

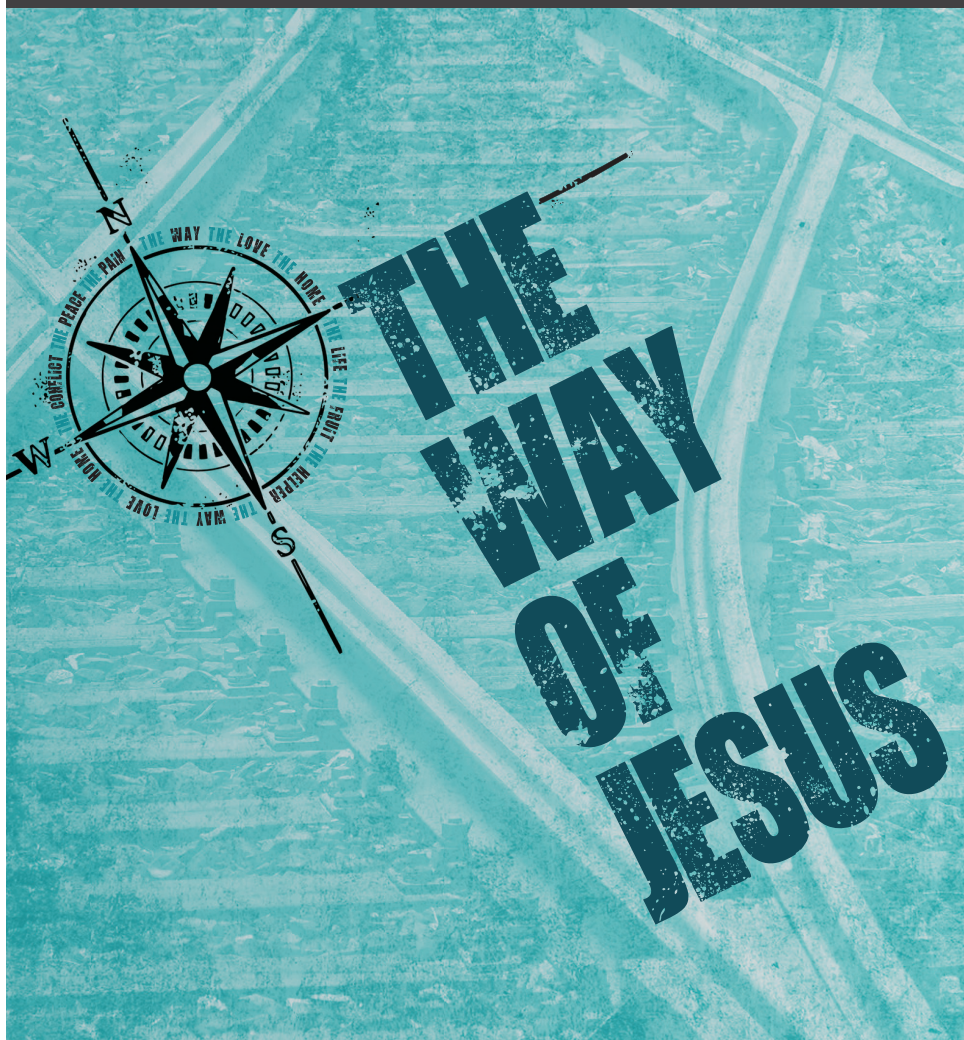
GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

# The DEVO

JULY 13 - 17, 2020



# MONDAY

## Luke 19:1-10 - Jesus Saw Zacchaeus

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This week we consider five encounters with Jesus as we follow Glenkirk's VBS daily curriculum. Today's appointment is with the outcast tax collector, Zacchaeus.

Rome's occupation of Israel began in 63 BC, more than 90 years prior to today's story. Roman governance in ancient Israel included both Roman overseers and local leaders. Tax collectors like Zacchaeus, though having important positions and wealth, were despised by fellow Israelites for collaborating with Rome. They earned income by adding to required Roman taxes at the expense of countrymen. Tax collectors were considered so low that they could not testify in Jewish courts nor give offerings—ancient Jews considered tax collectors' money “unclean.”

