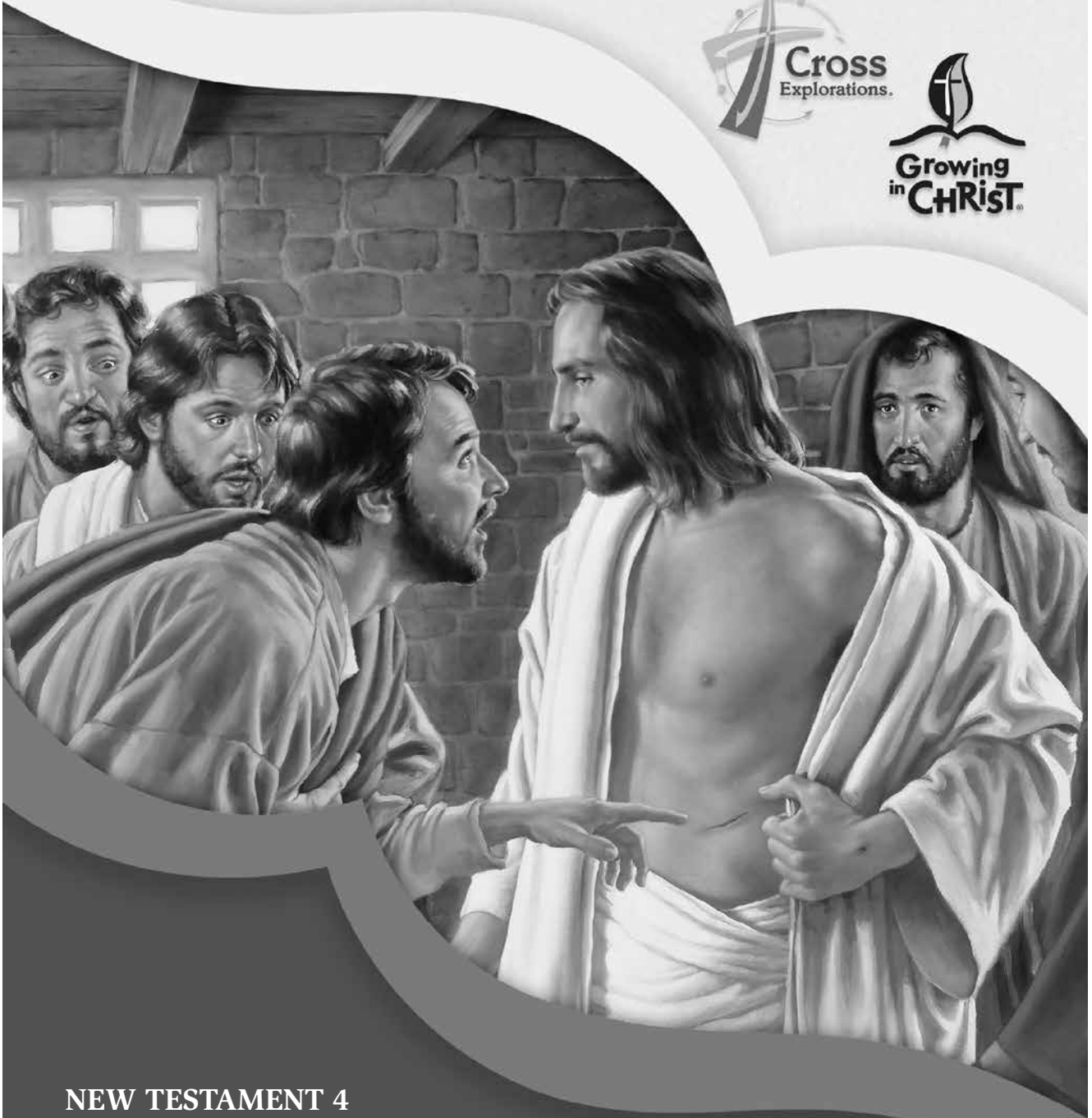




NEW TESTAMENT 4

Adult Bible Study

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

REPRODUCIBLE STUDY PAGES



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Introduction

God promises to strengthen our life in Christ as we study His Word. This Adult Bible Study series provides resources to help you do just that, giving you an opportunity to study some familiar, and possibly some not-so-familiar, biblical accounts in depth.

This guide has thirteen sessions, each divided into four easy-to-use sections:

Start—Section 1 of each session invites discussion and thinking about the topic of the lesson to draw participants into the study.

Study—Section 2 of each session explores a portion of Scripture through the use of a brief commentary and questions that help the participants study the text.

Share—Section 3 of each session helps the participants apply God's Law and Gospel revealed in the scriptural account to their own lives.

Send—Section 4 of each session provides the participants with practical suggestions for taking the theme of the lesson out of the classroom and into the world.

This study is designed to assist both novice and expert Bible students in their study of Holy Scripture. It offers resources that will enable them to grow in their understanding of God's Word while strengthening their life in Christ.

