

# “Whatever It Takes... to Possess Jesus” // Luke 19:1–10 //

## *Whatever It Takes #4*<sup>1</sup>

On the way in you should have gotten a couple things—one of these (stickers) and an official Summit pen. You’ll need that and your Bible this morning... (BTW, this is the #1 pen used by waiters and waitresses throughout the Triangle.)

Meet me in Luke 19...

**They say never to meet your heroes, but** I had the chance to meet one of mine when I was in middle school, the one and only Michael Jordan. It was at the Crosby golf tournament in 1986. (Some of you have heard this story, but we have a lot of new people at our church, right?) **Michael Jordan was at the height of his career—I think he had been with the Chicago Bulls 3 years, I was in 8th grade...**

**It was the pinnacle moment of my middle school career, but overall it didn’t have that much ongoing effect on me.** Today you’re going to see a man fight through the crowd just to get a glimpse of Jesus and the effect meeting Jesus has on him.

We’ve been in a series called *Whatever it Takes*, where we’ve focused on what following Jesus means specifically in regard to our TT&T. Today, we’re going to round out our study by considering the effect that actually meeting Jesus has on generosity. Luke 19 if you have

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<sup>1</sup> Sources consulted: Kyle Idleman, sermon delivered on January 29, 2012, “When You Have a Lot,” from series Making the Most of It, sermon on Luke 19; Curtis Andrusko, “A Sinner, a Savior, and Surrender,” sermon preached

your Bibles--all 4 weeks of this series have come from the Gospel of Luke, and so, we’ll finish up with Luke 19 this week.

This is one of the greatest little stories in the Bible--about a wee little man. It’s important to see that this story takes place right after Jesus’ encounter with the RYR that we looked at a couple of weeks ago. In that story, a rich young ruler had tragically walked away from Jesus sad because he couldn’t let go of his possessions. As the rich young ruler walked away, Jesus turned to his disciples and said, **“Truly, truly I say to you, it’s easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter into heaven.”** (Luke 18:25) And when he said that, his disciples responded, **“Well then who can be saved?”** And Jesus’s answer: **“What is impossible with man is possible with God.”** (Luke 18:27)

**Zacchaeus’ story is the answer to that dilemma**--because in Zacchaeus we have another RYR--but this one, even though he is far more compromised than the other--*does* respond the right way to Jesus and thereby enters into the Kingdom of heaven. **So, you’re about to see what it looks like for “a camel to go through the eye of a needle,”** and how God saves the impossible.

**Luke 19:1–10** *As (Jesus) entered Jericho... there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a (“Arche telonis,” literally, chief of the tax collectors) ~~chief tax collector~~ and was rich.*

**<sup>3</sup> And he was seeking to see who Jesus was,** (I have to wonder: what made him want to see Jesus? Was it a troubled conscience? Just curiosity? I have a suspicion what it was, which I’ll get to in a moment, but the bottom line is, we don’t know. **But the next detail is great: ...but on account of the crowd he could not (see Jesus), because**

at the Summit, 2021; Tim Keller, “Jesus’ Meal with Zacchaeus,” sermon on Luke 19:1–10 delivered at Redeemer Presbyterian; John Mark Comer, “Practice Hospitality,” a sermon preached at Bridgetown Church, posted Aug 25, 2021.

**he was small of stature.** <sup>4</sup> (“small of stature” in Greek is literally “wee little man.” Alright, how many of you grew up with that song? Zacchaeus was a wee little man, and...” We do that, and people who didn’t grow up in church are like, “What in the...” But it’s true, that’s what it says, he was a wee little man.) **So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.**

**Why does he climb the tree? You say, “Well, duh, b/c he’s short. He’s a wee little man and a wee little man was he, so he climbed up into that sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see.”**

**But here’s the thing:** When somebody is short, you don’t mind if they stand in front of you; they don’t affect your line of sight. But this crowd won’t let Zacchaeus in even though he won’t affect their ability to see Jesus--**why? Because they hate him**; and that’s because they hated all tax collectors.

