You Are Known- Part 5

# Where Grace Finds You

## (Luke 19:1-10)

Welcome to part 5 of our message series, "You Are Known." Whether you've been here every week or today is your first time, you are not here by accident. God doesn’t just see the crowd; He is a personal God, and He sees you. He sees your strengths, your struggles, your story, and still calls you by name.

This series has centered on one truth: no matter where you have been or what you have done, you are fully seen, deeply loved, and personally known by God.

Today, we're looking at a man who knew what it felt like to be overlooked. Zacchaeus had been pushed aside, disregarded, and dismissed by the crowds, but there was something in him that still longed to climb higher, not for attention, but to catch a glimpse of hope.

All his life, he had fallen short in the eyes of others, but not in those of Jesus. Today, we see that even when the world passed him by, heaven did not, because he was known, Jesus saw him, and he called him.

Let’s read together from the Gospel of Luke, chapter 19:

"Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way" (Luke 19:1-4).

"When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.' So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly" (Luke 19:5-6).

"All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner'" (Luke 19:7).

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount'" (Luke 19:8).

"Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost'" (Luke 19:9-10).

Even though Zacchaeus had fallen short in every way—physically, morally, and spiritually—Jesus still saw him. Others might have dismissed him as unworthy, unimportant, and excluded from God's promises, but Jesus included him in the story of redemption.

Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus, unaware that one day soon Jesus would hang on a tree to save people just like him. Because the Bible says,

"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).

In other words, just like you and me, Zacchaeus wasn’t invisible to Jesus; he wasn’t just another face in the crowd. Jesus knew him, saw him, and called him by name.

That's the good news: Jesus doesn’t pass you by. Not only does he see you, but he also stops for you and calls you to come because you are known.

Even when others call you a sinner, Jesus doesn’t define you by your past; he knows you and calls you according to your purpose. Even when you feel like you have fallen short, Jesus still draws near because he isn’t intimidated by your weakness.

In fact, God moves toward us in our need, not away from us. He comes full of grace and truth, with mercy and compassion, especially when we are hurting, broken, or in need of help. And so, when you’re broken, bankrupt, and without hope, he still invites you to himself. He doesn’t wait for you to have it all together, but he draws you to himself; he stoops down and enters into your mess, making it holy.

Sometimes I wonder if we spend too much time trying to change people when that transformation happens through the Holy Spirit. Many haven’t been filled with the Holy Spirit and don’t yet know who they are because they are still becoming who God called them to be. The Bible tells us that we are all clay in the potter’s hands (Isaiah 64:8).

And so, we are still being shaped, becoming who he created us to be, formed by his grace and truth. As the Scripture says:

"We are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known" (1 John 3:2).

In other words, not understanding your spiritual gift or knowing what you've been called to do and your role as a member of the body of Christ isn’t ignorance; it’s part of growing and maturing, and that process takes time.

Today, we live in a culture that celebrates victory, so we often ignore the process. We pray for breakthroughs but overlook the process of breaking. Yet, without the process, there will be no fruit, and the results won’t last.

Just think about Adam for a moment; he was created as a full-grown man. God breathed life into him without the process, and he couldn’t hold onto what he had been given.

Some of you are in that moment right now; you’ve been filled with the Holy Spirit, and you sense a calling because the anointing is real. Yet, you are still in the process, still clay in the hands of the potter. In other words, sometimes it may feel like things are out of control, just slipping through your fingers, but it is the process that builds the strength to manage the blessings you have received.

And so, sometimes God gives you a preview of the promise early, not to reward you, but to prepare you for what is to come. He shows you a glimpse, not to fulfill it yet, but to stir something in you for the journey ahead. Because if you receive the gift without building the foundation, what was meant to bless you can instead overwhelm you. That’s why the Bible says,

“Encourage one another and build each other up” (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

Statistics show that most lottery winners go broke within two years because they gain wealth without developing the wisdom needed to manage it. That’s why it’s better to grow into your blessings—to be shaped, stretched, and strengthened before the overflow comes. When God builds you first, what He gives you won’t break you; instead, it will bless you.

We see this in Scripture because Adam was created as a man, fully formed in a moment, but Jesus, the second Adam, came differently. He entered the world through a natural process. The Bible says.

“Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger” (Luke 2:7).

As the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, Jesus was in the process of growing. They found him teaching in the temple at age twelve, but then he was hidden for another eighteen years.

That is important because the world is quick to judge what God is still shaping. That's why God hides your process until you're ready, because you don’t want to be in the spotlight while you're still becoming. And so, when the time comes, God will bring you out, but until then, let the potter do his work. Let him shape you and prepare you for what he has already planned for you.

Jesus was baptized, and as he was praying, the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily form. The Bible says,

“Full of the Holy Spirit, he returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the desert” (Luke 4:1).

The reason he was taken into the wilderness was that growth needs space, and the process requires privacy before the platform becomes the proving ground.

It’s in hidden places, like those dry desert regions, where identity is formed. When all distractions are gone and only you, the Word, and the Spirit remain, it’s in that desert where you discover who you truly are. If you skip that season, you won’t be ready for what’s ahead. And if you haven’t been strengthened in secret, you won’t be able to stand in public.

That’s why we must embrace the process — because it is in the wilderness where our roots grow deep, enabling us to bear fruit later. Then we will be like a tree planted by the water, sending out its roots along the stream. It doesn’t fear the heat when it comes; its leaves are always green. It doesn’t worry about a year of drought, and it never fails to bear fruit (Jeremiah 17:8).

But if you skip the process and miss that season, your roots won’t grow, and you won’t be prepared for what comes next.