As an added benefit, the sessions in the Adult Bible Study series follow the Scripture lessons taught in both Growing in Christ and Cross Explorations Sunday School series. Parents will enjoy studying in depth the Bible stories their children are studying in Sunday School. This will provide parents and children additional opportunities to

- discuss God's Word together;
- extend lesson applications to everyday situations;
- pray together; and
- engage in family activities that grow out of lesson truths.

How to Use This Bible Study

This leader guide gives you all the material you need to teach the thirteen Bible stories for this quarter. The material is designed to be used in an adult Bible study while children are participating in Sunday School. Shorten or lengthen the study and discussion to fit your time frame.

Each lesson includes a brief Bible commentary with the key point, Law/Gospel statements, discussion questions with leader notes, and a front-and-back reproducible Student Page at the end of the lesson. Make copies of the Student Page to distribute to the members of the class. This format allows for the frequent fluctuation in class size that is common to adult study groups. Additionally, churches will save money by only ordering one leader guide rather than individual student books for every participant.

We also encourage you to order the set of Bible posters for this quarter. These large, beautifully rendered works of art will provide your class with memorable visuals of the texts they are studying. (To order, call 1-800-325-3040; ask for CPH stock number 44-4115.)

Jesus' Life	Dates	Jesus' Ministry
Jesus begins His ministry	AD 29	
Jesus' Galilean ministry	AD 31/32	Jesus feeds the five thousand Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray Jesus teaches in parables
Jesus' transfiguration		Jesus sends out the Seventy-Two Jesus teaches about the Good Shepherd
Jesus at the Feast of Dedication and the Feast of Tabernacles	AD 33	Jesus and Zacchaeus Jesus rides into Jerusalem Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper
Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection		Jesus dies and rises Jesus appears to the disciples Jesus appears in Galilee Jesus ascends into heaven
The first Christian Pentecost		God sends the Holy Spirit

Preparing the Lesson

 Date of Use

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1–10

Key Point

Like Zacchaeus, we are among the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. Jesus asks us to forgive those who sin against us, as He forgives us, unconditionally.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I ignore my own sinfulness and focus on the sinfulness of others, rejecting them because of it. **Christ's blood covers not only my sins but also the sins of every sinner, no strings attached.**

Context

Jesus is on the last leg of His journey to Jerusalem as He passes through Jericho. It is a few days before Palm Sunday (Luke 19:28–40). Having already extended mercy to a blind beggar, a resident of Jericho (18:35–43), Jesus now runs into another resident of Jericho in need of mercy—Zacchaeus. Because tax collectors worked for the Roman government and overtaxed people to pad their own wallets, the Jews detested them as thieves and traitors. Since Zacchaeus was rich and a chief among the tax collectors (19:2), he was the object of particular spite, shunned as a “sinner” (v. 7).

Commentary

Thanks to the well-known ditty about this “wee little man,” Zacchaeus has often been portrayed as a sort of patron saint of the height challenged. But this is to miss the point. Short though he was, mammoth were his sins. If he is the patron saint of anyone, it is of those who become rich by sucking the lifeblood out of others. Zacchaeus was in the business that no respectable Jew would consider, indeed, that they would abhor as equal to prostituting one-self to the Romans. To make matters worse, such men often

became wealthy, doubly damning them in the eyes of their countrymen.

So when Jesus invited Zacchaeus to come down from his sycamore perch and serve Him supper, “all grumbled,” saying, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” (v. 7). This is as much, or more, an indictment of Jesus as of the tax collector. “How dare He even speak to such filth, much less invite Himself over for a meal with that scoundrel!” the people scowled. For Zacchaeus had not only sinned in general, but he had also sinned against them. He had siphoned off their income. Jesus would be dining in a home built with money stolen from them, eating food purchased with cash that was rightfully theirs. If they wanted Jesus to do anything with Zacchaeus, it was to yank a switch from that sycamore tree and publicly whip him for his greed!

Perhaps because he overheard the grumbling and was moved by repentance and faith, this infamous sinner announced, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” (v. 8). What a promise! What faith! As a clear fruit of his own repentance, Zacchaeus astounded everyone by such lavish generosity.

Salvation came to this man not because of his bigheartedness but because of his faith in Jesus, which was evidenced in this giving away of wealth. He is among the “lost” whom the Son of Man seeks, as are we, who are forgiven and called to forgive those who sin against us, no matter how Zacchaeus-like their sins may be.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Lesson 1

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1–10

1 Start (5 minutes)

Pray Dear Savior, Jesus Christ, You came seeking all who are lost in our own devices, struggles, and sin. Grant to me the forgiveness of my sins, that I may also earnestly forgive the sins of others, knowing that You have come to save them too. For You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Read the Bible story from **Luke 19:1–10**. Have participants take turns, or ask a volunteer to read the entire text.

Ask 1. Are there any situations in your life where you remember the pain and distress of someone's sin against you? Is there a situation like this in which you haven't forgiven the person who has sinned against you? Are there situations you can recall where you caused someone pain and distress by your sin?

