

Media and Graphics Notes

Sermon Starter Video?	Yes
Sermon Notes?	Yes
Other Notes	There will be a video during the announcements at the end of the service to introduce the next worship series.

Key Questions

What is this sermon about?

This sermon is about the opportunity to be generous in our lives and finances.

Why is this sermon important?

This sermon is important because giving is a matter of discipleship and affects our soul.

What is the context of this sermon?

This is the final week of our Growing Forward capital campaign worship series. We will present our capital campaign commitment cards during worship.

What are the next action steps?

Experience the joy of living a generous life and make a commitment of financial generosity for the ministry of the church.

What is the good news (bottom line)?

The good news is that when we grow in our generosity, as a response to God's extravagant generosity for us, we become more like Christ.

What are other key takeaways? (140 characters or less)

- Zacchaeus had to decide to climb down from the tree.
The widow had to decide to put her gift in the offering.

We are a growing church, growing family and together, we are moving forward.



- Salvation is the way God transforms every area of life so that we become a part of God's saving work in this world.
— James Harnish
- Salvation changes our hearts by changing the fundamental orientation of our living, including the way we use our money. It sets us free from bondage to narrow self-interest and opens our lives to the way the Spirit of God can be at work through us in the lives of others.
— James Harnish
- Salvation is, of course, about a lot more than money, but it is never about anything less than money, particularly in a culture that is compulsively driven by the power of money, a culture in which money has such awesome power as a blessing or curse, as a gracious gift we manage for God's sake, or as a demonic tyrant that manages us for its own sake.
— James Harnish
- With us as with the widow, Jesus counts our offerings based not on the size of the gift but on the impact it has on the giver. He looks at our giving based not on how much we give but on how much is left over after we give it.
— James Harnish
- "Zacchaeus did not earn salvation by giving. His newfound generosity was his response to the extravagant generosity of God. But salvation never would have become a reality for Zacchaeus without his movement from a life that was consumed with gaining and saving into a life that was energized by giving.
— James Harnish
- Looking up, Jesus saw rich people throwing their gifts into the collection box for the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow throw in two small copper coins worth a penny. He said, "I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than them all. All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had to live on."
— Luke 21:1-4, CEB

Metadata

Topic(s)

1. Change Lives
2. Give

Sermon Books of the Bible

1. Luke

1st Sunday after Pentecost / in Kingdomtide - Trinity Sunday

May 22, 2016

Growing Forward - Sacrificial Giving

Luke 21:1-4

First United Methodist Church of El Dorado

Preaching Target Word Count: 1,977

Text Online at <http://j.mp/1Q7tpOY>

Audio Online at <http://bit.ly/1WJzTfl>

Tags

sermon, worship, church, Methodist, UnitedMethodist, UnitedMethodistChurch, FirstUnitedMethodistChurch, ElDorado, Kansas, GreatPlains, AnnualConference, GreatPlainsAnnualConference, giving, generosity, stewardship, capitalcampaign, give

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Luke 21:1-4, CEB

Looking up, Jesus saw rich people throwing their gifts into the collection box for the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow throw in two small copper coins worth a penny. He said, "I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than them all. All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had to live on."

Response to Scripture

One: The Word of God for the People of God.

All: **Thanks be to God!**

Introduction

Sermon Starter Video

[Play sermon starter video.](#)

Series Review

We are a growing church, growing family, moving forward. Our story began in December 1869 as the church first church organized in Butler County. In the first sixty years of our church's existence, we worshiped in seven different locations and built three brand new buildings. We have the opportunity to build on the legacy of generosity and sacrifice of those who have come before us. Today, we focus on sacrificial giving.

Sermon Notes and Scripture Study

Take Notes - Bulletin

I invite you to take notes during the message today. You can find a place in your bulletin or if you have a mobile device you can take notes and save them in the Bible App. Just open the Bible App, click on "More" and then "Events" You'll find us on the map.