**You say, “Why?”** I wouldn’t say that tax collector is the MOST popular job today, but back then it was the worst thing you could do--BTW, I read an article that explained that the term ‘IRS agent’ has become so unpopular in our culture that in some parts of our country IRS agents have adopted the new name, “**compliance directors**”—and I thought, “Oh yeah, that’s a lot better—“compliance director”—somebody over there in marketing is just killing it). So, “tax collector” might not be the most popular job today, but back then, it was about the worst thing you could do, because tax collectors were considered traitors and thieves. **You see, the Romans had come up with a pretty ingenious system**--after they conquered a people, they wanted to tax the people so they could get rich off of them, but they found that if they transplanted a Roman official there to collect the tax, he wouldn’t understand the city well enough to know where all the

money was hidden. (For example, imagine a tax agent from another country is sent here to collect taxes from waiters at a restaurant, and so he demands to see each waiter’s paycheck and takes taxes out of that--but he doesn’t understand that the real money a waiter makes comes not from his hourly wage but from the tips. An insider would know that. The Romans wanted an insider who knew where the real money was hiding.) And so, they paid local Jews to do their dirty work for them, they told them, “This is how much tax we want; anything you get beyond that you can keep for yourself. And here’s a garrison of Romans soldiers to help you enforce it.” So Jewish tax collectors extracted these huge amounts of money from their own people and got rich in the process, and anyone who resisted them would get roughed up by the Roman soldiers. **Tax collectors did this to their neighbors, friends, their former elementary school teachers, their grandmas...** Imagine that: when you chose to become a tax collector you chose to get rich off of the suffering of your neighbors. **Money was so important to you that you were willing to sacrifice everything—your country, your integrity, your family—everything--to get it.**

**Tax collectors were so despised that the Jewish *Mishnah***--which is an ancient commentary on Jewish laws--said that lying to one was ok<sup>2</sup>--one source said that was because tax collectors were like animals and lying to animals, Jewish law maintained, was NOT a sin--which is a weird clarification, if you ask me. It’s ok to lie to your pet--it’s not a sin. You for sure should lie to your cat because your cat is definitely lying to you. I know they rub up against your leg like they like you, but while you are sleeping, they fantasize about your early demise. Science has proven that. Maybe. Some studies show. Cats and tax collectors go in the same category.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.evidenceunseen.com/theology/historical-theology/tax-collectors/>

**The point is: this is Zacchaeus.** In most people's eyes, he is sub-human. And, Jericho, btw, where Zacchaeus is the CHIEF tax collector, was the richest city in Israel. It's their NYC. This is **not your "run of the mill" rich guy**--he sits in the top office in the tallest skyscraper in Manhattan. As far as they are concerned, he is the worst of the worst. **So, when they see him trying to press through the crowds, they are like,** "We're not moving for you, you wee little pig of a man."

And so, after trying unsuccessfully for several minutes to **worm his way in between their knees**, he's running SHORT on options, so he decides to branch out... (Is that not good? Fine, I'll leaf it alone.)

**Y'all, what a sight this must have been!** Think about it: As far as riches go, Zacchaeus was the Elon Musk or Mark Zuckerberg of his day--he's used to being carried around in a chariot by servants, and here he's climbing up a tree to get a gander at Jesus like he's a middle school fan boy trying to stick his head in a Porsche to get a quick glimpse of his hero. Imagine if one of those guys did that today. You look up in a crowd and see a desperate Elon Musk hanging off a limb just trying to get a glimpse of Jesus.

