

What Do You Do When You Can't See Jesus?

NOVEMBER 20, 2022

"FOR THE SON OF MAN HAS COME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST" LUKE 19:10

PROPS:

KIDS SERMON:

Hide & Go Seek / Sardines

Juggling Tennis Balls... find which one is the one.

It's fun to hide. And its fun to seek. And its even more fun to find. And God sometimes hides, and invites us to seek Him. And when we do, He always finds us.

INTRO:

OPEN YOUR BIBLE to Luke 19. As always we'll have the Bible on the screen, but I've been blessed by having my physical Bible with me so that I can make my own notes, and create my own study guide in this book. So whichever way is better for you, that's great.

We've been seeing the importance of a shared meal in the Gospel of Luke. A gospel that's written by a man named Luke to a man named Theophilus, so that, for the purpose of, Theophilus being certain of seeing clearly who Jesus is.

And in this Gospel about seeing Jesus, we meet two men who couldn't see Jesus. Two men who by no doing of their own, are blocked from seeing who Jesus is, even when they look for Him. We read about this blind man named BARTIMEUS in Luke 18 who because of physical blindness, could not physically see Jesus. His blindness, something he didn't choose, a barrier that he didn't build but was placed upon him, made it impossible to look on Jesus' face. And he calls out to Jesus

—> [Luke 18:38b "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"](#)

And he gets shushed by the crowd. so he kept crying out all the more

—> [Luke 18:39b "Son of David, have mercy on me!"](#)

And after he does this, Jesus finds Bartimeus, and gives him back his sight. And the first thing Bartimeus sees with his eyes, is the loving eyes of Jesus and he began following Him.

And in our story today we're looking at Zaccheus, and Zaccheus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he, and because he was so short, he couldn't see Jesus over the crowd. And that's not okay with Jesus. Jesus says the purpose He came to this earth, the very reason He is on this journey to Jerusalem, is to seek and to save the lost, we're told in Luke 19:10.

—> [Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.](#)

What's more in 1 Timothy 2:4 we're told that it is God's desire, God's will that everyone be saved.

So what do you do when God's will is not being done on earth as it is in heaven?

—> [What do you do when you can't see Jesus?](#)

MOVE 1: Care

What do you do when you can't see Jesus? When God can't be found. When your pain is too great, when your heart is so wounded, when you just don't care, and you're wondering does Jesus even notice you? Does God even care about what you going through? Or are you in this, alone. **Most of us in this room have been there. Maybe you're there right now. Things are just "off."** You've tried to read your Bible, tried to pray, but it seems like God's not there, or not there like He used. Or for some of you, it's a bit bigger and your life's falling apart, you and your spouse can't seem to see eye to eye, your loved one is suffering through pain or sickness. Or the burdens of this life have grown to require so much of you that you no longer can see Jesus in the way you once did. And you're feeling alone and helpless.

When you're in a moment like that, a moment when you can't see Jesus... what do you do? **You look for Jesus and let Him find you.**

Look for Jesus and let Him find you.

Luke 19:1 and you meet someone who has walked in your shoes.

At this point, Jesus is just a couple weeks away from His death. He's been on a mission to travel from the Northern Galilee Region, to the southern region where Jerusalem is. And He's been getting everything out of the way that people have put up themselves that keep them from Him.

Barriers like Martha created, who let God's Work distract her from God's Word. And the Pharisees who let the Good things like fame, and fortune, and family and friends get in the way of the God things, and they became Bad things. Self Imposed Barriers that keep you and me, and your friend and neighbors and co-workers away from Jesus. And we build those barriers ourselves, all the time. It's in your sin. It's in your apathy. Its in your arrogance. Its in your busyness. And Jesus takes those barriers, and He smashes them to pieces so people can clearly see Jesus.

But what do you do when a barrier is imposed upon you, not of your own doing on you? What do you do when you can't see Jesus?

—> **Luke 19:1-2 He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus, he was a chief tax collector and he was rich.**

On His travels to Jerusalem, Jesus came to Jericho, a beautiful city that's 17 miles north east of Jerusalem, so he's pretty close to his destination. Notice that Jesus wasn't planning to stay in this city, He was passing through it to go save humanity. He was on a schedule, He had to get there by Passover a little over a week away.

