

Luke 19:1-10

“Giving Out”

2nd Stewardship Sunday

October 21, 2018

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church

Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace from God, our Heavenly Father, and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ –

[Introduction]

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord,

“Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”

And Jesus said to him, ***“Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”***(Lk 19:8–10)

We are thinking about this encounter through “Generous Giving.”

We are entering a story of exceptional attention and affection,
which Jesus extends to a man who most consider a traitor to his people.

Zacchaeus is a tax collector.

| | |
|---|--|
| In this ancient place, a tax collector is one who makes his income by extracting money from his neighbors | and giving that money to a foreign, occupying, often harsh government. |
|---|--|

The work is filled with corruption, and everyone knows it.

AND then suddenly, words like salvation and son of Abraham
show up in the story describing Zacchaeus.

These words imply a relationship with God that no one thinks Zacchaeus deserves.
The words are spoken by Jesus himself.

AND They come following the intent and action of generous giving by Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus’s action indicates he understands that his own generous giving
is merely a simple response to the extraordinary, generous gift of salvation
that Jesus offers to him.

[Generous Giving]

When we think about generous giving,

it’s important to know that it is not exclusively financial in nature.

Generous giving is a lifestyle of deep love for Jesus Christ.

As the Bible describes this encounter, generous giving is relational and missional
as well as financial.

Think of a triangle. A triangle with three separate, three unique sides.

The three sides of the generous-giving triangle are:

“***giving up***,” expressing deep love for God;

“***giving out***,” expressing profound love
for those who are not yet Jesus’ followers; and

“***giving in***,” expressing exemplary love
for those who are part of God’s family.

Generous giving requires all three.

Last month we focused on “giving up” and this month “giving out.”

“Giving out” is expressing profound love.

It is missional in nature because the primary recipients are not yet Jesus’ followers.

Giving out is missional as Jesus is missional.

He “***came to seek and to save the lost***” (Lk 19:10).

[A Case Study]

Consider Zacchaeus, chief tax collector.

If he is ruthless, he will have wealth.

If he can be bribed, he will have wealth.

If he is dishonest, he will have wealth.

All his wealth will be attained at the hardship and expense of others.

Consider Zacchaeus is described as “rich.” He has wealth. No wonder people are afraid of him. No wonder people despise him. No wonder people are condescending toward him. Every single day, this is the context of his life.

Consider Zacchaeus. He wants to see Jesus. He is small in stature. He is curious. As Jesus approaches his town of Jericho, Zacchaeus runs ahead of him and climbs up in a sycamore tree.

Consider Zacchaeus. Jesus stops. He looks up in the tree and makes eye contact. “***Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today***” (v 5).

Consider Zacchaeus.

He is accustomed to people not stopping for him and not speaking to him.

He is familiar with disapproving stares.

He knows the ugly, profane names people use when they refer to him.

He is the man people love to hate.

Yet, with a look and a word from Jesus,

Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree and gladly receives him.

Something happens. The people who observed the moment did not see or sense it.
They grumble. They complain. They accuse.

“He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” (v 7).

Something happens.

God’s grace intersects Zacchaeus’s disgrace.

Jesus expresses profound love for someone who is not yet his follower.

No one sees it, but Jesus knows it.

Zacchaeus’s life is transformed.

The one who receives generous giving becomes a generous giver.

Something happens.

This is a kind of giving out that Jesus connects to salvation.

This is a kind of giving out that Martin Luther recognizes

when he describes the Christian life as consisting of faith and charity.

Zacchaeus did not give to earn Jesus’ love and respect.

Zacchaeus gives out because he is found

by a Savior who seeks and saves lost people.

The encounter with Jesus changes the entire orientation of Zacchaeus’s life.
Zacchaeus is giving out to others.

Yes. He responds to Jesus:

“So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully” (v 6).

Yes. He responds to the needs of the community around him

—the poor and those he had defrauded (v 8).

Yes. He responds with generous giving: ***“The half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold”***
(v 8).

Jesus notices. Jesus makes the connection between “giving out” and “new creation.” ***“Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham”*** (v 9).

On another occasion, Jesus teaches about the relationship between the “treasure” of my life and the orientation of my life. ***“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”*** (Mt 6:21).

In other words, your giving gives you away.

[What about me?] Think about it:

If Jesus watches me give,

would he come to the same conclusion about me that he did regarding Zacchaeus?

Consider two things...

First, consider how connections to lost people count.

Jesus comes to “seek and to save the lost” (v 10).

He is very intentional about that.

He is intentional when he stops at the location of the tree Zacchaeus climbs.

He is intentional when he makes eye contact with Zacchaeus.

He is intentional when he announces to Zacchaeus his destination as “your house” (v 5).

Jesus did not isolate himself from those whose lives are completely dominated by sin.

Jesus’ intentional, generous giving toward Zacchaeus

helps me know that God loves lost people.

As a recipient of Jesus’ generous giving, I want to be an intentional missionary
to family and friends who are not yet Jesus’ followers.

That is “giving out.”

Second, consider the importance of generous giving to mission opportunities.

Jesus gives his life in order to save lost people.

Zacchaeus gives generously to the poor and the defrauded.

He does not separate his wealth from his mission.

He does not separate his wealth from the opportunities

he sees to advance the cause of Christ in the people and places of need.

He does not separate his wealth from seeking the lost.

[Conclusion]

Through Jesus’ death and resurrection we are saved – we know salvation.

As a result we “give up” and “give out.”

So, when I examine my life and how I use my resources, time, talent and treasure,
will I find I give generously?

Generous giving is not an abstract concept.

Generous giving includes giving out to others

—especially those who are not yet Jesus’ followers.

It is true for Zacchaeus. It is true for you and me.

The issue is urgent. The time to begin is now.

Give generously and rejoice! Amen!

REJOICE always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. AMEN! (1 Thess. 5:16–18)