God Speaking

I pray that you will hear God speaking to you sometime during the service today. Listen for God's word for you – something that helps you live as a disciple of Jesus Christ. Whenever you hear it, write it down.

Tool for Spiritual Growth

Then, take this bulletin home with you so that you can grow in your faith outside of worship by reflecting on what you heard today, praying for others connected with our community and reading scripture.

Prayer

Will you pray with me? O God, use these words to speak good news so that as individuals and as a congregation we will fear nothing but sin, desire nothing but you and live as part of your kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

Opening Story

Story

“When I was very young, I learned a song that I remember to this day. It goes like this:

Zacchaeus was a wee little man
And a wee little man was he.
He climbed up in the sycamore tree,
For the Lord it wanted to see.

And when the Savior came that way
He looked up in the tree.
And he said, “Zacchaeus, you come down!
For I’m going to your house today.”

Maybe you know this song, too.”¹

Transition

“The story is easy to tell and colorful to remember, but it’s challenging to hear, because in one sense we are all Zacchaeus and because it’s a story about the connection between our salvation and our money.”²

A Big Change for a Little Man

The Story of Zacchaeus

We read the story of Zacchaeus in Luke 19:1-10:

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town. A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn’t because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, “Zacchaeus, come down at once. I

¹ Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.i>

² Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.i>

must stay in your home today.” So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.

Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much.”

Jesus said to him, “Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. The Human One came to seek and save the lost.”³

Context for a Tax Collector

“[He] was a little man with a big bank account – he was very rich. You see, he was as chief tax collector and profited from a corrupt economic system in which he collected ever increasing taxes for the Roman Empire and kept a generous percentage for himself. As a result, he was despised as a sinner, rejected by his own people, and unwelcome in the synagogue.”⁴

Why did Zacchaeus seek Jesus?

“Have you ever wondered why Zacchaeus climbed up into that sycamore tree to get a look at Jesus? How had he even heard of Jesus?

Luke may have given us a clue earlier in his Gospel, when, in the fifth chapter, another tax collector named Levi, also known as Matthew, threw a dinner party to introduce Jesus to others. We read in Luke 5:29:

“Then Levi threw a great banquet for Jesus in his home. A large number of tax collectors and others sat down to eat with them.”⁵

I like to imagine that Zacchaeus was in that crowd.”⁶

Glimpse of Life in the Kingdom

“If Zacchaeus was indeed at the dinner table with Jesus, he may have experienced something he never had known before. He would have felt accepted by Jesus and loved by God. He could have glimpsed a life that was about more than grabbing all the money he could get. He may have realized that all his wealth could

³ Luke 19:1-10, CEB.

⁴ Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

⁵ Luke 5:29, CEB.

⁶ Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.l>

never buy the life he most deeply desired. Perhaps he became convinced there was a higher calling for the way he used his money.”⁷

Last Chance to See Jesus

When Zacchaeus heard that Jesus was coming through Jericho on his way to Jerusalem, he may also have heard the prediction that when Jesus entered the city he would be rejected and put to death. If that were true, then this might be Zacchaeus’ only chance to see Jesus again.”⁸

Jesus and Zacchaeus

“So there he was, willing to sacrifice his pride and dignity by hanging on for dear life in the branches of that sycamore tree. He must have looked downright foolish! I suspect he nearly fell off the limb when Jesus called him by name: “Zacchaeus, get down here! I’m going to your house today!”⁹

Joy and Grumbling

“It’s probably an understatement when Luke says that Zacchaeus was “happy to welcome Jesus.” But it would be no understatement for Luke to record that everyone else “grumbled” at the idea of Jesus hanging out with an obvious sinner like Zacchaeus.”¹⁰

Zacchaeus’ Response

In response to the unexpected, undeserved, unearned grace of God in Jesus Christ, Zacchaeus blurted out, “Wow! The only way I know to say ‘Thanks’ is to give half my wealth to the poor and pay back the folks I’ve cheated four times over!” Jesus said, “Now, that’s what salvation looks like! Let’s party!”¹¹