And this town Jericho, we know it from the story of Joshua as the first city in the Promised Land that the Israelite's defeated and destroyed. It got rebuilt. It became a favorite city for prophets like Elijah and Elisha, and many Levitical Priests settled here in Jesus' day, and because it was located on a busy trade route, a lot of wealth passed through this town, and so the Romans put a bunch of tax collectors there. So you have a city that's made up of clashing demographics. You have the holy, clean Levitical priests, greedy merchants, highway robbers (good samaritan), and despised tax collectors.

And then Jesus came into this diverse mix, and of those who would see Jesus, a massive crowd surrounds Jesus, and Jesus isn't riding on a horse, He's just walking, and the crowd pushes in all around Him and a man named Zaccheus wants to see Him.

Immediately we know a couple things about Zaccheus.

- One: because he was a tax collector, people didn't like him. And he wasn't just any old tax collector like the apostle Levi we met Luke 5... he was a Chief tax collector... His Jewish friends and family viewed him as the ultimate traitor. He was collecting taxes for the occupying nation of Rome, and it was legal for Zaccheus

to collect more taxes than what was due and keep it for himself. Zaccheus was hated... a social outcast to say the least.

- We also know this about Zaccheus: He was rich. He had tons of money, and in our last meal in Luke 14, (14:12,13) Jesus said don't invite the rich to meals, but invite the poor. Now when you and I talked about that last meal, we saw that Jesus wasn't talking about excluding financially rich people from God's banquet table, and He wasn't talking about only inviting people who are financially poor, Jesus is more interested in a heart that is poor in spirit and ready to receive Him... that's who Jesus invites... but Zaccheus didn't hear my sermon, so if he got wind of who Jesus wants to invite to a meal, and if he only thought of it in literal terms... maybe he didn't think Jesus would invite someone like him, because he was rich. Certainly, Jesus, a Jew, wouldn't invite Zaccheus, who was a Jewish traitor. Zaccheus probably had some big, insecurities, and emotional barriers that kept him from seeing Jesus.
- We also know this about Zaccheus: He has a common Jewish name meaning "Pure" or "Just" and there was a famous Rabbi during his day with that same name... but for Zaccheus, his life was exactly the opposite of his name.
Now when I was a kid, bullies used to make fun of my name and when I was at recess at the daycare center, they'd sing "Here's comes Peter Cottontail, hopping down the bunny trail" and I'd go home crying week after week because people made fun of my name... imagine the fun the bullies had with Zaccheus' name... this man who's name means "Pure" and "Just" but was living a life exactly the opposite. Zaccheus had social barriers to overcome in order to see Jesus

What's more...

—> Luke 19:3 (when) Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature.

Zaccheus couldn't see Jesus because he was short. My 6'5" frame doesn't understand this problem, especially when I go to Costco in town and the crowd is only up to my chin. I can see everything!

But Zaccheus couldn't see Jesus because he had a physical limitation that kept him from seeing Jesus.

So far, Zaccheus can't see Jesus because of emotional insecurities, social pain and isolation, physical limitations.

And then on top of that, Zaccheus still wanted, and made efforts to see Jesus... how many of us would've given up for any one of those reasons...

but when Zaccheus went to see Jesus, he couldn't even see him because the crowd of people following Jesus was in the way. Imagine that. Jesus followers, making it hard for someone to follow Jesus.

How often has a friend told you a story that they used to go to church, they used to be a Christian, but then their pastor, embezzled money, or cheated on their spouse. Their dad, who served as an usher on Sunday morning, treated the family horribly Sunday afternoon. Their friend who invited them to Youth group on Thursdays, partied every Friday. What a sad reality that the crowd that follows Jesus can keep people from following Jesus.

And this isn't the first time the Gospel author, Luke, mentions the crowd being a barrier to someone needing Jesus. Back in Luke 5, there was a paralyzed man who his friends put on a mat and began carrying him to Jesus to be healed, but they couldn't get to Jesus because of the crowd, so they had to climb up on a roof and vandalize private property, tear off the tiles, to get to Jesus.

