

FUTURE CHURCH



A WAY OF LIFE FOR THE
CHURCH OF THE FUTURE

A Community of Peacemakers in a Culture of Political Polarization

Luke 19:1-10

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A community of peacemakers in a culture of political polarization, through the practice of hospitality.

Luke 19:1-9

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” 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.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

The division in our nation plays out in our communities.

“[Is it] possible for...Christians to offer an open and hospitable space where strangers can cast off their strangeness and become our fellow human beings? The movement from hostility to hospitality is hard and full of difficulties. Our society seems to be increasingly full of fearful, defensive, aggressive people anxiously clinging to their property and inclined to look at their surrounding world with suspicion, always expecting an enemy to suddenly appear, intrude and do harm. But still—[this] is our vocation: to convert the enemy into a guest and to create the free and fearless space where brotherhood and sisterhood can be formed and fully experienced.”

- Henri Nouwen, *Reaching Out*

The movement from hostility to hospitality.

Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers.”

Luke 19:3-4

He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

“It is not simply that Zacchaeus cannot see over the crowd; rather, the crowd itself is present as an obstacle to him. On account of their negative assessment of Zacchaeus, the people refused him the privilege of seeing Jesus as he passed by.”

- Joel Green, *The Gospel of Luke*

“The kind of atheism we experience in America today is not a conclusion but a mood.”

- Ken Myers

Luke 19:5-6

Jesus looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

Luke 19:10

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Luke 7:34

“The Son of Man has come eating and drinking.”

“It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of table fellowship for the cultures of the Mediterranean basin in the first century of our era. Mealtimes were far more than occasions for individuals to consume nourishment. Being welcomed at a table for the purpose of eating food with another person had become a ceremony richly symbolic of friendship, intimacy and unity. Thus betrayal or unfaithfulness toward anyone with whom one had shared the table was viewed as particularly reprehensible. On the other hand, when persons were estranged, a meal invitation opened the way to reconciliation.”

- Scott Bartchy

Luke 19:8-10

“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.” Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

“The creation of a free space where the stranger can enter and become a friend instead of an enemy.”

- Henry Nouwen

“Turning enemies into neighbors and neighbors into family.”

- Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*

Romans 12:13

Practice hospitality.

1 Peter 4:8-10

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling.

Hebrew 13:22

Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

“Radically ordinary hospitality – those who live it see strangers as neighbors and neighbors as family of God. They recoil at reducing a person to a category or a label. They see God’s image reflected in the eyes of every human being on earth... Those who live out radically ordinary hospitality see

their homes not as theirs at all but as God's gift to use for the furtherance of his kingdom. They open doors; they seek out the underprivileged. They know that the gospel comes with a house key."

- Rosaria Butterfield, *The Gospel Comes with a House Key*

"Hospitality should not be limited to its literal sense of receiving a stranger in our house - although it's important never to forget or neglect that! - but as a fundamental attitude toward our fellow human being, which can be expressed in a great variety of ways."

- Henri Nouwen

Take-Aways:

1. Holy Week Pods
2. Let's not give up on hospitality.