We all love suddenly stories and those immediately miracles, but it takes time to truly answer the question, “Who am I?” Anything that lasts takes time; becoming who you are requires patience. So, don’t rush to define yourself or settle on a version of yourself that’s still in progress. It’s okay to say, “I don’t know yet, because God is still shaping me, and I’m learning to be okay with that.”

And so, as you are now, you are still growing, still being shaped, and even in the process, you are known by God. That’s important because you need time to become strong enough to fulfill what God has prepared for you.

Zacchaeus reminds us that it's okay to still be becoming who we are called to be, recognizing that the only reason we're standing is because God held us up. And so, now Zacchaeus, whose name means “pure,” climbed a fig tree like the one Jesus cursed. A man who was seen as sinful and corrupt came seeking the only one who brings real fruit, real life, and lasting change.

Zacchaeus, who is known for being short, was called “pure”. And isn’t that the tension of being human? Broken but reaching. Messed up but sincere. Guilty but hungry. Flawed but longing for more.

That’s why it’s so hard to answer the question, “How are you?” Even though I’m doing well, I’m still struggling. I have faith, but I’m scared. I am holy, but I’m still human.

Isn’t that why we say, “Everything’s good!”? Because it feels safer than admitting, “I am broken, fractured, and fragmented.” This is for real people, not perfect but genuine. That’s what it means to be in progress. Isn’t that grace at work in a believer?

Zacchaeus climbed a tree because he wanted to be in the right position. He didn’t wait until Jesus arrived; he got in place early because if you wait until you're ready, you might miss it. You have to be in position before he passes by.

Some of you are living in chaos right now; you’re waiting to fix it later, but now is the time. This is your moment to get in position—don’t wait for perfect conditions. Find your place while you can because Jesus is coming soon.

This tree is important because every major act of redemption in Scripture happened on a tree. It starts in Genesis with the Tree of Life and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. It was foreshadowed in Numbers, where the Lord said to Moses:

“Make a snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live" (Numbers 21:8).

And it reached its climax at Calvary, on an old, rugged cross lifted between heaven and earth.

Now, Zacchaeus climbs another tree, getting into position and waiting for Jesus. The Bible says:

“When Jesus reached the spot…” (Luke 19:5).

In other words, Zacchaeus was already in position; he was there when Jesus arrived. This shows us that you don’t need to chase after the blessing, but instead wait for it and get into position, just like blind Bartimaeus.

The woman with the issue of blood was in the right place at the right time. And right now, Jesus is coming to you, into your weakness, into your contradiction, into your shortcomings, because all have sinned and fall short of his glory. You don’t have to impress him; you don’t have to have everything together. You just need to position yourself in faith. When grace walks by, the only thing that matters is being in the right place.

Abraham climbed the mountain and found a ram waiting for him there. So, the only thing that matters is being in the right place because God doesn’t provide everywhere. He places things where he has called you, and if you get in the right spot, everything you need will come to you.

And so, Zacchaeus was up in a tree, looking down at Jesus, and Jesus said, “This is backwards, because I am the one who is supposed to be on the cursed tree.”

That’s what he said to Nicodemus, “The Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:14-15).

So, he told Zacchaeus, “Come down,” because he was going up to the cross. He wasn’t simply climbing a hill; he was going up on a cursed tree, carrying the full weight of our sin and shame. As he prepared to be lifted up, he made a powerful promise:

“I will draw all men to myself” (John 12:32).

And he would be lifted up in judgment, taking the curse upon himself, so that we could be brought down into grace. He rose on that tree so we could fall into mercy. He gave his life so we could receive eternal life.

In contrast, Zacchaeus could hang out, waiting in a tree, but he couldn’t save anyone. Only Jesus, the Lamb of God, the Righteous One, could die for the unrighteous. And so, he looked up and said,

“Zacchaeus, we can’t both be up here. You’ve got to come down so I can go up.”

In other words, God wants to trade places with you. Because as the Bible says,

“He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5).

And so, God made the one who had no sin to become sin for us. Jesus went to the cross and took on a curse for us.

But here’s the problem: some of you won’t come down because you climbed that tree to make yourself look taller. I imagine most of us do it in one way or another. Some of us do it because of peer pressure, others to appear taller through accomplishments, status, titles, or image. But God blesses those who fall short. And He will meet you in your weakness.

So, if you stop pretending and come down, he will bless you more than you ever imagined. Right now, some of you are pretending, and Jesus says, “I don’t recognize you up there,” and the Bible says,

“Humble yourself before the Lord, and he will lift you up” (James 4:10).

In other words, he is ready to anoint you in your weakness, to meet you when you're broken and desperate, crying out to him. But right now, you've built something impressive, and he says, “I can’t give you what I have for you until you come down.” Not later, not someday, but Jesus said,

“Come down immediately” (Luke 19:5).

And Zacchaeus did. He came down. And only then did Jesus say:

“I must stay at your house today” (Luke 19:5).

In other words, “If you come down, I’ll come in.” Because when you feel small, you will look for something to make you feel tall.

Why do you think Zacchaeus became a tax collector for Rome, betraying his own people? It was because he wanted to feel important. He was climbing to make up for what he lacked. The world calls it ambition, but the Spirit calls it brokenness. So, you don’t need another title to feel strong; you need healing. You don’t need another tree to climb; you need the truth.

Do you have the courage today to come down?

You see, that tree, which symbolizes your status, the image you project to others, or the platform that has become your God. You are still praising God, still showing up, but you are guarding your tree. And so, you remain just out of reach, but God isn’t after your image—who you pretend to be; he’s calling the real you to come down, to be seen, to be known, and to be healed.

As we close today, will you keep holding onto the tree, or will you trust God with your shortness? That’s an important question, one that makes all the difference in the world, because if you come down, Jesus said:

“If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me” (Revelation 3:20).

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