Week 5-Reconciliation

Vision and Objective:

Having been reconciled to God through Jesus, flourishing communities engage in the hard work of being in the right relationship with one another. Working to right the wrongs we have done, even when costly, leads us and those around us to flourish.

Opening Prayer

Our Father, we come this evening to study and learn from your word for as the Psalmist said, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path”. Please use this time that we have together as that lamp and help us to keep to the path that you have put before us. In the name of Jesus, your son, amen.

Scripture Passage: Luke 19:1-10 NRSV

### Jesus and Zacchaeus

**19** He entered Jericho and was passing through it. **2** A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. **3** He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. **4** So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. **5** When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.” **6** So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. **7** All who saw it began to grumble and said, “He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.” **8** Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” **9** Then Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.”

Context & Background

Luke’s writing draws attention to the marginalized, for example, tax collectors were a despised group of Jewish people who collected taxes for the government at a profit.

Questions to Discuss:,

What were Zacchaeus’s actions before and after meeting Jesus?

Before: skimming money off the top of taxes

After: Giving money to the poor and offer to paid 4x what he had swindled from the people. (Dispute it beng standard procedure;he “owned his sin”)

Received God’s grace.

What is significant about Jesus publicly inviting himself to Zacchaeus’s house?

In front of huge audience: Salvation is available to all regardless of past/current sins

Tax collectors were particularly despised because they worked for the Romans and they skimmed from the taxes that they collected.

Jesus was pointing out to the crowd that we are all equal in God’s eyes; i.e. Mary Magdalene, woman at the well, even Matthew

What do you notice about Zacchaeus’s response to Jesus? What about Jesus’s response in return?

Zacchaeus recognized Jesus as God’s authority (moral)

He became a giver (to the poor), he sought to reconcile with those that he swindled

Thought of Zaccaeus like Nicodemus; Nicodemus came by night, Zaccaeus climbed a tree; both were rich men wanting to know more about Jesus and forgiveness of sins

Forgiveness of sins stories are life transforming stories

What can this story teach us about reconciliation, both to God and others?

“God accepts our U-Turns”

It is important to reconcile with those whom you have harmed

Making amends is life restoring, proper accounting of one’s actions-how they have affected others

What would it take for reconciliation to truly be a value of your community? How can you practise this, and what can you commit to as a group?

Seek to find common ground even when there doesn’t seem to be any

Accept people the way they are

Peaceful (as much as possible) resistance

Love your neighbor, even the ones you don’t like

Closing Prayer

May the road rise up to meet you. May the wind be always at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face; the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again, may God hold you in the palm of His hand.  
  
*Old Gaelic blessing found at: https://www.lords-prayer-words.com/times/closing\_prayer.html*