seeking in this passage. Where do you see them?
5. Why did Jesus’ words, “I must eat with you at your home Zacchaeus,” have such an impact upon him?
6. How do you compare the reaction of Zacchaeus to the crowd’s reaction in light of Jesus’ offer of a dinner meal?
7. What do you think of this phrase: Gratitude and generosity are signs that our lives have been touched by Jesus Christ.
8. What happens to us when we forget God’s goodness in our lives?
9. Why does Jesus share his mission statement at the end of the story?