



Reach

Part 2

August 8, 2021

Last Sunday, we began our new series on Reach and today I will be continuing this series with our opening text being found in the Gospel of Saint Luke chapter 19, verses 1-10. If you will please stand for the reading of the Word this morning.

The Gospel of Saint Luke chapter 19 records the story of Jesus and his interaction with a man by the name of Zacchaeus. Let's look at the text together.

The Gospel of Saint Luke 19:1-10 *“He entered Jericho and was passing through. ² And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. ³ And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. ⁴ So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. ⁵ 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.” ⁶ So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. ⁷ And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” ⁸ 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.” ⁹ 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.”*

There are a few things about this text that truly stick out to me. Let's begin with the person of Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, like most people, did not start off his professional career with the intentions of becoming one of the most hated people in the social construct. And it is the act of Reaching that leads us to our first point this morning.

Point #1 - Jesus, while being ridiculed, was still reaching for One More

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector who made his living off of enforcing the taxation laws of Rome on the Jewish people and to add insult to this misdeed is the fact that Zacchaeus himself was a Jew. Tax Collectors were hated because it was common place for them to abuse their power to steal additional monies from the masses for their own pleasures. To use a Revolutionary War term, he was a turn coat who had betrayed his countrymen to side with the “enemy”.

But here we have Jesus entering in Jericho with the clear intentions, according to the text, of simply passing through and he finds a man who had scaled a tree just so that he would have the opportunity see this man named Jesus. And as Jesus passed by, he saw this man in the tree and told him that He was to be staying at his house for the day.

Jesus was reaching out to a man hated by society who had decided to climb up into a tree to see the crowds, all the while not realizing that the tree was positioning him for a breakthrough.

Hear me well this morning, Jesus was not afraid of associating himself with Zacchaeus because, in the end, He was the only one who can change the heart of the man whom everyone else hated.

The Scripture records in verse 7-8, *“And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. ⁸ 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 will restore it fourfold.”*”

When Jesus entered the home of Zacchaeus, his entire world changed and Zacchaeus was willing to give all of his wealth away because he had had one experience with the Master. He was willing to throw away what the world had given him over what Jesus had offered him.

Jesus’ decision to reach out to Zacchaeus was not hindered by the opinions and grumblings of others but rather was motivated by the Heart of the Father. The Gospel of Saint John 5:19 records, *“So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.”*

Jesus’ decision to reach out to Zacchaeus was the secondary consequence of the Son seeing what the Father was doing and He followed suit. The Father had already made His divine mind up about what He intended to do in the life of Zacchaeus and the Son was simply

fulfilling the Will of the Father! Jesus was not afraid of diving into the trenches of Zacchaeus's life because, in the end, He was the only one who could end the war of Zacchaeus' soul.

And with that said, Jesus is not afraid of diving into the trenches of your life because, in the end, He is the only one who can transform your life and change what everyone else thinks about you. And Jesus' pursuit of you is due to the Father having already made His mind up about what His will is for your life!

Dr. Eugene Peterson, world renown theology and scholar, said, "When we sin and mess up our lives, we find that God doesn't go off and leave us - he enters into our trouble and saves us."

And we, like Jesus, must be willing to keep on reaching for One More even though we run the risk of having to deal with other people's grumblings and dissidence because they don't like the fact that you are reaching out and loving on people that they deem unlovable.

Dr. Mark Rutland, the great pastor and preacher, declared, "How can we be the salt of the earth if we are afraid to touch the dirt?"

When are we going to make the choice to reach out and love people the way that Jesus loved and be willing to wade off into the muck

and the mire of their lives? If we are to be the salt of the Earth then we must not be afraid of dealing with dirty people!

And in spite of the sting of grumblings and murmuring, Jesus was still reaching for One More ...

Point #2 - Jesus, after His death, burial and resurrection, was still reaching for One More

John chapter 21 records the story of Jesus and his interaction with a backslidden and broken disciple by the name of Peter. Let's look at the text together from verse 15 to verse 17, "15When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Feed my lambs." 16He said to him a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He said to him, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you." He said to him, "Tend my sheep." 17He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" and he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus was still reaching out to Peter who has abandoned his faith and was a broken man. But hear me good this morning, if Peter had consulted his past he would have never preached on the day of Pentecost, which was the birthday of the Church!