KCC, let's never be a crowd that keeps people who need Jesus, away from Jesus.

- Let's keep the door open. Like we did during Covid.
- Let's introduce ourselves to the person sitting next us, because it's their first time in a church in years, and they're wondering if someone will say hi to them.
- Let's be a church that reveals the love and truth of Jesus through how we live and speak.
- Lets live lives of integrity, deeply honest about our failings, and God's forgiveness.
- And lets help people who need Jesus, get to Jesus.

SUMMARY

Zaccheus couldn't see Jesus because he had an emotional barrier - he didn't know Jesus character to know if Jesus even wanted him. Maybe he was damaged good.

Zaccheus couldn't see Jesus because he had a social barrier - he didn't fit in to his community.

Zaccheus couldn't see Jesus because he had a physical barrier, he was too short.

Zaccheus couldn't see Jesus because he had a "religious" barrier. The followers of Jesus were blocking him from seeing Jesus.

What's keeps you from seeing Jesus?

Is it an **emotional barrier**?

You've done things that you're ashamed of. You have guilt from that decision you made years ago, that no one else knows about but it still haunts you. And you wonder if you're damaged goods. And how could Jesus ever want someone like you. Bless you. Zaccheus understands you. And Jesus wants you.

Is it a **social barrier**?

You've tried to make friends at church, you hear us say we want to be a family for you, that KCC isn't a place you go, it's a church where you belong... and that sounds awesome and it looks like everyone around you belongs here, but you don't feel like family, you wonder if you actually do belong here.

Or you look at the worship team, and you think you have to be young and attractive and hip to be on the team. Or you see how "cool" the youth leaders are, and how peppy the Sunday school teachers are, and you look at yourself and think you don't fit the bill because you're too old, too uncool, too un-peppy. You don't know the Bible good enough... Zaccheus gets you. And Jesus wants you... and so does Brandon on the worship team and Marjorie in the Sunday school, by the way :)

Or for you, it's a **physical barrier**.

At the 10:30 service, my Mom is reading Scripture. My Mom loves Jesus, and she led me to the Lord when I was 7. But a decade ago, she became disabled, and now just getting out of her house to go to church or joining a small group, is really, really hard. And there are a number of you in our congregation who are enduring physical challenge, sickness, you're facing death. Or you're the one caring for your sick child, spouse, friend....and just being here on Sundays is hard. If that's you, an extra special blessing upon you. Zaccheus understands your struggle. And Jesus has a special place of grace for those of you with physical barriers.

Perhaps the worst of all is you who have had a **religious barrier** to seeing Jesus

The crowd that's following Jesus is keeping you from Jesus because their too busy to notice you, too apathetic to invite you in, or worst of all, they are a phony crowd, like the 5,000 men in [John 6](#) that followed Jesus only for the bread He hands out.

As your friend, brother, and pastor, if any of those barriers are keeping you from seeing Jesus, hear me say this. Those barriers are thee very place that Jesus wants to reveal Himself to you.

Your greatest barrier is your place of greatest blessing.

The place of your greatest guilt, your greatest pain, is where God wants to give you the greatest Peace. Where you have been Hurt by the crowd, God desires to bring you Healing.

Your obstacles becomes His Assets.

Where you are weak, there God will be strong” (2 Cor 12:10) (Don't include this verse on slides)

What do you do when you can't see Jesus?

—> Bring your barrier to Jesus... (And He turns it into a Broadway.)

There are a ton of things that will keep you from seeing Jesus, so don't let them. Some of you know this, but in 2006, Pastor Perry destroyed his leg in a snowboarding accident... he couldn't walk. He had a physical barrier. But he thought maybe he could swim. So he hobbled down to the beach on his crutches, set them in the dry sand, scooted to the water, and began swimming. And he has swam the Kailua buoys 2-3 times a week. That's a mile swim. And when he gets up in the morning, there are a million "legitimate" excuses he could make to not swim... it's windy, the water is choppy, it's murky, there was a shark spotting, it's cold, it's rainy, my joints are stiff, I'm tired, it's just one time I'd miss... He can pretty much find an excuse everyday to not go swimming... but he chooses to go out, regardless. The only thing that has ever stopped him, apart from his motorcycle accident, was being stung 7 times by a man-o-war. And not just a little sting, and its gone, but 7 wraps, where he had to pluck that thing off. He could handle the first 6 wraps, but that 7th one sent him back to the shore...

