

2. **Our willingness to welcome Jesus changes our heart.**

So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. **Ephesians 2:8–9**

• Humility • Surrender • Sacrifice

3. **Our relationship with Jesus changes our behavior.**

...I will pay back four times the amount .

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. **Romans 12:1–2 (NIV)**

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.”

Matthew 12:33 (NIV)

“This being human is complicated. We long for more in our spiritual lives, that’s for sure, but we’re not always ready for the harrowing journey of suffering, death, burial, and resurrection that any true spiritual journey entails.

We want God as long as we can still have our successes, too. We like the idea of being on a journey of faith as long as it doesn’t require too much...well, faith. We dream of a promised land but we don’t want to leave anything behind. We want space for God as long as it doesn’t intrude too radically on our packed schedules and conflicting priorities. We want self-knowledge as long as it doesn’t cut too close to the ego bone. We desire to know and do God’s will as long as it doesn’t make us look foolish. We want love as long as it’s not too inconvenient. We’d like to buy the pearl of great price as long as we don’t have to sell everything we have. We wax eloquent about the Paschal Mystery one weekend a year as long as we’re not the ones doing the dying!”

—Ruth Haley Barton

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF GOD’S AMAZING LOVE

ACT 3: THE FULFILLMENT

RESCUING THE LOST (ZACCHAEUS)

LUKE 19:1-10 (NIV)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. ⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. ⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” ⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.” ⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

1. **Jesus seeks and saves the lost.**

“I must stay at your house today... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” **Luke 15:1–7 (NIV)**

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—WEEK OF MARCH 15, 2020
THE FULFILLMENT—RESCUING THE LOST (ZACCHAEUS)**

CONNECT

- Reflecting back on your week, when did you see or feel God's presence?
- How does what you hear and who you listen to affect your well-being (emotionally, spiritually, and physically)?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE—Lectio Divina

Lectio Divina is the practice of reading scripture devotionally, to encounter the living God by listening with both the heart and mind. It means reflecting on a text in such a way that you are able to fully engage with the drama of the passage. The Gospel stories are especially meaningful when we use our imagination to enter into the places and conversations people had with Jesus. As you listen to the reading, imagine you are the one who is seeking to see and hear Jesus. Pause between each reading to allow time to journal your responses to the prompts.

Opening: Take a moment in silence to sit quietly, breathe deeply, and open your heart to the Holy Spirit.

Reader #1: Slowly read Luke 19:1-10 aloud from the bulletin. Imagine you have gone to great lengths to see Jesus and hear what he says.

- What is your motivation for wanting to see Jesus?

- What are you really looking for right now from Jesus?

Reader #2: Reread the passage. Imagine Jesus looking at you. He sees you, really sees you.

- What does it feel like to be the one Jesus sees?

- What would Jesus see as he looks into your heart?

Reader #3: Reread the passage. Imagine Jesus turning to you with the invitation, "Come down immediately, I must stay at your house today."

- Thinking about the change in Zacchaeus after meeting Jesus, what would you need to receive or relinquish in order to say yes to beginning a new, deeper, even risky relationship with Jesus?

- Would you welcome such a new beginning in your life? How do you want to respond just now?

Group Debrief: What were your thoughts as you imagined being with Jesus in this passage?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION—Questions to stimulate discussion

- Read Luke 19:1-10 aloud. What stood out to you from this week's passage or message?
- What impresses you about Zacchaeus? Do you see any similarities between Zacchaeus' life and your life?
- When, as you were seeking Jesus, did you realize Jesus was seeking you?
- Read Luke 15:1-7. How does the parable of the lost sheep relate to Zacchaeus' story? Why were the people in both Luke 15 and Luke 19 "muttering"?
- Thinking of how Zacchaeus was viewed in his community, who in our community may be the "one sheep" Jesus is seeking? How does that change your perspective?
- How does Zacchaeus demonstrate humility, surrender, and sacrifice? What did he have to let go of or hold on to in order to see Jesus? What is challenging to you in the Ruth Haley Barton quote as you seek humility, surrender, and sacrifice during this season of Lent?
- How is spending time alone with each day Jesus changing you?
- What do you think Zacchaeus is seeking that the world could not offer?
- What does the story of Zacchaeus reveal about the power of God to change hearts?
- As you think about the people you love, who do sense is seeking Jesus and whom might Jesus be seeking? How could you pray for that connection?

PRAYER and BENEDICTION

Prayer updates: Share your current joys, hopes, or challenges with one another.

Pray for one another: Pray for those in your life who need to know Jesus as the one who is seeking after them.

Closing Benediction: (from Ephesians 2:8-9)

For it is by grace we have been saved, through faith and this is not from ourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast. Lord Jesus, as you have given your life, your love, and yourself for us, help us to give our lives, our love, and ourselves to you. Amen.

DAILY PRACTICE—Continue to spend time with God daily (see Reading Plan or APP). Ask God to show you the "lost sheep" around you and pray for them.