Short-statured Zacchaeus needed to climb a tree to be able to see Jesus—now known throughout Israel—as He approached and passed by. It is also possible, however, that this tax collector climbed also to separate himself from his haters below. Imagine Zacchaeus' surprise when Jesus not only noticed him, but also invited such a man to spend the day with Him. Scripture does not reveal exactly what happened as Zacchaeus hosted the Lord in his home. We do know that grumblers disapproved because Zacchaeus was considered “a sinner” (Luke 19:7) and traitor. Most importantly, after time with Jesus, Zacchaeus was changed—he overflowed with joy, generosity and honesty.

Jesus declared, “*Today salvation has come to this house*” (19:9), not because Zacchaeus' actions caused his redemption—salvation cannot

be earned. Zacchaeus' heart was transformed, his resultant charity revealing a new man. People may look at another's heritage, abilities, appearance, status and/or politics to size them up. However, God's ways are higher than ours (Isaiah 55:9)—“*God looks at the heart*” (1 Samuel 16:7).

Have you ever felt out-of-step, unpopular or misunderstood? Jesus understands. God the Son came into the world impoverished, later abandoned by many of His followers, and executed by enemies. Yet, He rose from the grave, confirming His victory in coming to “*seek and save the lost*” (Luke 19:10). He is “*not willing that any should perish*” (2 Peter 3:9). Do you know Jesus as Zacchaeus came to know Him—as Lord and Savior?

## QUESTIONS

What did Jesus see in Zacchaeus that others apparently did not?  
Was Zacchaeus saved by his charity after meeting Jesus?

## PRAYERS REQUESTED BY THREE ANGELS HAITI STAFF

*Madame Ruth Louissaint Thomas, Three Angels Christian Academy:*  
Pray for the people of Haiti and their continued spiritual connection with God. Pray that their relationship with God would continue to flourish during this time and pray for the protection of the students and their parents.

# TUESDAY

## John 4:1-42 - Jesus Saw the Woman at the Well

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Jesus violated several strong social conventions in meeting the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. Men and women, particularly when strangers, did not socialize publicly in those days. Samaritans, the product of Jewish-Assyrian intermarriage following Assyria's northern Israel conquest 750 years earlier, were reviled by ancient Jews for their mixed lineage and religious practices. Moreover, this woman had a scandalous background. Yet Jesus, unfazed, spoke openly with her.

"She was an outcast and looked down upon by her own people ... [as] evidenced by the fact that she came alone to draw water from the community well [in the hot noon sun when no one else would be at the well]. This woman was ostracized and marked as immoral, an unmarried woman living openly with the sixth in a series of men." (GotQuestions.org)

"Just as the Samaritan woman was looking to men to satisfy her soul, we also look to things outside of Christ to give our hearts meaning and purpose (John 4:14). ... [Jesus] show[ed] her that He was the never-ending water she was so thirsty for (John 7:38). ... Jesus is not fazed by our sin. ... He is not surprised by our evil desires, but rather He seeks to reconcile us to the Father in spite of them (Hebrews 7:25)." (Stephanie Englehart)

"God loves us [despite] our bankrupt lives. ... [Jesus saw worth in the] Samaritan woman ... when no one, not even herself, could see anything of value in her." (GotQuestions.org) Like you and me, she was made in

God's image and Jesus would later die on the cross to provide the Way for her salvation. But she needed to surrender in recognition of her desperate need for the Savior. This is why Jesus met her. Verse 4 indicates, "*He had to pass through Samaria*"—this divine appointment and her testimony also pointed others in Sychar toward Christ.

We have much in common with this Samaritan woman. Have you met Jesus in your loneliness and despair, when the world could not satisfy your longings? "*When He saw the crowds, He had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd*" (Matthew 9:36). He awaits you.

## QUESTIONS

What did the Samaritan woman at the well come to see in Jesus, which she did not see at first? Why did Jesus value her more than she seemed to value herself?

## PRAYERS REQUESTED BY THREE ANGELS HAITI STAFF

*Madame Tabithas Joseph, Three Angels Medical Clinic:* Pray for the patients we see suffering from high blood pressure or diabetes because life is very difficult for them during this time. Pray for the country of Haiti—insecurity and protests are still widespread.

