



When Jesus Calls Your Name

Ninth in the Fall sermon series "Taking Jesus Seriously"

Luke 19:1-10

All Saints Sunday ~ Sunday, November 3rd, 2019

First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois

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Text: 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." (v. 5)

Zacchaeus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he.

He climbed up in the sycamore tree,

the Lord he wanted to see.

The profundity of the story of Zacchaeus is much, much larger than a little children's song.

I have long believed that the stories of the Bible are like mirrors that when we hold them before us, we see a reflection of ourselves. So, as you listened to the story, who did you identify with. Hopefully you didn't see yourself as Jesus. Maybe it was Zacchaeus. Maybe the critical crowd. Maybe a little of each.

The thing that I want you to take away from this morning message is this, when we hear Jesus call our name, things change.

As I read the story I wrestled with a number of questions. You may remember that Luke was a very careful writer of his gospel. He tells us as much in the opening sentences of the gospel, reading from Eugene Peterson's *The Message* bible;

So many others have tried their hand at putting together a story of the wonderful harvest of Scripture and history that took place among us, using reports handed down by the original eyewitnesses who served this Word with their very lives. Since I have investigated all the reports in close detail, starting from the story's beginning, I decided to write it all out for you, most honorable Theophilus, so you can know beyond a shadow of a doubt the reliability of what you were taught.

So this gospel, like all of the gospel accounts are no so much biographical but theological reflections based on the stories of Jesus that were familiar to each of the various faith communities.

So what were some of the questions that I wrestled with? Well, for one, why did Zacchaeus want to see Jesus? Was something missing from his life? Did he feel like, despite his apparent success--he was rich--was there a hole in his heart, a God-shaped hole?

I think that in many of us we feel as if something is missing. There is a hole in our soul. We try to fill it with fleeting things, work, busyness, money, drugs, alcohol, sports, the thrill of love, marriage, children, adulation, the list is really endless.

Maybe Zacchaeus wanted to see if Jesus could fill the hole in his heart. Like a jig-saw puzzle, maybe Jesus was the missing piece that would make his life whole.

But here's another question, one that is more interesting, have you ever thought that maybe Jesus was looking for Zacchaeus.

*In the words of the old hymn,
I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
he moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
it was not I that found, O Saviour true;
no, I was found, was found of thee.*

In the story Jesus knew Zacchaeus by name.

Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay in your house today.

In other words, "I must dwell-live with you".

The man who climbed that sycamore tree was not the same man who climbed down.

Once Jesus calls your name, once Jesus comes into your life, once you decide to take Jesus seriously and make him more than a Sunday thing, but an everyday thing, things change.

And the best way that I can explain this change is to simply say that you become more generous.

People who take Jesus seriously become more generous.

I do not mean in a monetary way, though they are more generous in that way, too.

I mean that they become more generous in their time and their talents. They become more generous in their forgiving.

They become more generous in their dealings with other people and the world around them.

And in the midst of growing generosity they are slowly being made into the image of Christ.

And what this world needs now.

Taking Jesus seriously is a life-changing experience.

It is what this country, this city, this church needs ; men and women who decide to take Jesus seriously, who are more generous and open to the movement of God in their lives. More willing to take risks for the glory of God.

The baptismal font reminds us, as I said at a funeral service in this very sanctuary yesterday, that the Risen Lord is with us until the end of time.

The communion table reminds us that God gives us the faith to preserve unto the end of our lives.

And the candles that burn on that holy table is nothing less than the voices of the saints who have gone before us, shown us the way of faith as best as they capable, the saints who cheer us on in our own faith journey. Amen.