

**“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. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because Jesus was going to pass that way.*

*<sup>5</sup>When 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.” <sup>6</sup>So Zacchaeus came down at once and welcomed him gladly.*

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

*<sup>8</sup>Zacchaeus 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.”*

*<sup>9</sup>Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For 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.

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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!*