As you discuss, encourage participants not to reveal details. The object is not to talk about either the sin of others or even your own sin against others but rather to be able to identify with Zacchaeus. Most will be able to think of times others have sinned against them and should be able to recall specific times they have sinned against others. One of the goals of today's study is to help us learn and believe how this kind of great sin and distress can be handled.

Zacchaeus's occupation meant that he was likely involved in defrauding a whole society. Consider the grief, pain, and resentment he caused the people he knew and strangers who would have looked upon him as simply a "crook."

2 Study (15 minutes)

Ask 2. Who is Zacchaeus? How does Luke describe him and his actions? Does this tell us anything about Zacchaeus's faith or attitude?

Zacchaeus is not only a tax collector but a chief tax collector. This means not only did he do the dirty work of collecting taxes, but he actually supervised others who were involved in the collection, extortion, and manipulation of the livelihood of the Jews. Tax collectors did awful things—betrayed their countrymen for political power and squeezed more from the people than even the Romans levied—and Zacchaeus was the one who oversaw these tax collectors. In first-century Palestinian society, Zacchaeus was the most corrupted of the corrupt, the worst betrayer of the betraying.

Leader Note

Encourage participants to bring their own Bibles to class so they can mark key passages each week. Set out Bibles for those who do not bring their own.

It almost goes without saying that Zacchaeus is rich. He is also questioning and curious about Jesus, “seeking to see who Jesus was” (Luke 19:3), so he has not heard extensive or accurate reports of His ministry. Because it appears that Zacchaeus knows so little, we can say with some certainty that he did not yet have faith. He wasn’t even aware of the details of Jesus’ work and ministry, so it would be hard to say that he trusted in Jesus to forgive his sins and rescue him from this covetous and rich (yet somehow unfulfilling) lifestyle.

Zacchaeus may have had all his temporal needs and desires met, but he could not fill that need in his heart to know God, trust God, and be loved by God. Money, for all its power and benefits, is useless in the kingdom of heaven. Perhaps this man Jesus, of whom he had heard, could offer him this.

Ask 3. What does Jesus do when He reaches Zacchaeus? What does it mean for Jesus to say that He must stay at Zacchaeus’s house? How does Zacchaeus, in turn, respond to Jesus?

Nothing Jesus does is happenstance. All things have meaning and purpose for Jesus, whether as great as journeying to Jerusalem to offer Himself for the sin of the world or as seemingly insignificant as running into this sinner Zacchaeus. Luke describes the intent with the phrase, “[Jesus] looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today’” (v. 5). Jesus plans to eat with a sinner, welcome him, forgive him, save him, and reconcile him to God.

What money could not offer Zacchaeus, Jesus now offers. While money seemed to provide external, temporary things, Jesus provides the one thing needful: true companionship with God based not on wrath, punishment, or fear, but on love and trust because of God’s complete mercy, love, and reconciling work. Jesus opens the door and sets the table for peaceful, joyful fellowship between God and all sinners. It does not matter what the sin is—even the greedy, betraying covetousness of a tax collector—Jesus removes this greed, sin, and evil.

Notice that Jesus does not present an invitation, “If you’ll have Me, I’d like to come to your house.” No! Instead, He says, “I must stay at your house today.” Jesus comes to all people, to all sinners. Of course, it is true that a sinner can reject Jesus, utterly fleeing from His gracious love and mercy, but Jesus is the one who sets the stage and the table for reconciliation with God. We do not have to take even one step in Jesus’ direction to receive Him. He is already here; He has already presented Himself to us. He already stands in our house. All we do is rejoice in this presentation, as Zacchaeus does (v. 6).

Ask 4. What is the grumbling complaint of those who see this? How does Luke respond to this accusation?

The grumblers say, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” (v. 7). Luke records that Jesus says nothing against this accusation, nor do any of His disciples or Zacchaeus. Why should any of them say anything? The statement is true. Jesus does go in to be the guest of those who are sinners. He does this with all of us. Every time the congregation gathers, Jesus comes in to be our guest. He preaches and we gather around Him. He baptizes, and we join the household that receives Him. In fact, He enters in not as a mere guest but as the host, serving us His own body and blood. We are all sinners left to our own devices and inclinations. But

Christ has come in to us, making Himself our guest and, in turn, purifying us from our sin.

Christ must be the guest of sinners, for there is no other kind of people! Yet sinners do not corrupt Him; rather, He forgives, frees, and purifies those who are sinners. Thus when the people grumble against Him, they simply demonstrate that they have not believed in the forgiveness and reconciliation that He offers. They still imagine that there are certain people Jesus should not befriend, while there are others “worthy” of being saved; only to this group should Jesus come. Jesus, however, never makes this distinction.