There's something here all of us can learn from Zacchaeus: ***Zacchaeus is willing to do whatever it takes to see Jesus. And let me just point out to those of you who might be seeking Jesus this morning: Zacchaeus does not let Jesus' hypocritical, judgmental, self-righteous followers discourage him from getting that view.*** I feel like that might be a word for somebody here today. Maybe you need to climb a tree to get "above" Jesus' followers so you can see him. It ought not be like that, but maybe you've felt crowded out by the way some of Jesus' followers act about politics on social media. Or maybe you've experienced some followers of Jesus to be really cliquish or standoffish, or, maybe they've made racial or sexist jokes around you in a way that's really turned you off. Maybe you were in business with a Christian and they really did you wrong; maybe you've even suffered abuse at the hands of someone who claimed to be a

Christian. I don't know--but church, I don't want us to be the kind of people who keeps a Zacchaeus from getting a good glimpse of Jesus. That's like our whole ministry philosophy--**Don't make it hard for people who are looking for Jesus to get a glimpse of him.**

**But maybe that's you today**--you have been hurt by Jesus' followers and you have to climb up above them to get a good look at him. **All I will tell you is that it's worth it,** b/c watch what happens next: <sup>5</sup> ***And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, (you come down!...) hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."***

- **Now, this almost seems a little presumptuous on Jesus' part, right?** "Hey, strange little man I've never talked to before--I'm inviting myself to dinner at your house today. And I'll probably stay over for the night."
- **Y'all, what is it that makes Jesus know how to pick somebody out of a crowd and say,** "You! I know God is at work in your life!" We see it not only in this story: throughout the Gospels, Jesus has this ability to see right into people's hearts and say, "I see you. I know what's going on inside of you." **I suspect that is happening to some of you today. You never thought you'd be in here, but you are, trying to hide somewhere out there in a big crowd**--maybe you went to one of our campuses because you thought, "I'll go where the teaching pastor is not even physically present b/c I'm definitely safe there,"--but you're just trying to get a little look at Jesus, and today you are going to sense Jesus call you out of that hiding spot and say, "You. I see you. I'm looking for you!"

<sup>6</sup> ***So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.*** / **There's a scandalous order to this story every Jewish listener would have picked up on immediately.** In those days, to eat with someone--to go to their house and share a meal--was a sign of intimate fellowship. That's true even in our American context today--to share your dinner table is to share your life--but it was *especially* true in this culture. To

eat with someone meant that you were accepting them; that you were committing yourself to a loving relationship with them.

- **And Jesus chose to eat with Zacchaeus before Zacchaeus cleaned up his life.** Zacchaeus was still a cheating, practicing tax collector. That's why vs. 7 says they were all scandalized: *And when (the Jewish religious leaders) saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."*
- **They would have thought a holy person, a representative of God--if he had anything to say to Zacchaeus--it would have been to command Zacchaeus to go clean up his life, and then, later, after Zacchaeus had made sufficient amends--maybe, only maybe, then--he'd eat with him.** But Jesus enters Zacchaeus' house first, before Zacchaeus changes.
- **But this scandalous order, you see, is the heart of the gospel:** salvation comes to our house *before* we change; salvation is what *brings* the change. Every other religion in the world would have said to Zacchaeus, *"Zacchaeus, if you want to find God, clean up your life--start being honest, give away your money... go and do those things, and then you'll find salvation."* But Jesus reversed the order. **Salvation invites itself to dinner at your house--**you only have to receive it, and in response, you change.

**And boy did Zacchaeus ever change!** <sup>8</sup> *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."*

- Did you notice--I **didn't skip any verses between vs 7 and 8!** There were no commands from Jesus, no belittling, no shame, no 'how could you?' Just the experience of grace changed Zacchaeus, and he stood up and said, "I'm going to repay anything I've ever stolen 4-fold and give away ½ my goods to the poor."
- **Now, the Jewish law specified** what you were required to repay to someone if you stole from them (and Zacchaeus surely would

have known those laws): basically, it was the value of the object plus 20%. IOW, if you stole someone's cow you had to repay them the value of the cow and then add 20%. (That's like... what? A cow plus a tomahawk steak from Angus Barn? The value of the cow plus 20%. That's udderly appropriate.) **But Zacchaeus repays 4x the value.** No one required him to do that--he does it voluntarily. And the part about him giving away 50%--that's nowhere in the law. That just springs forth spontaneously from joy in his heart.

