

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church  
March 21, 2021

Greetings brothers and sisters in Christ.

**Holy Week and Easter Services – all will be on-line**

Palm Sunday – March 28 @ 10:30 a.m. ...via Zoom

Maundy Thursday – April 1 @ 7:00 p.m. ... via Zoom

Good Friday – April 2 @ 7:00 p.m. ... via Zoom

Easter Sunday – April 4 @ 10:30 a.m. via Zoom

The Church Council met this week and voted to begin in-person worship OUTSIDE on the parking lot on May 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Prayer Breakfast

March 24<sup>th</sup> on Zoom. The Zoom Link is at the end of this message.

**And join us for our Annual Lenten Prayer Gathering  
BYOB – Bring your own Breakfast!**

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 at 8:30 AM on Zoom

**Our guest speaker will be NEPS Bishop Christopher  
deForest**



To Join Zoom Meeting:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84216588859?  
pwd=ZHFUVWtNTVQ3dVFrNWpOYUdBcWFvUT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84216588859?pwd=ZHFUVWtNTVQ3dVFrNWpOYUdBcWFvUT09)

Meeting ID: 842 1658 8859    Passcode: 389976

Yours in Christ,  
Home Phone

Pastor Denise  
610-750-6432

Cell/Text Phone

610-858-8187

## Luke 18:31—19:10

The gospel reading is from the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Luke beginning at the 31<sup>st</sup> verse.

**31-34** Then Jesus took the Twelve off to the side and said, “Listen carefully. We’re on our way up to Jerusalem. Everything written in the Prophets about the Son of Man will take place.

He will be handed over to the Romans, jeered at, ridiculed, and spit on. Then, after giving him the third degree, they will kill him. In three days, he will rise, alive.” But they didn’t get it, could make neither heads nor tails of what he was talking about.

**35-37** He came to the outskirts of Jericho. A blind man was sitting beside the road asking for handouts. When he heard the rustle of the crowd, he asked what was going on. They told him, “Jesus the Nazarene is going by.”

**38** He yelled, “Jesus! Son of David! Mercy, have mercy on me!”

**39** Those ahead of Jesus told the man to shut up, but he only yelled

all the louder, “Son of David! Mercy, have mercy on me!”

**40** Jesus stopped and ordered him to be brought over. When he had come near, Jesus asked, “What do you want from me?”

**41** He said, “Master, I want to see again.”

**42-43** Jesus said, “Go ahead—see again! Your faith has saved and healed you!” The healing was instant: He looked up, seeing—and then followed Jesus, glorifying God. Everyone in the street joined in, shouting praise to God.

**19 1-4** Then Jesus entered and walked through Jericho. There was a man there, his name Zacchaeus, the head tax man and quite rich. He wanted desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his way—he was a short man and couldn’t see over the crowd. So he ran on ahead

and climbed up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by.

<sup>5-7</sup> When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home.” Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree, hardly believing his good luck, delighted to take Jesus home with him.

Everyone who saw the incident was indignant and grumped, “What business does he have getting cozy with this crook?”

<sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned. He stammered apologetically, “Master, I give away half my income to the poor—and if I’m caught cheating, I pay four times the damages.”

<sup>9-10</sup> Jesus said, “Today is salvation day in this home! Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham! For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.”

The gospel of our Lord.

Thanks be to God.

## Sermon

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior AMEN

This is our last Sunday on the journey to Jerusalem and this morning's text begins with Jesus taking his twelve disciples aside to prepare them for what will happen when they reach Jerusalem.

As Jesus says: I will be handed over to the Romans, jeered at, ridiculed, and spit on. Then, after being interrogated and beaten, they will kill me. In three days, I will rise again and be alive.

But the disciples could not comprehend what Jesus was telling them.

The last stop of their journey was the small and remote town of Jericho. As they enter the town, they encounter one of the outcasts of the city - a blind man, who due to his physical disability

would have been relegated to the margins of society and would have been forced to live on whatever crumbs might be thrown his way. He had no standing and no voice according to the societal standards of the time.

