

**“Beyond”
Reformation Sunday
October 30, 2022**

Luke 19: 1-10

Jesus came to Jericho and was passing through it, and many people went to see him walk by. A man was there named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector and wealthy, who was trying to get a glimpse of him, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was short in stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because Jesus was going to pass that way.

⁵When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to him “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” ⁶So Zacchaeus came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

⁸Zacchaeus stood there and said to Jesus: “Look, Lord, half of my possessions, I will give to the poor; and if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will pay back four times as much.”

⁹Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

Before we hear this anthem,
I was reading and a pastor, in the midst of COVID,
and wrote, when we have a choir again,
this is the song I will ask them to sing:

In it you will hear the themes of this stewardship season.

*Belonging to one another,
Good travelers move in company.
we travel together as one*

Becoming

we know not where the road will lead
but we move in faith making love our creed

And Beyond

Sharing bread with those in need
giving help to those who fall.
Yet far beyond the setting sun,
there shines a light of a victory won;

Now, the Chancel Choir,
accompanied by Adrielle Van Bibber
and directed by Greg White
with, “*The Journey is Our Home*”

The Journey Is Our Home by Allen Pote

*Awake, arise, the journey's begun.
We travel on together as one.
We know not where the road will lead,
but we move in faith, making love our creed as we follow;
The journey is our home.*

*Good trav'lers walk with company,
sharing bread with those in need.
Giving help along the way to those who fall,
who wander astray as we follow;
The journey is our home.*

Join with us in jubilee.
Celebrate God's family.
Sing together joyfully.
Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.
Praise for evermore!

*God moves with us as we go.
He hears our cry, our pain He knows.*

*Yet far beyond the setting sun,
there shines a light of a victory won;
The journey, the journey is our home.*

Join with us in jubilee.
Celebrate God's family.
Sing together joyfully.
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia,
Praise for evermore.

Jesus is journeying,
and passes through Jericho
Stories of his healing powers and the power of his words
have proceeded him
and people come out just to see him walk by.

Zacchaeus is the chief tax collector,
he has bought that position, paid Rome up front,
and now collects more tax than is due and pockets it,
and he is despised for it.

He is curious about Jesus
perhaps he has always felt small inside,
no matter how great his wealth
we can understand that,
Mister Rogers used to tell children
how grown ups often feel small, insignificant
on the inside, too

Perhaps there is within Zaccheaus
a longing for something he can't even describe
beyond anything he could buy.
And we understand that, too.

Perhaps he is lonely,
Dag Hammarskjöld's the great Swedish leader
and head of the United Nations who wrote of his
own loneliness:

“ *pray your loneliness is spurring you into finding
something to live for,
something great enough to die for.*”

and he wants to see this man who is inviting people
into community and growth and more,
into belonging, becoming and beyond

so Zacchaeus climbs up a sycamore tree
to see the holy man walk by.

But, surprisingly, it is Jesus who sees **him**,
and calls him out, miraculously, by name,
*Zacchaeus, come down to me.
for I must stay at your house*

Jesus, the holy one, insists,
for perhaps he is like Mister Rogers in a crowd of children
he could always seem to find the most vulnerable ones
Jesus Zacchaeus, recognizes the longing,
the searching heart behind his eyes,
and so, to the dismay of the crowd,
invites himself into the home
of the most unholy and despised of men.

This happens over and over in Luke's account
Women, men and children,
whom others see as without merit,
Jesus leans in with them.

in this story, as Frederick Buechner says:

*The mob points out that the man Jesus is talking to
is a public disaster.*

Jesus' silence is deafening.

The people watching him do not realize
that Jesus is the Christ

God's grace, God's love made known in creation,
and that love and grace moves beyond any line we might
think can't be crossed,
for there is nothing and no one outside of God.

God's affection is constantly, continuously
coming toward us:
in the light of every star
and birdsong and
leaf bright with glory,
God is ever and always present
and waiting for the opening of our heart
of our mind, of our eyes.

Jesus sees that Zacchaeus is looking for him,
and he invites himself to his home,
and, Luke says, Zacchaeus gladly receives him.

Accepting, as we all must,
that he is accepted by that great love
which calls him down from the tree
and away from the ways he has sinned against others,
to rest and be at home in his deepest self
to be at home with the one
who has made his home in him.

it is our work too,
to realize that the divine is calling our name
that, as much as the mob within us says
that we are alone, and unremarkable and
small.

That we can know belonging, and becoming and beyond.
To accept, as Zacchaeus does,
that God cannot not love **us**;
cannot not forgive us.

To finally put down this burden
of proving ourselves,
and know salvation, that is, wholeness,

A wholeness that allows Zacchaeus not only to truly love himself,
but to move beyond that to love his neighbor as himself.

*I will make it right by those I have injured, he says,
I will give away half of what I own
I will repay them 4 times what I took from them.*

He receives grace, then offers it,
and so is restored to his community
as Jesus says, this is a child of Abraham
he belongs.

We, the church, this Christ's church
seeks to offer the gift of community,
of belonging.
That is the heart of a reconciling congregation
that all may know they belong.

We, this Church, this Christ's church seek to
acknowledge the work that God is doing in you,
companion you in this process of interior formation
support you in your becoming.

And in the midst of all that distracts and hurts and terrifies
and upsets, of elections, and wars, and floods,
in the midst of life and death,
we climb the tree together
to see that which is both beyond us
and beside us,
and so to rest in that love
to be at home in this holy universe,
to be at home in the One
who makes his home in us.

A that moves us, beyond our immediate cares,
to the cares of our neighbors, for the poor
to share our time, our talents, our treasures
as Zacchaeus has.

to love our enemy
and our neighbor as ourselves
to do unto others
to give our lives for our friends.

and so, with all our hearts, cry out
For all that has been,
Thank you.
For all that is to come, Yes!