Yet, in another way, Zacchaeus does answer them. They accuse him of being a sinner and say that Jesus associates with sinners, yet Zacchaeus’s response indicates that he is a person transformed by Jesus. Of course, this work of restoring what he has stolen and serving the poor is not what makes him righteous, but it reveals that, by faith, he rejoices over what Christ offers to him. That void in his heart that separated him from God has been filled. He is forgiven, God loves him, and he now loves God. No amount of money could accomplish that, and no amount of money is necessary for that. Yes, Jesus has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. But at the Day of Judgment, it will not be Zacchaeus and the other sinners with whom Jesus eats who will be judged as sinners. Christ has freed them from their sin.

Say 5. Read verses 8–10. Is Jesus saying that salvation has come to Zacchaeus because he will give his goods to the poor and make restitution with those whom he defrauded? Why or why not?

Zacchaeus makes a truly bold statement: “The half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” (v. 8). Yes, Zacchaeus is quite rich, but this is an amazing commitment. Perhaps giving half of millions would not hurt so much, but when much of his income was taken through deception and fraud, to restore that amount fourfold really is a huge commitment. Zacchaeus is making a drastic switch in the material quality of his life. Then Jesus says, “Today salvation has come to this house” (v. 9). So, has salvation come to Zacchaeus only because of these good works? After all, Jesus only makes this declaration after Zacchaeus makes his.

The relationship between salvation and good works can seem difficult sometimes, but this story can help us understand it and confess it more fully. Recall the full sequence of events. The story does not begin with Zacchaeus promising to give back to the poor or defrauded. Rather, the story begins with Jesus and His ministry. Jesus has been preaching and helping others. Word of Him has spread throughout all Palestine (Luke 7:17). Zacchaeus heard these reports as a result of what Jesus did. Zacchaeus tries to find Jesus because of what Jesus has done.

Even then, it is not Zacchaeus who makes a claim on Jesus, but Jesus on Zacchaeus. Jesus looks, sees Zacchaeus, and declares, “I am going to your house.” And at his house, Jesus eats with Zacchaeus, demonstrating that God loves him, forgives him, and is reconciled to him. We almost pass it over in the story, but the real moment of God’s forgiving reconciliation comes at that point—at the meal during which Jesus and Zacchaeus share the expression of full fellowship. It is precisely because the meal represents this full forgiveness and reconciliation that the observers grumble at this event. They grumble to

no avail, however. The proof of Jesus' forgiveness of Zacchaeus is in the eating together.

Therefore, the statements that both Zacchaeus and Jesus make after this time of table fellowship and accusation by the observers are confession and confirmation of what has already happened. When Zacchaeus declares that he will give to the poor and restore fourfold what he has defrauded, he is not trying to appeal to God to get His favor. He already has God's favor in Jesus! Instead, he is expressing through confession and action that God has indeed forgiven and saved him. His allegiance has switched from money to Christ. He has been converted from his idolatry—not by his own power, but by Christ's forgiving power. The emptiness in his heart that money could not fill has been healed and filled by Jesus.

In the same way, when Jesus says that salvation has come to this house, He is affirming what has already happened. After all, who is "salvation" but Jesus Christ in the flesh! Jesus is our salvation (Isaiah 12:2). Salvation is not just an event or a conversion, but salvation occurs in the life, words, and actions of Jesus. When Jesus entered into Zacchaeus's house and forgave him, salvation also entered.

Share (10 minutes)

Ask 6. **Whom does Jesus come to seek and save? Who is included in this? Who is excluded? How do we know if we're included?**

Jesus comes to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). If we recall that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," that no one seeks what is right, "not even one" (Romans 3:23; Psalm 14:3), then all people are lost. Every person on the face of the earth is lost. Thus, if Jesus has come to seek and save the lost, He has come to seek and save everybody. Everybody is included in Jesus' seeking; none are excluded.

This is the mistake the grumblers made. They thought that Jesus wasn't really here to seek the great sinners. Those who publicly scandalize society, who cruelly harm others in their body, property, or reputation—surely Jesus should not save them, they say. We, too, are tempted to have this same grumbling attitude. We are hurt, insulted, embarrassed, and offended by great, public sinners. And it's true: sin does hurt. Sin is embarrassing and scandalous. Sin is wrong, and we should try to avoid it. But the point is that Christ is doing exactly what needs to be done to restore sinners and destroy sin. The grumblers despised Zacchaeus, but they couldn't change anything. Zacchaeus kept going on as a tax collector and extortionist. Indeed, he was driven deeper into it because of his isolation.

Christ, however, through His love, forgives, reconciles, and heals even these great sinners. He fixes the problems of sin. What none of us could do, He does through His death on the cross and resurrection to new life. He conquers sin and death, and through His forgiveness, He includes us in this victory. Only Christ could heal Zacchaeus this way. So it is with all of us: we can all only be healed by Christ. Thus Christ is the solution to all problems. Christ is the forgiver of all sins. Christ is the seeker and saver of all who are lost, including the manifest

sinner. Including you. None are excluded. What's the easiest way to know if you're included in God's forgiveness? Recall that Christ seeks and saves all the lost. If that includes you, then you're also included in Christ's salvation! Rejoice, for today salvation has come to your house!