Salvation

“Zacchaeus’ witness underscores the deep reality that salvation is not merely a spiritual experience that prepares us for life after death. Salvation is the way God transforms every area of life so that we become a part of God’s saving work in this

⁷ Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.i>

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world. Salvation changes our hearts by changing the fundamental orientation of our living, including the way we use our money. It sets us free from bondage to narrow self-interest and opens our lives to the way the Spirit of God can be at work through us in the lives of others.”¹²

Salvation is more than money

“Salvation is, of course, about a lot more than money, but it is never about anything less than money, particularly in a culture that is compulsively driven by the power of money, a culture in which money has such awesome power as a blessing or curse, as a gracious gift we manage for God’s sake, or as a demonic tyrant that manages us for its own sake.”¹³

Generosity as a response to God’s generosity

“Zacchaeus did not earn salvation by giving. His newfound generosity was his response to the extravagant generosity of God. But salvation never would have become a reality for Zacchaeus without his movement from a life that was consumed with gaining and saving into a life that was energized by giving.”¹⁴

The Widow’s Mite

This brings us to the story of scripture for today from Luke 21:1-4. Let me read it again for you:

Looking up, Jesus saw rich people throwing their gifts into the collection box for the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow throw in two small copper coins worth a penny. He said, “I assure you that this poor widow has put in more than them all. All of them are giving out of their spare change. But she from her hopeless poverty has given everything she had to live on.”¹⁵

Giving at the Temple

“It seems that Jesus was doing some serious people-watching in the Temple. Thirteen large, metal, trumpet-shaped containers lined the wall of the Temple courtyard.

¹² Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.i>

¹³ Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.i>

¹⁴ Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.i>

¹⁵ Luke 21:1-4, CEB.

Because there was no paper money, we can imagine that when the rich dropped a large gift into the container, you could hear it clanging all the way to the bottom.”¹⁶

Widow's Gift

“Jesus watched—and heard—the way the rich gave their gifts, “throwing in lots of money” (Mark 12:41). Then he noticed an anonymous widow who dropped two tiny coins into the offering. The original text says the coins were lepta, the smallest Greek coins of the day, which were so small that you couldn't hear a sound when they hit the bottom of the container.”¹⁷

Jesus' Observations

“Clearly, Jesus had a different way of counting the offering that day. He counted it

- based not on its size but on its impact on the giver;
- based not on the difference it made in the Temple treasury but on the difference it made in the giver's life;
- based not on how much people gave but on how much they had left over afterward;
- based not on other offerings but on the capacity of the giver.

With us as with the widow, Jesus counts our offerings based not on the size of the gift but on the impact it has on the giver. He looks at our giving based not on how much we give but on how much is left over after we give it.”¹⁸

Conclusion

Good News

The good news is that when we grow in our generosity, as a response to God's extravagant generosity for us, we become more like Christ.

Call to Action

I invite you to the joy of living a generous life through a three year financial commitment to our Growing Forward campaign.

We invite you to make a second mile gift, over and above your giving to the operating budget.

¹⁶ Excerpt From: James A. Harnish. “Earn. Save. Give. [Large Print].” iBooks. <https://itun.es/us/cjv93.i>

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If you find yourself in a position of being unable to make a commitment for whatever reason, it's okay. We invite you to return a card, even if your commitment is zero.

Throughout our campaign we have stressed that persons should pray about what God's will is for them in light of this campaign. The expectation of our leaders is that each member enter into a conversation with God through the prayer "Lord, what do You want to do through me?" If God leads you not to participate, writing zero under the commitment amount is a faithful response and one we will gladly accept.

Invitation

I invite you to present your commitment cards during the final song in worship.

Zacchaeus had to decide to climb down from the tree.

The widow had to decide to put her gift in the offering.

We are a growing church, growing family and together, we are moving forward.

Closing Prayer

Will you pray with me?