# WEDNESDAY

## John 3:1-21, 19:38-42 - Jesus Saw Nicodemus

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Nicodemus was one of Israel's elite religious rulers, the Pharisees who eventually engineered Jesus' crucifixion. He was called "*a ruler of the Jews*" (John 3:1) and "*the teacher of Israel*" (3:10). Why did this prestigious Jewish leader see Jesus at night? Desired secrecy? Embarrassment? He visited One with no formal credentials, a lowly carpenter from nowhere. Yet Nicodemus knew that this Man, whom he called "Rabbi" (teacher), had something he lacked—he simply couldn't grasp what it was.

Jesus got right to the point: "*You must be born again.*" (3:7) Your stature doesn't matter, nor do intellect, religiosity, talent, or good deeds—redemption has nothing to do with *your* worthiness; it's all about *His* worthiness. Each of us is born a rebel against God—"*people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.*" (3:19). But Jesus came to restore us to right relationship with God, paying for our sins in His crucifixion and calling us to Him.

Many refuse Christ and salvation, not because they reject that there's a Creator and that things are amiss (including themselves)—they "disbelieve" because they don't want to change, be accountable to God and/or be considered "strange." When self-labeled "atheists" who are taking polygraphs are asked, "Is there a God?" nearly all are shown lying with their "No" responses. (Everette Hatcher)

"*For God so loved the world, that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life*" (3:16). That's it—Jesus' mission and the Gospel's core. Each of us needs the Savior's

redemption. I need Him and so do you. However, it's good news that we can add nothing to Jesus Christ's redemptive work—"It is finished!" (John 19:30). Simply believe, turn from sin and follow Him. He has already stood in for you—if only you will accept it.

John 19:39-40 shares a happy sequel to the "Nic at night" meeting. Nicodemus' newfound faith prompted him to honor His crucified Savior (who would rise again!). It likely cost him his standing among Israel's elite, but revealed Nicodemus' new identity: reborn into God's family. What's your response to Jesus' call?

## QUESTIONS

Why is it surprising that a man like Nicodemus would seek out Jesus?  
What does "*You must be born again*" mean?

## PRAYERS REQUESTED BY THREE ANGELS HAITI STAFF

*Madame Rose Indise Jean, Three Angels Orphanage:* Pray for our sweet orphans waiting for their adoption and for the adoption process. Pray that this would progress so that the children can soon be with their forever families; pray for the children recently placed with their forever families and for their new families—pray for a smooth transition.

# THURSDAY

## John 9 - Jesus Saw a Blind Man

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“[Restaurant lobsters] are kept in a shallow cage without any lid ... yet you don’t see the lobsters getting out. ... When one lobster tries to crawl out of the tank, the other lobsters will grab and pull that lobster right back into the tank with them. ... There are certain people in this world who are infected with ‘the lobster syndrome.’ [They] cannot stand to see other people [prosper]. They will pinch, pull, and pry to try to drag anyone else down who appears to be progressing ahead of them.”  
(Amy Reese Anderson)

Today’s man born blind experienced “the lobster syndrome” when encountering the Pharisees. Though he was standing right in front of them, now obviously able to see despite a lifetime of blindness, these Jewish leaders could not accept it. They confronted him, opposing what Jesus had done for this man. Who was truly blind here?

Skeptics deny God and His ways, often for reasons addressed yesterday. They sometimes criticize, mock and demean believers, trying to discredit Christianity. They concoct fanciful theories—“life began when primordial goo was struck by lightning”; “nature created itself”; “we came from animals (so it is understandable and OK when we act like animals)”; etc.—to reject God. All of this while experiencing a universe so finely tuned, life so intelligently designed, that there must be an Intelligent Designer.



What did the formerly blind man do regarding his critics? He told his story: “*Though I was blind, now I see*” (v. 25), and proclaimed, “*Lord, I believe*” as he worshiped Christ (v. 38). We must do the same, walking faithfully, sharing the truth in love, and praying for the enlightenment of those living apart from the Savior. As Jesus did, we are called to love “enemies” (Matthew 5:44).