- **And the thing to notice--he does it with glee.** In fact, there's a nuance in Greek you might miss. **In vs. 8 says, "Look, Lord... I'm giving away 50%," and the syntax is like a kid who** is showing his mom and dad how he can ride his bike without holding the handlebars. "Look daddy, look at what I'm doing!"
- **You see, it's not just Zacchaeus' behavior that's changed; he's changed.** What the Jewish law had been utterly unable to compel, the grace of the gospel produced in an instant.
  - The law tells us what we ought to do; the gospel changes our heart so that we want to do it.
  - The law is like railroad tracks, pointing us in the direction we should go, but powerless to move the freight along the tracks; the gospel is the power that moves the load.
  - The law commands us to act like God, and in the process reveals how utterly unwilling and unable we are to do that; the gospel transforms us to be like God, so that we obey his commandments from the heart.
  - **Or, to quote Martin Luther:** The law says "do," but it's never done.<sup>3</sup> The gospel says, "Believe, rejoice, because it's already done."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."* Zacchaeus is supposed to be an example of how all

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<sup>3</sup> Martin Luther

people find Jesus--or, better yet, are found by him--and what happens to them when they do.

So, **2 questions I want us to consider:** **1.** *What brought the change in Zacchaeus?* And, **2.** *What was the sign of the change?"*

## 1. What brought about the change in Zacchaeus?

Zacchaeus' awakening, as I see it, **was 2-fold:** first, he **recognized the emptiness of money.** Think about it: *Something drove Zacchaeus to climb that tree.* There he was, having achieved all that he'd ever hoped to achieve, and still he felt empty; unsettled. Prov 11:25 says that "The righteous eat to the satisfying of their souls, but the stomach of the ungodly, no matter how much they eat, always craves more."

- **Throughout his life, Robin Williams** confessed to being deeply unhappy, despite being regarded as one of the most successful comics of all time. He started with that hit sitcom "Mork and Mindy," won several awards, and then starred in not one or two but several culture-defining movies. He proved Waldo Emerson right that, "Humor is often the mistress of sorrow." Those who worked with him said that off-stage Williams was sullen and morose. Zak, his son, said his moods would rise and fall with the movie reviews or how much everyone was talking about somebody else. Robin Williams once told his wife, "You're only as good as your last performance." Towards the end of his life he was so distraught he confided to a friend that he didn't know how to be funny anymore and finally, tragically, he decided to end it all by hanging himself.
- **Maybe there's something in that story that resonates with you--** maybe you've given your life to pursue some dream and now you've got it--at least a part of it--but it still leaves you unsettled. **Maybe it's time you recognize that what you've given your life to pursue** may not deliver what you thought it would.

- **Joby Martin, who was here a few weeks ago,** talks about how when he first moved to **Jacksonville** he got invited to the dog racing track there. We don't have those in Raleigh, but that's Jacksonville. Joby told me that the best moment of every race was when the dogs are at the gates ready to race and the announcer comes on the loudspeaker and bellows out, *"Heeere's Rusty!"* Joby said he didn't know what was going on but everybody started cheering, and a fake rabbit popped up out onto the track and shot down the straightaway along a little railway. He said, "Man, when those dogs saw Rusty, they lost their ever-lovin' canine minds." "They'd start barking and jumping banging up against the doors of the cages, and when they let down those gates, those dogs tore off after that fake rabbit like they'd been fired out of a cannon." They chased Rusty all the way to the end of the track, he said, when suddenly "Rusty" disappeared back into a hole in the ground. Joby said, "I'm sure, later in the kennel, the dogs were like 'Ahhh, I was so close this time! I almost had him.' And their dog friends were like, 'Gosh, me too! You think we'll ever have a chance at Rusty again?'" And sure enough, the next day, Rusty's back! And off they go after him again, only to have him disappear again just before they catch him. And they repeat this routine every weekend. Do they never learn? Now, we say, "What dumb dogs!" But consider this: everyday our alarm clocks go off, and it's almost like that alarm clock bellows out, 'Heeere's Rusty!' And we hop out of bed and off we go in pursuit of him." The promotion. The corner office. The new boyfriend. The new car.