Ask 7. **What should our attitude be toward others who commit great sins? What about those who sin against us personally? Read Ephesians 2:14–18 when answering this question.**

Christ came to seek and to save the lost—that means everyone. We, then, who are in fellowship with Christ, are also called to forgive everyone. There is no escaping this earthly reality that sin causes pain. We live with great offenses having been committed against us. And if we are at all honest with ourselves, we know that we have hurt others, whether in small or large ways. It does seem as though nothing can ever really overcome the pain and hurt we feel and have caused.

Yet the Word of Christ promises differently. Christ promises that in the new heaven and new earth, there will be no more sorrow, no more crying, no more pain, and no more death (Revelation 21:1–4). He really will take away all the trouble and distress that we go through. He does this through His satisfaction for sin, His death on the cross, His reconciliation with the Father, and His work of bringing us into that reconciliation (Ephesians 2:14–18).

The full effect of this peace, reconciliation, and joy comes in the kingdom of heaven, but Christ brings us into that here and now. "Today," He says, salvation has come to this house. Christ's work now in the Church grants to us the seal and promise of this peace and begins its work in us.

Thus, we are called also to be at peace with everyone, even those who sin dearly against us. The parable of the wicked servant is not just a warning to us that we should forgive because Christ has forgiven (Matthew 18:23–35); it also shows us that forgiveness and reconciliation are part of the milieu of the kingdom of heaven. Not to forgive shows fundamental incompatibility with God's kingdom and unwillingness to live in the peace that God offers. So we forgive, bearing the sufferings while we wait for the fulfillment of Christ's promises.

4 Send (5 minutes)

Before they go home, give participants the text for next week's lesson and encourage them to read and think about it during the week.

For the **Family Connections** section, encourage the adults with children in Sunday School to review their children's Sunday School leaflets together at home. Help them connect the story of Zacchaeus and forgiving others with the Sacrament of the Altar. When we eat and drink, we are not only receiving the forgiveness earned and given by the body of Christ, but we are also confessing our unity with the others who commune. We are confessing that all other communicants are also forgiven and that we hold nothing against them either.

For the **Personal Reflection** section, encourage group members to be forgiving in all their relationships, even with those who haven't expressed remorse.

Lesson 1 Student Page

Jesus and Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10)

- ① Are there any situations in your life where you remember the pain and distress of someone's sin against you? Is there a situation like this in which you haven't forgiven the person who has sinned against you? Are there situations you can recall where you caused someone pain and distress by your sin?
- ② Who is Zacchaeus? How does Luke describe him and his actions? Does this tell us anything about Zacchaeus's faith or attitude?
- ③ What does Jesus do when He reaches Zacchaeus? What does it mean for Jesus to say that He must stay at Zacchaeus's house? How does Zacchaeus, in turn, respond to Jesus?
- ④ What is the grumbling complaint of those who see this? How does Luke respond to this accusation?
- ⑤ Read verses 8–10. Is Jesus saying that salvation has come to Zacchaeus because he will give his goods to the poor and make restitution with those whom he defrauded? Why or why not?
- ⑥ Whom does Jesus come to seek and save? Who is included in this? Who is excluded? How do we know if we're included?
- ⑦ What should our attitude be toward others who commit great sins? What about those who sin against us personally? Read Ephesians 2:14–18 when answering this question.

Lesson 1 Student Page

Through the Week

Family Connections

If you have children in Sunday School, go over their Sunday School leaflets together, sharing with one another what you learned about today's Bible story.

Review the questions and answers from the Sacrament of the Altar in the Small Catechism. Talk about how the forgiveness of sins applies for the whole Church, which eats and drinks at Communion. Worthy eating means having faith in the words "Given and shed for you for the forgiveness of sins." This forgiveness extends not only to individual communicants but also between the communicants. As God forgives us in the Supper, so we forgive others who commune with us.

Personal Reflection

If there is someone you haven't forgiven for an offense against you, pray and think about the power of forgiveness even when the sinner hasn't apologized. Often we think that we have to wait for someone to apologize to forgive.

But Jesus didn't wait for us to apologize! He came, forgave, and demonstrated His love in spite of our offenses against Him. We, too, are to live in that forgiveness, relying on and empowered by Christ. Work to forgive. If this seems difficult, talk with your pastor, who will provide continued counsel with the Gospel.

Also consider going to your pastor for individual Confession and Absolution if you are having difficulty forgiving. The power of the Gospel spoken in the Absolution will help enliven you to rely on Christ and be less distressed by the offenses of others.

Preparing the Lesson

 Date of Use

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40

Key Point

The multitudes called out “Hosanna!”—Save us!—to their King. We, too, cry out “Hosanna!” to Jesus, our King, who entered Jerusalem to save us and all people by triumphing over sin.

