

“Becoming who you were destined to be”

Luke 19:1-10

Series: Road Trip Week 3. God is with us when we are lonely

Nathaniel Brodish

The Woodside Church

July 20, 2025

Hello everybody! My name is Nathaniel Brodish and I'm the Young Adult Director here at Woodside. I just want to welcome everybody this morning. Whether in person or online I want to let you know that you belong before you believe. We want to welcome you as you're part of our family here at Woodside. No matter where you are on your journey through life once you walk in these doors you're family.

A few weeks ago we started a series called Road trip where we are journeying through the bible. Last week Pastor Doug talked about how the Israelites were on their journey and Aaron and Moses were leading them towards the promised land. The big idea last week is that God is with us when we go off course.

This week we will be continuing this series so if you have your bibles please open up to Luke chapter 19. Let me offer a prayer.

Again, if you have your Bibles, your phones, I would like you to open up to Luke chapter 19. A few years ago I had a conversation with a student in the youth group about the idea of potential. We were talking about how people can say to one another “I see the potential in you to become something great.” The student said in response to this “Isn't potential just a figment of our imagination?” I said that in a way it is. And as you can see I am still impacted by this conversation today. I think potential is real. Yes it can start in the imaginary world but it can slowly move into our reality.

When we think of potential in a realistic way we get a glimpse of something unseen. For a split second you understand what it could look like to be in that reality. For a second you may understand the destiny that's been hidden for far too long.

This past week Woodside hosted Push The Rock. For those of you that don't know, Push the Rock is a Christian affiliated sports camp. Myself along with Markie and some other coaches got the opportunity to interact with some amazing players. Ever since I started working with Push The Rock I have always enjoyed seeing the level of the players increase as they come back year after year. From the first year I met some of these kids I could sense that they were good at the sport that they played. I could see the potential of what they could become.

What they were destined for. And as they return year after year they are slowly becoming and even going beyond what I felt years prior. We have gotten to see a glimpse of who they'll become. Who they're destined to be. Something like this is happening in our passage today. Something amazing. Something divine. A destiny is coming into existence.

Let's take a look at the passage: Luke 19:1–10

“ He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. And 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.” So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the 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.” If you have a pen, a notebook, or the notes app in your phone get it ready. There are three things you need to know to understand the context of this passage and the power behind it:

1. Jesus has already predicted His death 3 times. (His journey to Jerusalem is almost complete.
2. In chapter 18 Jesus had His conversation with the rich young ruler who left the conversation pretty sad and upset because he didn't want to give away what he had worked so hard to get.
3. In chapter 18 Jesus heals a physically blind man and restores His sight.

With understanding these 3 things we will get the power of this story!

Let's start with Jesus entering Jericho. We see that in this portion of Luke Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem on his way to the cross, but he is entering Jericho now and for what purpose? We see him in his interaction with Zacchaeus. Jesus is purposefully going through Jericho because of Zacchaeus.

But who was Zacchaeus because we see him here in this passage and we really don't see him anywhere else. But we see he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy right away, and from other things we can gather from the passage as Jesus then later states that he's a son of Abraham. Meaning he was a Jew.

Concluding that Zacchaeus was an outsider and sinner. He was looked down upon from the Jews because he was looked at as a traitor, someone who decided to abandon their Jewish heritage, joining the Romans and cheating the Jews out of their money. A chief tax collector would've skimmed some off the top as much as possible, raising taxes for his fellow Jews, so he could put more in his pocket. He was a cheater, a sinner.

We see in this passage he's described as just being small. But we can also describe him as curious, agile, and an opportunist based off of his actions. That even though Zacchaeus would've wanted himself to be looked at as this high tax collector, this high man in society, he finds himself in a situation where he is being looked down upon. He's standing there in that crowd, unable to see this man that's being whispered about, this man that's being talked about.

I can imagine Zacchaeus trying to see through the crowd but being unable to. Perhaps some of the Jews made it so he couldn't get through. Pushing him to the back. But would that stop Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus? No. Zacchaeus being the smart and dedicated man he was, ran ahead. Knowing that this man will be coming through his town, may be passing his own very house. He runs ahead looking for that opportunity. Seeking that opportunity just to see Jesus.