Joby said the worst are those rare times where one of the dogs actually catches Rusty. He gets it, that object of his greatest desire, his lifelong pursuit, and he chews into it and says, "Hey... wait a minute, this isn't what I thought it was. I've been duped!" That dog, Joby says, will never run in quite the same way again. This is where the dogs might actually be a

little smarter than us, because some of us caught Rusty. We moved into the new house; we got the corner office; the car. We chewed into it and thought, “Well, this was disappointing. There must be another Rusty I need. This Rusty was not what I thought it would be but I’m sure the next one will be!”

*Zacchaeus got a glimpse of how empty money was, and he learned from it; but even more, he got a glimpse of how glorious Jesus is.*

- **Here was a Savior who loved Zacchaeus when nobody else would**, and sought him up in a tree when nobody else would even let him be a part of the crowd. Here was a person--Jesus, who had no need of Zacchaeus--he could work miracles, he could walk on water, heal the sick and raise the dead--and yet, he sought out Zacchaeus, a man so despised people wouldn't even make room for him in a crowd.
- **That experience of grace broke money's hold over Zacchaeus.** Zacchaeus didn't become a tax collector, you see, because he was inwardly more dishonest than other people; he became a tax collector because money had this spell over him. He believed money represented “the good life,” and if he had to compromise his integrity, or burn a few relationships (or all of his relationships), to get it, well, that's the price. His sin was driven by his idolization of money. The same is true with your sins: if romance is your idol--if you see titillating romance and exciting sex as essential to the good life, well, if you have to step outside of marriage to get it and you can get away with it, you will. It's **not usually that inwardly** you are some overly craven, lustful person. You are just held captive by the spell of romance. If you see the respect of your friends as essential to happiness, and you have to compromise yourself to earn that respect, you will. You are under the spell of your friends' opinions.
- **Zacchaeus had lived all his life under the spell of money**, but then he met Jesus, and that broke money's spell over him, because he found in Jesus a greater treasure than he had found in money.

- **Thomas Chalmers, a Puritan**, preached a famous sermon called “*The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*,” and he said the only way we overcome sinful desires is by replacing them with a stronger desire.
- **Illus:** I've done a lot of weddings in my lifetime. and one of the things I've noticed is that quite often the bride and groom will forget to eat at the reception--despite the fact that they are ravenously hungry and despite the fact they are just a few feet away from an all-expenses paid buffet of the finest foods they've ever been around. And that's because they are so enraptured with the joy of the moment that they forget to eat. In all my years of doing weddings, I've never had a groom look at me when those doors opened and the bride is walking down the aisle--I've never had one say, “Hey man, you got a Snickers? I am SO hungry.” No--the expulsive power of a new affection. All lesser affections are brought into captivity by a stronger one.
- **The problem is not that your sinful desires are too strong**, it's that your desire for God is too weak. The only way to become an honest person, a generous person, a sexually pure person, is for your wonder at Jesus to grow. **And how does that happen? Well, like with Zacchaeus**, you get a taste of glorious grace, like Zacchaeus did.

**And here's the thing:** Zacchaeus didn't see the half of it. You see, you and I can read this story from a vantage point even Zacchaeus didn't have.

- **Zacchaeus climbed up in a tree seeking Jesus.** But in just a couple of chapters, Jesus would climb up into a tree seeking Zacchaeus. But Jesus wasn't climbing up into a sycamore tree just to be able to get a better vantage point of Zacchaeus; he was climbing up in a tree to take Zacchaeus' place and die for his sins.
- You see, there was an Old Testament reference every Jew knew, “Cursed (despised) is everyone who is hung on a tree.” (Deut 21:23)

- Jesus climbed up into a tree so he could take Zacchaeus' place of cursing and extend intimacy and fellowship to him in its place. Jesus traded places with Zacchaeus. Jesus experienced the shame so that Zacchaeus could receive the acceptance. Jesus took the curse so Zacchaeus could reap the blessing. Jesus told Zacchaeus to come down from that tree of shame so he could climb up into it. And when Zacchaeus saw that, and tasted it--just a little bit of it--it changed him.