Law/Gospel

Sin brought death into the world for me and all people. **Jesus, the perfect Son of God, came to be my Savior and King, dying in my place and rising three days later to save me from sin and give me new life in His kingdom.**

Context

At Jesus’ Baptism, God declared Him to be the bearer of the sins of the whole world. For three years, He preached, taught, and worked miracles to show the people that the Old Testament promise of the Messiah had come true. Now, in the last week of His earthly ministry, Jesus “set His face to go to Jerusalem” on His way to the cross (Luke 9:51).

Jesus entered Jerusalem from a small town near the Mount of Olives called Bethphage. It was a town near Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived.

Commentary

Jesus chose to enter the city on a donkey, displaying the humble nature of His incarnation. He did not come into this world to sit on an earthly throne and rule over an earthly kingdom. He did not ride into King David’s city to restore King David’s earthly kingdom. If He wanted to do this, He would have ridden on a warhorse, leading an army of soldiers to fight the Romans, who occupied not only Jerusalem but all of the land of Israel. Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world.

Instead, Jesus entered upon a donkey and was followed by a multitude that included the poor, the destitute, and even children. They were people who had been waiting to be rescued from their sins. Many in the crowd believed

the Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would be David’s son and would come to them humble, riding on a donkey, as the prophet Zechariah had written, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (9:9). Animals that had not yet been used were especially appropriate for holy purposes. Jesus was not coming with the riches of an earthly king. No, He rode into Jerusalem with the accolades of a messianic, heavenly king, coming to give the people righteousness and salvation, forgiveness from their sins. This was the first time Jesus allowed people to treat Him as a king.

In a display of divine knowledge, Jesus described to His disciples where and how to find the donkey He would ride. After spreading their cloaks on the donkey, the disciples led the procession into Jerusalem, and the crowds followed. They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:9). *Hosanna* means “save us now.” The spreading of garments and palm branches is a ceremony of honor, respect, and reverence.

We know something about this crowd from the Gospels. Luke records that the people were rejoicing and praising God for all the great works that they had seen. John 12:17–18 expands on what these works were. These people, or at least a portion of them, had witnessed Jesus raising Lazarus from the tomb after he had been dead four days. The feeding of the five thousand happened just before Jesus “set His face to go to Jerusalem,” so those people were also on their way up to Jerusalem at this time.

All of Jesus’ ministry led up to this point. In fact, all of Holy Scripture anticipated this moment when God would save His people from their sins in Jesus.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Lesson 2

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40

1 Start (5 minutes)

Pray Dear Savior, Jesus Christ, You came seeking all who are lost in our own devices, struggles, and sin. Grant to me the forgiveness of my sins, that I may also earnestly forgive the sins of others, knowing that You have come to save them too. For You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Read the Bible story from **Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40**. Have participants take turns, or ask a volunteer to read the entire text.

Say 1. The phrase “trappings of office” refers to special privileges associated with holding a position of power and authority. For example, the president of the United States never occupies a cramped seat in coach. Instead, *Air Force One* serves his travel needs quite nicely! You see a movie star arriving at the Oscars not in a fifteen-year-old Ford but in a chauffeured limousine. Certain prerequisites of office come with being at the top of the power pyramid. What are some other perks of position?

Accept answers. Perks might include these: a reserved parking space near the entrance to the office; seats in the company skybox at the ball game; multiple assistants to see to one’s needs; increased vacation time; catered meals; an expense account; access to the “executive” washroom; or paid vacations.

Say 2. Now think about Jesus and His earthly ministry. What perks or trappings of office did He enjoy?

While it’s true that Jesus did have at His fingertips all the power of being true God in human flesh, Jesus never used that power for His own comfort or personal advantage. He was born in a stable, not a palace. He refused to turn stones into loaves of bread when He fasted in the wilderness. Indeed, as Jesus said in Luke 9:58, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

2 Study (15 minutes)

Say 3. All four Gospels in the New Testament include the account of Jesus’ Palm Sunday procession. They all tell the same story, but each gives some unique information. Read the accounts in Mark 11:1–10 and Luke 19:28–40. What do they report that is similar, and what do they

contain that is unique? (If you are familiar with the story, also comment on details we know from other Gospel accounts that Mark and Luke don't include.)

Make a list of the similar information and the unique points as participants point them out. Similar: The reference to Bethphage and Bethany; how the colt/donkey was obtained; how the people spread their cloaks on the road, along with the leafy branches (John 12:13 specifies that they were palm branches); the use of "Blessed is . . ." Distinct: "Hosanna" is used in Mark, but not in Luke. David is referenced in Mark, but not Luke. Luke records the opposition of the Pharisees, while Mark does not. Only Luke records Jesus' words that if the crowd was silenced, then the stones would cry out in praise. Other similarities and differences could be noted. No one brief narrative account could contain everything that happened, but together they give us a good composite.