And like Peter, if we are not willing to let Jesus reconcile us then we will not be positioned to walk out the call of God for our lives. When we come into the house of God, we need to check our failures at the door! The mistakes of your yesterday do not determine the promises of your tomorrow.

Jesus called Peter a “rock” long before Peter was ever stable or mature. Jesus leads us by calling out what He sees in us and not by what we have done. (Repeat)

Peter goes from being called a “rock” to being rebuked by Jesus himself, makes bad decisions, almost drowns, has pride issues, complains, boasts in himself, opens mouth and inserts foot often, curses at a woman who points out the call of God on his life and the fact that Peter’s very speech and means of communicating betrays his identity, he flees away from the one he swore he would die for, he walks away from the faith, goes back to fishing, **ALL THE WHILE**

STRUGGLING WITH THE CALL OF GOD ON HIS LIFE! But Jesus never stopped Reaching!

But it didn't matter how hard he pulled away, Christ was still reaching out to him... finds him toiling away in his old life.... calls him to the shore... prepares a meal for him... restores him as a man of God and Apostle... and the man who made all of these mistakes finds himself standing on the southern steps of the temple mount in Jerusalem preaching the first sermon at the first outpouring at the first Church service to the first century Church and 3000 people are swept into the kingdom!!!! **ALL BECAUSE JESUS NEVER STOPPED REACHING OUT!!!**

Jesus was continually reaching for Peter because Jesus knew that Peter was a seed and that if He could ever get him planted, there was a massive harvest to come out of his life and sometimes we have to be buried for a little while to let what is in us begin to manifest.

And those people who tried to bury you in the mistakes of your yesterday did not realize that you are a seed containing the promises of God that were spoken over your life.

They thought they were burying you, they thought they were destroying you; they thought that they were putting you in your place, but they were actually releasing the potential that was in you; potential that even you may not have realized that was there...

At face value, Peter should have been written off but Jesus never stopped Reaching for One More! Jesus is still reaching out to those of us who, like Peter, abandoned our faith and are broken, fractured shells of what we were called to be. And Jesus pursued us, found us, restored us and set our lives back in order. And in spite of the bad decisions of one of His disciples, Jesus was still reaching for One More...

Point #3 - Jesus, at His ascension, was telling the Church to Reach One More!

The Book of Acts chapter 1 records the words of Jesus to his disciples before His ascension. Let's look at the text together from verse 1 to verse 8.

“In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering

by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶ So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷ He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

The Great Commission that Jesus gave to his Disciples in Matthew 28 and the reiteration of that Commission in Acts 1:8 is clear with one resounding theme; Reach One More!

This Commissioning should be the heartbeat of the Church because it is the Heartbeat of the Messiah; Reach One More!

If Jesus gave us the Great Commission and promised us Great Power, then we have all that we need to make the decision to Reach One More. Notice the text records that the Holy Spirit was given to the Church to give them power to be a witness...

Jesus gave us Purpose and then gave us Power to back that Purpose. And over the next month, we will be focusing on Reaching One More; it is our goal to fill this sanctuary and to reach as many people as we can corporately. I am asking you to make it a priority to invite your family, your friends, your coworkers, your neighbors, everybody to come and be a part of one of our services.

I'm not asking you to fill up the Church; I am asking you to be the Church! Take a look around you; is there an empty chair? Take responsibility for that empty chair. Do you want to know what that chair represents? A mother getting off of drugs, A dad coming home, a child being restored, a marriage being healed, a prodigal coming home, cancer being conquered, a soul being saved, a life being transformed...

If we call ourselves Followers of Jesus then Reach One More. But there may be some of you that have never received Christ as your Lord and Savior; or perhaps like Peter, you had a relationship and you backslid from your faith because of difficulty or loss but you feel the Father reaching towards you this morning, I want to ask you stand right where you are at and just remain standing.

I want to ask every person who is sitting around those who have stood to simply stand and pray over them as I lead them in a prayer of repentance.

Now Church, we are going to initiate something that we are going to do be doing all month long; Jesus said in the **Gospel of Saint Luke chapter 15 and verse 10, “Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”** And if the angels are rejoicing, I want you stand up on your feet and let’s give a standing ovation for every person who gave their heart and life to Jesus this morning!