

31s Sunday in Ordinary Time
Luke 19: 1-10
October 30, 2022
Submitted by Dr. Rosemary Murphy

The more we, All Saints Parishioners, strive to be disciples and faithful followers of Jesus Christ, the more touching are the Gospel scenes where Jesus interacts with people like us—imperfect human beings. Today’s Gospel is a classic depiction of how Jesus values the very people his mother described as “the lowly,” those who will be lifted up by the Lord.

Enter Zacchaeus—short in stature, a scorned chief of tax collectors, a wealthy man, a seeker, someone desiring to know the Prophet. Remarkably, Jesus recognizes Zacchaeus and provides him the opportunity to welcome the Son of God into his home.

Jesus’ request carries some urgency. “Zacchaeus come down quickly for today, I must stay at your house.” (Luke 18:5) *Today*, this is *the day*, when salvation will come to the Zacchaeus’ household.

As all of this is happening, Jesus’ ever-present critics are grumbling. Here again, Jesus is fraternizing with questionable people. And, here the Gospel pivots with a message for the grumblers. Zacchaeus is filled with joy to entertain a renown prophet, but his joy is heightened by something else. On the way to his home, Zacchaeus stops dead in his tracks to publicly address Jesus’ as “Lord.” As Zacchaeus speaks of his alms giving to the poor, he emerges as a righteous man who also observes the Law and is willing to make restitution for even the potential of cheating. “If I have cheated someone of something, I make fourfold restitution.” (Luke 18: 8). This “confession,” is a clear signal to the grumblers that this Prophet is the Messiah. And, Zacchaeus understands that.

The final lines of this Gospel are so powerful. Salvation comes not only to one righteous man but to his entire household. Remarkably, Zacchaeus is identified as a child of Abraham. He is a Jewish descendent of the patriarch and, as such, enjoys God’s covenantal promises and fidelity. Zacchaeus may be a chief tax-agent, but he is also a person whom Jesus loved and sought out for salvation.

Our imperfections and limitations may not be those of Zacchaeus. However, Jesus’ message is also meant for us. If we desire to know him, Jesus will seek us out and, despite all the times we feel so lost, Jesus will come to our home and save us and save those who reside there.