I can picture Zacchaeus running ahead climbing that tree. perhaps at first hesitant because of his social status but because he is more curious than anything, he takes the leap and climbs the tree. When I think of this, I actually think back to 2018 when the Eagles won the Superbowl. That year I attended the Eagles parade with my family, I could see people climbing a lamp posts, climbing the traffic lights, climbing statues just to get a glimpse of the team. Just to have a good view of the parade. Just to see what was happening because they knew that they couldn't be involved themselves but wanted to have the best seat they could get. I think Zacchaeus had the same mindset, he was trying to get a good view because he knew that that's all that he'd be able to afford, was to see Jesus but Jesus had other plans. That day all Zacchaeus was prepared for was to see Jesus but little did he know that he was going to commune with Him. Eat with Him. Be with Him.

Moving now to verse 5 we can see that Jesus immediately notices Zacchaeus. In this powerful moment we understand that Jesus notices the outcast. Jesus here is demonstrating to us that even when we isolate ourselves He is still there, present as always. Even when we feel isolated and possibly forgotten Jesus notices us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Jesus says "I must stay at your house today." Jesus in this moment is inviting Himself into the life of Zacchaeus. Jesus is inviting Himself into your life... It's up to you to take the step into this new life. A life full of beauty and love. Something beyond measure. Something beyond imagination. Someone one who will always see you. Understand you. Love you. Pursue you. Someone who will never leave you. Jesus wants you. In this powerful moment Zacchaeus is faced with an opportunity to have dinner with the man he only desired (at first to see) but is now given the opportunity to sit with. To see Him face to face. Often in our lives there will be people who will only see us for who they've known us to be. That was the people in Jericho in this moment. From the fellow Jews to the Pharisees they saw Zacchaeus as a sinner. They saw him

as the man who has cheated them out of so much money. They saw him as someone who was too far gone to come back home to his Jewish family. Someone who was too far gone to be a prodigal son. But this is the beauty of the Gospel. Jesus a man of perfection. A man of purity saw Zacchaeus for who he truly was and who he was destined to be and spoke life into him. He looked at Him and said "That's the one I want." The scene then quickly shifts to Zacchaeus's house and he leads this declaration of a changed life. A declaration that we see only being prompted by the presence of Jesus. Notice here that Jesus hasn't said anything yet. He hasn't told Zacchaeus that he will need to give anything away or change his profession. He doesn't tell him to go to the temple to repent or make sure that he takes off fully for the Sabbath. He doesn't ask Zacchaeus to stop hanging out with the other tax collectors. Just BEING with Jesus sparked a transformation within Zacchaeus that couldn't be undone. Just being with Jesus can transform your life.

Zacchaeus in this moment was the mirror image of what the rich young ruler could've been. Zacchaeus declares that he will give half his possessions to the poor and give 4 times back what he had cheated people out of. He is a spiritual example of a blind man gaining his sight. His eyes were opened to who Jesus was. He is proof that change can come from just being with Jesus. Zacchaeus, someone that would not have been picked first by society had already been picked by God way before any of this. Jesus saw who Zacchaeus had been destined to become since his birth. You might be asking, "How can this be possible?" Well Zacchaeus's name means pure. And we can see that somewhere along the line he stepped out of that. He was far from it if he was a chief tax collector. But Jesus in this moment is fulfilling the truest potential that has been hidden dormant within Zacchaeus. Jesus is awakening the future within him. Jesus in this moment is opening the door for Zacchaeus (and us) to step into what we were born for. Zacchaeus like some of us had fallen off the path. Jesus isn't just calling out the destiny within Zacchaeus in this moment. He is calling out the destiny in us all. Jesus is looking at you saying "I choose you. I see all that you've been through and all that you've done. Even though you may have sinned or ran from me. I choose you. Come my child and be with me. Have dinner with me. Commune with me." This is the gospel.

Jesus says it in verse 10, New International Version (2011) Chapter 19 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost No matter where you are on your faith journey you need to know this. The same voice that spoke creation into being is speaking life into your soul. Jesus is calling us into our destiny. What is that destiny you may be wondering. For some of you it may be spending more time being with Jesus than doing for him. Spending some solid time listening to His voice. Knowing His heart. For some of you it may be taking that step out and telling someone about Jesus. But for others of you it may be here and now taking that step into a relationship with Jesus. Being with Him.