Say It might be helpful to fix the geographical setting in our minds. The Mount of Olives lies immediately to the east of the hill on which sits the city of Jerusalem, with the Kidron Valley in between. Imagine a capital letter V, with the slope of the Mount of Olives on the left and Jerusalem on the right. Take away the upper third of the right-hand leg of the V and add it to the top of the left leg, and you have the setting. The Mount of Olives was taller, overlooking Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, one could look across the Kidron Valley and look up the Mount of Olives easily. It would have taken the procession perhaps an hour to make its way down the Mount of Olives and then up into Jerusalem.

Ask 4. If you were in Jerusalem observing the procession and listening to the crowds in front of and behind Jesus, how would you have responded?

Answers will vary. Some might have gone out to join the crowds. Some might have simply watched at a distance. Some might have inquired why Jesus was receiving such treatment. Much of Jerusalem, however, would have taken note of the event. Pilgrims from outside Jerusalem and Judea were also gathered in Jerusalem, having come to celebrate the feast. The purpose of thinking about the geography is to help understand how long the procession would have taken. This length of time would have allowed the crowd to grow as it came closer to Jerusalem. One can also imagine how the religious authorities in Jerusalem stood watching the long procession, growing in size, come down the Mount of Olives toward Jerusalem and how those same authorities grew uncomfortable with the accolades Jesus was receiving.

Say In three ways, the crowd revealed that they saw Jesus as a powerful and unique figure who could help them: (1) They called out to Him "Hosanna," which means "Save us now!" (2) They declared that Jesus was coming in the name of the Lord and was thus worthy to be blessed or praised. (3) They linked Jesus to King David of Old Testament fame. They also observed Jesus riding on a young donkey (as predicted in Zechariah 9:9), the Son of David who comes ready to serve. Jesus arrived not on *Air Force One* or in a limo but on a beast of burden. With His choice of transportation, Jesus was sending a signal about the nature of His kingship.

Ask 5. How does Jesus' kingly rule differ from that of other earthly kings?

Jesus is a king who has come in humble fashion, to serve rather than be served. Jesus did not live cloistered in elegant dwellings with all the trappings of power and prestige but rather walked among the people, interacting with the poor, the needy, the broken, the disobedient, the sick, the grieving, the forlorn, and so forth. Jesus has more power than all earthly royalty combined; however, He used that power not for His own ease, but to bring relief and salvation to others. Jesus is a king most worthy of praise and adoration, but the trappings of His office in no way sidetracked Him from His mission of offering His own life in sacrifice on the cross to deliver the lost. As King, Jesus did not send others out to do battle against the enemy. Rather, Jesus Himself took up the battle against sin and death, conquering foes who were too powerful for us to overcome.

3 Share (10 minutes)

Say 6. King Jesus, humbly riding on a donkey, welcomed the cries of "Hosanna!" from the crowds. Jesus truly did come to save. However, it is not uncommon for us Christians to think that our own sins, failures, and disobedience are so repulsive to Jesus that He would want nothing to do with us. How do the events of Jesus' triumphal entry on Palm Sunday address our fear that we might be beyond redemption? That is, how do the happenings of Palm Sunday give you confidence about Jesus' response when you call out to Him, "Hosanna! Save me!" In what ways does Jesus come to us today?

Jesus' triumphal entry reveals Him as the King who rides into the battle, not away from it for His own protection. Just as Jesus knew that the owners of the donkey would lend it for His use, so Jesus knew why He was going to Jerusalem: to offer Himself as the one and only holy sacrifice sufficient to atone for the sins of the world.

Jesus did not respond to the cries of "Hosanna!" by saying, "No, as King I do not serve you, but you serve Me." Jesus is the one who rightly receives praise and blessing because He has come in the name of the gracious Lord who has mercy on sinners, as the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday reveal. While the Pharisees wanted to silence the crowds who cried out for help, Jesus welcomes such cries, for He is the King who saves.

Today, Jesus draws near to His holy people in the humble word of His death and resurrection; He shows Himself as our King by placing His name upon us in Baptism; and He invites us to His royal banquet, hidden in the humble means of bread and wine.

Say An interesting part of the Palm Sunday narrative is how the owners of the colt/donkey so readily allowed Jesus' disciples to take the animal away, all because "the Lord has need of it." Imagine your response if you saw some people enter your car in your driveway, and when you challenged them about their actions, they said, "The Lord

has need of it.” How many of us would let them take it? Still, the Lord used that lowly donkey to send a key message about the nature of His kingship. Jesus’ “need” for that donkey greatly outweighed the claims of the animal’s owners.

Ask 7. In grateful response to King Jesus and His work to save us from sin and death, what can we give to Him that He can use to meet the “needs” of His kingdom? That is, what can we offer to Jesus to help others know that this King hears and answers their cries for help?

