

went a way sad, Jesus asserts, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.” Indeed! Those with Jesus ask, “who then can be saved!” To which Jesus replies, “what is impossible with men is possible with God.”

Then a chapter later comes Zacchaeus as a tangible display of how with God all things are possible. Salvation has come to the life of a rich man!

Let this miracle of God’s power be a reminder to us that God is able to save any and all.

**PRAY:** Pray that salvation will come into the life of those who, perhaps, you’ve given up praying for. Pray for them believing with God all things are possible.

## FRIDAY APRIL 8

Read: Luke 19:8

It’s been said more than once and it’s true, money and power go hand in hand. By the world’s standard there are few who are both powerful and poor. That’s why having wealth can so subtly transform the human heart. Money affords power, and the use of power is primarily a matter of the heart.

Edward Bauman once wrote, “Money as a form of power is so intimately related to the possessor that one cannot consistently give money without giving self”. And if this is true, and I believe it is, then it is completely fitting that upon accepting the unconditional love of Christ, repenting, and welcoming fellowship with Jesus, Zacchaeus responded with a tangible display of a changed heart. His new life in Christ demonstrated a new relationship with money. In this story, for Zacchaeus to give his “self” to Jesus, he gave his wealth.

What must you give to Jesus, perhaps for the first time or the hundredth time, to tangibly display to Christ and to others, a changed heart? Is it the need for control? Affiliation with a particular organization? Addiction? Lies you believe about others or self? Anger? How, with Zacchaeus, will you testify that Jesus has changed your heart?

Allow the Holy Spirit to search your heart.

**PRAY:** Pray that God will fill you with a penitent heart. Sing “Change my heart O God, make it ever true. Change my heart, O God, may I be like you. You are the Potter, I am the clay. Mould me and make me, this is what I pray. Change my heart O God, make it ever true. Change my heart, O God, may I be like you.”

## SATURDAY APRIL 9

Read: Luke 19: 11-27 in preparation for tomorrow’s sermon.

Consider coming to morning prayer today in the sanctuary at 6:00AM.

# WEEKLY DEVOTIONS GUIDE

APRIL 3-9, 2011

BY: PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

NEW WEST CRC

**SERIES: A 'TANGIBLE DISPLAY' PEOPLE: JOURNEYING WITH JESUS IN LUKE**

SERMON: “TRUE RESPONSE OF A DISCIPLE: TRUE REPENTANCE”

LUKE 19:1-10

PASTOR ANDREW BEUNK

SUNDAY APRIL 3

**KEY THEME OR TAKE-AWAY:**

## MONDAY APRIL 4

Read: Luke 18:35—19:10

It is very likely that Luke intended these two stories to be read together. In the first story Jesus approaches Jericho, in the second he enters and passes through. In the first a man calls out to Jesus, in the second Jesus calls out to a man. Both stories make reference to messianic titles of Jesus. In the first Jesus is the Son of David, in the second he is the Son of Man.

In the first story the man who Jesus encounters is the type of person we've come to expect Jesus to minister to. He is blind. Because of his blindness he is an *oppressed* one. He is on the margins, dependent, helpless—oppressed. In Luke Jesus frequently ministers to “the least, the last and the lost.” With the crowd, we rejoice at how Jesus restores the man's sight.

But in the next story we find a reversal. Tax collectors were despised. They were considered Roman collaborators. They got rich off the backs of their fellow Jews. They were not *oppressed*. They were the *oppressors!* For those who lived in the Netherlands during the second World War, Zacchaeus was like a Dutchman who collaborated with the Nazi's. The whole town knew him and secretly would have loved to knife him in the back. Yet, Jesus searches him out and calls him to dinner fellowship.

Jesus shows love to *oppressed* and *oppressor* alike. And calls us to do the same.

**PRAY:** Thank God for His unconditional love extended to all. Pray that salvation will come to the oppressors in our world—try to be specific.

## TUESDAY APRIL 5

Read: Psalm 139: 7-10

Sycamore trees had large trunks, strong, low branches, and large, dense foliage. A perfect tree to climb and hide in. One commentator notes that for reasons of size sycamore trees were located at least 75ft. outside of town, likely on a road that left Jericho for Jerusalem.

To avoid the crowd and the shame of being a prominent man

climbing a tree, Zacchaeus ran ahead of the crowd. He climbed in a tree that surely would hide him.



But Jesus noticed him. “Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?” Nowhere. Because of our sin and shame, though we may wish to hide, Jesus searches us out.

**PRAY:** Sing “Amazing Grace” v.1. Thank the Lord for *finding* you, in spite of your sin and shame.

## WEDNESDAY APRIL 6

Read: Psalm 139: 13-16; 23-24

What does it mean to repent? In the story that we've been reflecting on this week from Luke 19:1-10, many see the repentance of Zacchaeus in his willingness to give away half of his possessions and repay four-fold what was taken. And in a certain sense this is true. His promise was a tangible display of God's renewing power in Zacchaeus' life.

But this story suggests that repentance comes even before this outward sign. Kenneth Bailey writes, “For Jesus, repentance is not simply confession of sin. Rather it is 'acceptance of being found.'” In the parable of the Good Shepherd, “my sheep know my voice.” Zacchaeus heard the voice of Jesus, and in coming down from the sycamore tree, we read, “[he] welcomed him gladly.” Zacchaeus accepted the gracious love of Jesus and perhaps that is the very beginning of repentance.

In a book I recently finished reading called *A Long Way Gone*, by Ishmael Bae, a story of a boy soldier conscripted by Sierra Leonian rebels and drugged into a killing machine. During his rehabilitation by UNICEF workers, it took many, many months for Ishmael to receive and accept love.

Accepting Christ's love, his forgiveness, his sacrifice, his grace and his Lordship, is the first step in true repentance. We must fully and completely accept that we have been found by Jesus, if we are truly to follow Him.

**PRAY:** Sing, “Just as I am without one plea, but that thy blood was shed for me, and that thou bidd'st me come to thee, O Lamb of God, I come, I come.” Thank Jesus for searching and finding us!

## THURSDAY APRIL 7

Read: Luke 18: 18-27; 19:2

Zacchaeus was a wealthy man. Not only was he a tax collector, but a chief tax collector. Roman and local authorities imposed various taxes, and tolls, and customs in the region of Palestine. Zacchaeus was a Jew serving Rome by collecting on their behalf. And as a chief tax collector he likely had hired underlings working for him. Perhaps Zacchaeus had jurisdiction over an entire region. Like a modern day pyramid scheme, Zacchaeus stood to make a good buck; no wonder Luke describes him as wealthy.

And this story comes on the heels of another story describing a man who was wealthy. In that story the disciples were perplexed. Here a righteous man was required to sell all that he had to follow Jesus. And when he