What ever obstacle you face, Bring your barrier to Jesus because it's in the hardest challenges and the biggest pains of your life that Jesus wants to meet you.

—> Luke 19:4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.

In this one verse, Zaccheus brings two of His barriers to Jesus. He couldn't see Jesus because of the crowd, so he ran ahead of the crowd. A religious barrier wouldn't stop him. Zaccheus was short, so he climbed a sycamore tree. A physical barrier wouldn't stop him. Zaccheus had a responsibility. In Hawaii, we call this his Kuleana. And Zaccheus' kuleana, was to do whatever it took to see Jesus. And he did.

What sycamore tree do you need to climb to bring your barrier to Jesus? That's your kuleana. It's your sycamore tree. And we all have one.

If you're spending a lot of time with people who don't lead you to Jesus, be like Zaccheus and run ahead of them. Stop drinking with the guys, stop milling around at the gym or the coffee shop with people who don't talk about Jesus. Stop scrolling through your Instagram or Facebook. Turn off that Netflix movie. Get away from the Phony Crowd. You have a sycamore tree to climb.

Your sycamore tree might be working too much, or shopping too much, or comfortable too much and since COVID, you're still sitting at home, and not joining in fellowship with your brothers and sisters in Christ. Get up from where you're at, run ahead, and climb up a sycamore tree.

And when you do, amazing things begin to happen.

—> Luke 19:5-6 When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly.

This city that Jesus was passing through, this city that was just on His way to His real destination, becomes a resting place for Jesus. And Zaccheus, a man that by no earthly standards should've hosted Jesus, Jesus was compelled to stay with, the original language tells us, because Zaccheus didn't let his barriers define him. He didn't give into his barriers, he brought his barriers to Jesus, and Jesus found Him.

—> Bring your barrier to Jesus and let Him find You...

When things are dark. When you can't see your way. When it feels like God isn't there. Your kuleana is to keep seeking Jesus anyway, and when you do, He will find you. It's a promise that Jesus gave in

—> [Matthew 7:7](#) Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks find, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

When you commit to seeing Jesus, He will find you... but like Zaccheus' example shows, it can take time and effort on your part.

< While you may be convinced that God finds you when you bring your barriers to Him, why does He make you go through that? >

After Jesus found Zaccheus, we see a great repentance in Zaccheus. He stopped being a crooked tax collector, and he paid back what he had stolen.

—> [Luke 19:9](#) And Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

More than just meeting you in your pain, in your barrier, God wants to redeem and redefine you. He wants to give you a new identity. Zaccheus, that short and stumpy traitor, becomes Zaccheus, the man who did what it takes to see Jesus. Zaccheus, a true son of Abraham, Jesus calls him.

How many times has he been told he wasn't a real Jew, a real son of Abraham by his Jewish friends... never again, because Jesus gave him a redeemed identity... Zaccheus, not just a wee little man was he, but a hero of our faith who climbed a tree.

—> [Bring your barrier to Jesus, and let Him find You, and re-define you.](#)

DDS

On September 5, 1977 Voyager 1 launched from Cape Canaveral to study Saturn and Jupiter, so we could better understand, so we could see the grandness of our solar system. But to accomplish its mission, it had to spend 13 years of sitting in darkness, with its camera equipment turned off, traveling 6 billion kilometers, until it's hour had come to turn back on its camera and take a picture of our solar system from the view of Pluto's orbit. The picture is called The Pale Blue Dot,

—> [Show Pale Blue Dot Picture](#)

That little blue dot that the arrow is pointing to, that is what our home looks like from Pluto. And you see how small and tiny you are... as short as Zaccheus, every one of us... and in the goodness of God, in that moment, there's a ray of sunlight, shining on us. And because Voyager 1 endured the dark night of the soul, spent years in darkness, unable to see, yet stayed faithful to its mission, you and I get to see the grandness of God's creation of our solar system and His intimate care of us.

What do you do when you can't see Jesus? Keep looking for Him, and He will find you.