But, on this occasion as Jesus is passing by, the blind man chooses to ignore the societal protocols and called out to Jesus to have mercy on him. Jesus heard his cry for mercy and stopped to talk to the man asking him what he would like Jesus do for him. And the blind man replied, I would like to see again.

With only words Jesus tells him that he is to see again and that his faith has made him well. A story of restoration not just of his eyesight, but of his place and his

purpose in society. Now that he has been restored to health, he will be welcomed back to the community as a respected member.

The third story in this morning's text is that of the story of Zacchaeus and if we were in-person this morning and singing was permitted, like back before the pandemic hit, we might be singing one of my favorite Sunday School songs about the wee little man named Zacchaeus.

And as I think of the words to that song I realize that the real focus of the beginning of that song is that indeed Zacchaeus was short – Zacchaeus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he, he climbed up in the sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see.

When Jesus sees the wee little man Zacchaeus sitting in the sycamore tree, he summons him to come down from the tree so that Jesus can go to his house for dinner.

But there is so much more to this story than that of Jesus having dinner with a wee little man.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, which means that he had made a deal with their oppressors, the Romans to do their bidding. He would collect the taxes from the Jewish people that would be sent to the support the Roman empire and inevitably finance the Roman armies.

And not only was Zacchaeus working for the enemy, but there were no rules. And so, in addition to the money he was collecting that he would turn over to Rome; he overcharged the people and kept that money for himself. Which made Zacchaeus, not only a very wealthy man, but also a very unpopular and untrustworthy man.

So, you have to wonder why out of all the people that Jesus passed on the street that day, Zacchaeus is the one Jesus stopped to talk with and tell him in front of all those within earshot that tonight he planned to eat dinner with him.

Another important part of this story that is missing in our Sunday School song, is how the presence of Jesus changed Zacchaeus. As Zacchaeus stop cheating the people that he collected taxes from and also made restitution to the people that he had cheated, by paying them back four times what he had stolen from them.

Jesus' presence in Zacchaeus' life not only transformed his, but think of all the lives that were changed due to Zacchaeus' transformation. Without a doubt, receiving a large sum of money would have had a positive impact on their lives.

And although we have no documentation telling us what the people did with their new found wealth, I want to believe there was some additional "paying it forward" that went on within the community of Jericho.

In the original covenant with God and Father Abraham, God promised that Abraham's descendants would be blessed to be a blessing for all nations.

And now as we walk on this last leg of this journey to Jerusalem; Jesus, a descendant of Abraham is the divine blessing from God, who will not be giving up his wealth to restore people's lives as Zacchaeus did, but Jesus will be giving up his life so that all people will be blessed with a restored relationship with God the Father and all people will be promised the gift of eternal life.

All people, not just the descendants of Abraham, not just the ones who have come to know Jesus and have followed him; but all people will be forgiven, restored and welcomed into this kingdom life not only in heaven, but here on Earth.

Throughout Jesus ministry here on Earth, he has taught us, challenged us and modeled for us the ways of the Kingdom. He has told us stories, and he talked with, had compassion for and healed those that the world had relegated to the lowest rung of society.

And most of his stories and many of his actions have left us puzzled for the ways of Jesus are

not the worldly ways that we  
have become so verry  
comfortable with.

Jesus' obedience and faithfulness  
all the way to the cross and the  
grave have restored our  
relationship with God.

And now, we are called to live  
the way that Jesus taught us to  
restore our relationships with  
our neighbors. And, just like that  
short little man Zacchaeus

changed his ways and restored  
his relationship with his  
neighbors, so too we are called to  
do the same.

For that is what being blessed to  
be a blessing is all about.

AMEN

***Blessing***

May

The love of God,

The light of Christ,

And the joy of the Holy Spirit

Abide with you on this day

and forever more.

AMEN