**Some of you have come back to church thinking,** *"I need to get my life back together--I need to start being better, start making amends for some of the wrong I've done--and then maybe I can be a good person again and earn my way back into God's favor."* But salvation, you see, is a gift you can only receive. Jesus took your curse. He paid your debt. And now salvation knocks at your door; all you can do is open it and receive him. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock..."

- You see, you and I are just like Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was too short to see Jesus; he had to climb a tree to get to him. We also are too short to see God--for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God--so God climbed a tree to get to us--but that tree was not a beautiful sycamore on the road to Jerusalem, it was a bloody cross on the crest of Golgotha.
- *Was it for crimes that I had done, he groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity! Grace unknown! And love beyond degree!... But drops of grief can ne'er repay the debt of love I owe: Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'tis all that I can do.*

Which leads me to question 2:

## 2. What was the sign of Zacchaeus' change?

Two things: **A yearning for justice and an impulse for generosity.**

**First, Zacchaeus had an immediate yearning to overcome injustice.** He said, "I've got to make things right." So far as we can tell, no one told him he had to do that; instinctively it's just what he wanted to do. Sometimes people think they can come to Jesus and stay the same; pray a little prayer like a "get out of hell free card," get baptized, cross yourself, and move on. **The first sign of meeting Jesus is a desire for justice.** Where you have wronged people, you want to make it right. You want to start living honorably before God and others. A desire to live in secrecy, and bend the rules so long as you don't get caught--those are signs of darkness, not light. It's like the Apostle John says, *"Any man who says they know him and continues in sin is a liar. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth."* So the first sign is a yearning for justice.

**The second sign of change we see in Zacchaeus is a sudden impulse for generosity:** As I noted, Zacchaeus went well beyond the justice requirements of the law--paying back 4x, giving away 50% to the poor--he did this not because he had to, but because grace moved him to do that.

- **Sometimes when we get into conversations about why relationships in our lives are strained,** all we talk about is justice. *"Well, they did that," or "they accused me of that but I didn't do that and I don't owe them anything."*
  - We're like that when we think about our marriages--"The reason we are having problems is because she does this and I don't deserve that."
  - We're like that in our jobs--"Well, I'm owed this and I wasn't given my full due here."
  - We're like that even in societal racial discussions, "Well, I'm being held responsible for what my ancestors did and that's not my fault," and that's all true, if we're talking about justice. But the Christian goes beyond justice to mercy. They ask different kinds of questions: What do I have by which I can lift up others? How can I use my position to pour myself out? I

don't want to merely repay what I owe; I want to give back 4x as much."

**An impulse for grace is the sign that grace has changed you.** I think my favorite parable of Jesus that illustrates this is the story of the man who was forgiven **10,000 talents**...

Which means if you're not a person of generosity, of mercy, of grace—if all you do is insist on what you are owed—then it means you haven't met Jesus.

**How do you know Jesus has come into your life? The best indicator is your generosity of spirit.**

**Robert Murray M'Cheyne said, "The more you understand who Jesus is and what he has done for you, the more generous you become... I fear there are many hearing me who now know they are not Christians because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart. An old heart would rather part with its lifeblood than its money."**<sup>4</sup>

**What does your impulse for generosity say about your experience of grace?** They say that pilots who fly through clouds or fog must follow their instruments even when those instruments contradict their perceptions of which way is up--it's so easy to get disoriented in cloud cover that if you follow your gut and not the instrument panel, inevitably you'll crash and die.<sup>5</sup> The most reliable indicator light on your spiritual dashboard, the light that tells you whether you have met Jesus, is what happens in your heart in regards to money: when you've been impacted by grace, you develop an impulse for generosity.