While it is true that Jesus doesn’t “need” anything we have in an absolute sense, He still has chosen to use us, our energies, and our possessions to assist in the Spirit’s work to bring the Gospel of salvation to others. Jesus didn’t “need” the donkey on Palm Sunday in an absolute sense (after all, Jesus could have walked down the Mount of Olives), but Jesus did put that donkey to great use in signaling to the world the kind of King He came to be. King Jesus doesn’t “need” our car in an absolute sense, but how might He put it to work in His kingdom? King Jesus doesn’t “need” our voices in an absolute sense, but how might our voices serve Him who served us so mercifully?

How can we offer our hands, our feet, our minds, our money, our ideas, our energy, our love, and the like to Jesus in order to help meet the “needs” of His kingdom? If Jesus used a donkey, certainly He could use each of us! Encourage participants to think of ways they can respond to God’s love in Jesus by serving their neighbor.

4 Send (5 minutes)

Before they go home, give participants the text for next week’s lesson and encourage them to read and think about it during the week.

For the **Family Connections** section, encourage the adults with children in Sunday School to review their children’s Sunday School leaflets together at home. Also have participants do the suggested activities at home.

Encourage parents to help their children understand how generous and merciful King Jesus is, that He came humbly to rescue people from sin and death. Assure the children that Jesus welcomes our cries of “Hosanna! Save us!” no matter how large our sins or how often we have come to Him. Also encourage participants to help their children to be confident that Jesus welcomes our praise and thanksgiving for all that He has done to rescue us.

For the **Personal Reflection** section, encourage participants to sing or read the hymn “No Tramp of Soldiers’ Marching Feet” (*LSB* 444). Note how the hymn poetically calls our attention to the different kind of King that Jesus is, not accompanied by a mighty military entourage but riding on a lowly donkey, coming to serve us through His death and resurrection.

Lesson 2 Student Page

The Triumphal Entry (Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40)

- ① The phrase “trappings of office” refers to special privileges associated with holding a position of power and authority. For example, the president of the United States never occupies a cramped seat in coach. Instead, *Air Force One* serves his travel needs quite nicely! You see a movie star arriving at the Oscars not in a fifteen-year-old Ford but in a chauffeured limousine. Certain perquisites of office come with being at the top of the power pyramid. What are some other perks of position?
- ② Now think about Jesus and His earthly ministry. What perks or trappings of office did He enjoy?
- ③ All four Gospels in the New Testament include the account of Jesus’ Palm Sunday procession. They all tell the same story, but each gives some unique information. Read the accounts in Mark 11:1–10 and Luke 19:28–40. What do they report that is similar, and what do they contain that is unique? (If you are familiar with the story, also comment on details we know from other Gospel accounts that Mark and Luke don’t include.)
- ④ If you were in Jerusalem observing the procession and listening to the crowds in front of and behind Jesus, how would you have responded?
- ⑤ How does Jesus’ kingly rule differ from that of other earthly kings?
- ⑥ King Jesus, humbly riding on a donkey, welcomed the cries of “Hosanna!” from the crowds. Jesus truly did come to save. However, it is not uncommon for us Christians to think that our own sins, failures, and disobedience are so repulsive to Jesus that He would want nothing to do with us. How do the events of Jesus’ triumphal entry on Palm Sunday address our fear that we might be beyond redemption? That is, how do the happenings of Palm Sunday give you confidence about Jesus’ response when you call out to Him, “Hosanna! Save me!” In what ways does Jesus come to us today?
- ⑦ In grateful response to King Jesus and His work to save us from sin and death, what can we give to Him that He can use to meet the “needs” of His kingdom? That is, what can we offer to Jesus to help others know that this King hears and answers their cries for help?

Lesson 2 Student Page

Through the Week

Family Connections

If you have children in Sunday School, go over their Sunday School leaflets together, sharing with one another what you learned about today's Bible story.

Ask your children to describe what they think a king is like, including what he wears, how he travels, and how he lives. After they have given their description, read with them one of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem (perhaps the Mark 11:1–10 account). Ask them to identify as many items as they can in which they see Jesus as a different kind of king than the world is used to. Help them to understand how a donkey/colt is a "work animal," not a powerful and prestigious steed. Help them to see how the triumphal entry brings Jesus into the city of Jerusalem so that He could offer Himself in our place on the cross in response to our cries of "Hosanna! Save us now!"

On a piece of paper, help your children draw a sketch of the Mount of Olives on one side of a valley with the city of Jerusalem on the other, making the Mount of Olives the larger of the hills. Let them trace Jesus' journey down the Mount of Olives to Jerusalem, singing aloud as they do so: "Hosanna! Blessed is King Jesus! He comes in the name of the Lord!"

Personal Reflection

Jesus rides into Jerusalem as our King to deliver us from sin's tyranny and our own rebelliousness. We have a King who serves us wholly and fully in love. The owners of the donkey/colt gave Jesus the use of their animal when the Lord had need of it. What can you offer in gratitude to our Lord for Him to use in meeting the needs of His kingdom?

Make a list of things to offer to the Lord over the coming weeks that will bring Him glory and that will assist the Spirit's work of spreading Christ's kingly love to others.