After all, each of us was “*born blind*” spiritually, needing God to open our eyes. The Lord Jesus knows your purpose: to know Him and thereby be able to reach your full potential. God delights when lost sinners turn to Him: “*He will rejoice over you with gladness; He will quiet you by his love; He will exult over you with loud singing*” (Zephaniah 3:17).

## QUESTIONS

Why were the Pharisees unable to see what had happened to this formerly blind man? How did he respond to their challenges?

## PRAYERS REQUESTED BY THREE ANGELS HAITI STAFF

*John and Johnny Wizorek, Three Angels Guest House Managers and Missionaries:* Pray that we would be able to return to Haiti soon and continue our mission there. Pray for God’s continuing direction and leading. Pray also for our close family member who recently lost their 5-day-old son.

# FRIDAY

## Mark 10:13-16 - Jesus Saw the Children

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Sadly, infanticide and child abuse were common in ancient Rome. Even in 1st century Israel children were not necessarily valued, except perhaps by their parents. The disciples therefore tried to shield Jesus, in His important work, from the continuing “distraction” of parents bringing lowly children to Him. Little did His followers appreciate part of Jesus’ message paraphrased, “These kids aren’t an interruption; they’re your instructors.” (Allen Sapp)

What did Jesus mean when declaring, “...*whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it*” (10:15)? “Children are needy and dependent, and they know almost nothing about life. ... Those who come to Christ must do so in childlike humility, faith, and simplicity. Like children who implicitly trust their parents, believers trust God.” (GotQuestions.org)

There are many so-called paradoxes in Christianity, including several relevant to today’s episode. For example, “... *the last will be first, and the first last*” (Matthew 20:16); “... *whoever humbles himself will be exalted*” (Matthew 23:12); and “*For when I am weak, then I am strong*” (2 Corinthians 12:10). Today’s seeming paradox: “The more spiritually mature we become, the more dependent on God we become.” (Sapp) Or, I might add, the more aware we become of our continuing, total dependence upon God. Everyone has always needed Him for life itself and all good things—some of us are simply fortunate now to see this.

“We don’t earn the kingdom of God, we receive it. ... God isn’t looking for you to clean yourself up enough for Him to accept you. He’s waiting for you to come to Him in faith and ask Him to save you through the work of His Son Jesus. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved. You can’t earn the kingdom; you can only receive it like a little child.” (Sapp)

Jesus loves you and welcomes you just as you are, warts and all—you need only to accept Him and turn from corruption. Have you yet received God’s gift of salvation in Christ? If not, why not? *“Behold, now is the favorable time ... now is the day of salvation”* (2 Corinthians 6:2).

## QUESTIONS

What did Jesus see in the children that His disciples could not?

What does it mean to *“receive the kingdom of God like a child”*?

## PRAYERS REQUESTED BY THREE ANGELS HAITI STAFF

*Eric and Christine Helgemo, Three Angels Board Member and Haiti Country Manager:* Pray for Haiti, struggling under the weight of months of civil unrest and now the pandemic. Pray that God would strengthen the people and provide strong, Christian leadership. Pray also for God’s provision so that we can continue to serve Haitian families and children.

## Sources

- GotQuestions.org quotes can be found at <https://www.gotquestions.org/woman-at-the-well.html> and <https://www.gotquestions.org/let-the-little-children-come-to-me.html>
- Stephanie Englehart's quote is from <https://www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/who-is-the-woman-at-the-well.html>
- Everette Hatcher's information on atheists taking polygraphs can be found at <https://thedailyhatch.org/2014/06/02/deep-down-everyone-knows-that-god-exists/> and <https://thedailyhatch.org/2014/06/04/csicop-experts-commented-15-years-ago-on-a-lie-detectors-ability-to-detect-ones-repressed-belief-in-god/>
- Amy Reese Anderson's quote is from [www.amyreesanderson.com/blog/the-lobster-syndrome/#.Xsk9QXdFxFY](http://www.amyreesanderson.com/blog/the-lobster-syndrome/#.Xsk9QXdFxFY)
- Allen Snapp's quotes can be found at <https://www.graceorning.org/sermons/sermon/2014-05-11/let-the-little-children-come-to-me>