<sup>4</sup> I am not sure if the last part of this quote is McCheyenne. The 1st part is.

- **Is your life characterized by justice and mercy?** Because if not, **Zacchaeus would say, "I don't think you could have met the same guy I met. There's no way to encounter that kind of grace and stay the same."** No. Way.

## VAMP

**Over the last several weeks we've taken time to consider what relationship our hearts have with money--b/c Jesus said that money is the #1 competitor in our hearts for God.** As I've said, our focus has not been on the money we need for various projects, but on how what we do with our money indicates that we love and trust the most and who is really the Lord of our lives. (*I'm a pastor, not a fundraiser.*) Today, we see generosity as the indicator of how much the gospel has impacted us. The deeper we go in the gospel, the more open our hands become with our possessions.

I want to end by giving you a tangible next step—which is this sticker. Go ahead and pull it out. I'm going to walk through three ways the Spirit may be leading you in this—in regards to your time, talent, treasure. Honestly, the Spirit may be leading you to a generosity of heart in any of them. This doesn't have to be about your money. But hear me out: Don't leave money off the table just because it's uncomfortable. Allow the Spirit to speak directly to you.

**"My Next Step is \_\_\_\_\_"**

**Treasure:**

- **...to start giving to the mission of God.** Some of you have never done that. That's a big step of faith and something I

<sup>5</sup> Tom LeCompte, "The Disorient Express," Air and Space, Sept 2008, <http://www.airspacemag.com/military-aviation/the-disorient-express-474780/>. Quoted in Keller, *Songs of Jesus*.g

want to invite you to experience. To start moving toward 10%, the tithe, of giving to God—and that’s a good first step. For many of you, this will be the first time you’ve done this and that’s great.

- **...to set up a recurring gift.** My wife and I made a commitment years ago that our biggest gift is going to the kingdom of God. Does your checkbook demonstrate that Jesus is first in your life?
- **...to give sacrificially.** Maybe like Zacchaeus your response to the grace of Jesus in your life is to give a radical gift that testifies to what the Lord has done for you. People always want to know, “How much?” I love the words of CS Lewis: “The only safe rule when it comes to generosity is to give more than you think you can spare.” B/c only then are you starting to give in a way that is generous and that requires trust.

#### **Time / Talent:**

Maybe for you to do whatever it takes your next step is:

- **...to start serving** in Summit Students or Kids to help us raise up the next generation for Christ.
- **...to invest in our community** by serving on a local outreach team.
- **...to start serving at your campus or join one of our prayer teams**
- **...to sign-up for** one of the 18 **short-term mission trips** we’ve got going on this spring. Maybe the Lord prompted you to go overseas but then the pandemic happened and all those doors closed. Is the Holy Spirit inviting you to take that next step?
- **...to share the gospel** with a lost neighbor, or coworker, or family member this Thanksgiving.

**Or maybe your next step is to surrender your life to Jesus!** Maybe, like Zacchaeus, you sense Jesus saying to you, I want to come into your life, and your response needs to be opening your hands and

releasing what you’ve been clinging to instead of him. You can do that right now. If that’s you, just put “Yes, Jesus” on this sticker. The gospel is about a gift you receive. It’s saying ‘yes’ to his offer to save you, by surrendering your life to him and receiving him as Savior. You can do that **right now.**

So here’s what we’re gonna do—I wanna give you a few minutes between just you and the Holy Spirit to determine what your specific next step is. On your way out of service we’re gonna ask you to take the sticker you’ve filled out and put it on the display in your lobby **as a declaration of faith**; your stake in the ground of saying, “I’m willing to do *whatever it takes*, and *this* is what God is calling me to next.” You don’t have to put your name on it. So don’t be scared—be honest and be bold.

So you take a few moments to pray through this, seek the Spirit, fill this out, and then in a few minutes our worship teams will come...