

April 2, 2017 Sermon Discussion Guide

Rev. Steve DeNeff

“An Other Economy”

Gathering

“Lord, may this scripture guide our discussion as well as our lives. Grant us focus and determination to set our eyes toward You as THE priority in our lives.”

Jeremiah 31:15-17a; 23-25

¹⁵ *This is what the Lord says:*

“A cry is heard in Ramah—

deep anguish and bitter weeping.

Rachel weeps for her children,

refusing to be comforted—

for her children are gone.”

¹⁶ *But now this is what the Lord says:*

“Do not weep any longer,

for I will reward you,” says the Lord.

“Your children will come back to you

from the distant land of the enemy.

¹⁷ *There is hope for your future,” says the Lord.*

²³ *This is what the Lord of Heaven’s Armies, the God of Israel, says: “When I bring them back from captivity, the people of Judah and its towns will again say, ‘The Lord bless you, O righteous home, O holy mountain!’”* ²⁴ *Townpeople and farmers and shepherds alike will live together in peace and happiness.* ²⁵ *For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing.”*

Prayer

- For families across the world mourning after the loss of loved ones due to natural disasters or violence. *Lord, hear our prayer.*
- For our brothers and sisters at Senda de Vida church. *Lord, hear our prayer.*
- For hearts that respond to Your call to generosity. *Lord, hear our prayer.*
- For the needs that we have shared together on a personal level,... *Lord, hear our prayer.*

Summary of the Sermon

- As a group, recall the key points of Pastor Steve’s sermon.
- How did God stir you during the service? How were you challenged or changed?

Scripture

Take the time to read aloud the scripture that was preached. Luke 18:18-27; 19:1-10

¹⁸ *Once a religious leader asked Jesus this question: “Good Teacher, what should I do to inherit eternal life?”*

¹⁹ *“Why do you call me good?” Jesus asked him. “Only God is truly good.”* ²⁰ *But to answer your question, you know the commandments: ‘You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not testify falsely. Honor your father and mother.’”*

²¹ *The man replied, “I’ve obeyed all these commandments since I was young.”*

²² *When Jesus heard his answer, he said, “There is still one thing you haven’t done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”*

²³ *But when the man heard this he became very sad, for he was very rich.*

²⁴ When Jesus saw this, he said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!" ²⁵ In fact, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the Kingdom of God!"

²⁶ Those who heard this said, "Then who in the world can be saved?"

²⁷ He replied, "What is impossible for people is possible with God."

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. ² There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. ³ He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

⁵ When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. "Zacchaeus!" he said. "Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today."

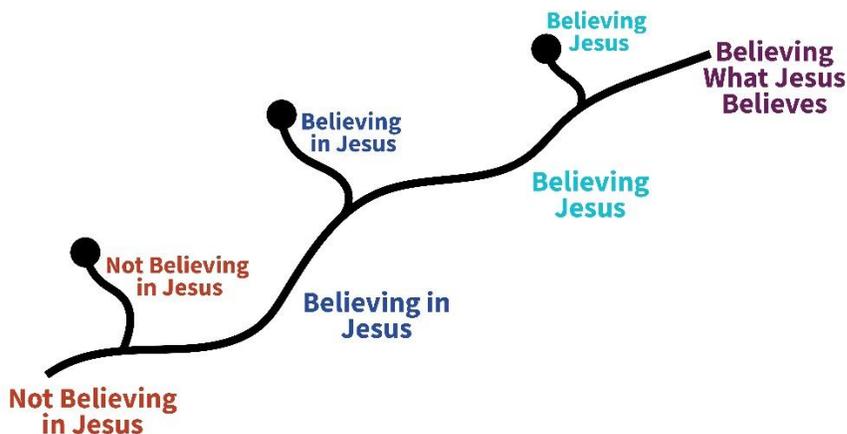
⁶ Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. ⁷ But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

⁸ Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!"

⁹ Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

Major Sermon Discussion Points

- Were the three questions of spiritual formation presented in this sermon helpful to you? Why?
 - Do I believe in Jesus?
 - Do I believe Jesus?
 - Do I believe what Jesus believes?



- Are there areas in your life in which you think you believe what Jesus believes? Are you willing to share some of those with the group?
 - How did you get to this point in those areas?
- Are there areas in your life in which you are struggling to believe Jesus? Are you willing to share any of those with the group?
 - What steps could you take to believe Jesus in those areas?
- Do you agree with the statement that most Christians practice "discretionary obligation" (feel obligated to give but I set the terms and the amount) when it comes to generosity?
- The rich young ruler had followed all the rules of religion but was still looking for life. Have you seen or experienced before? What was the outcome of that situation?
- Had you ever thought about the fact that Zacchaeus might have already been practicing generosity before he met Jesus? How does this change your understanding and application of this story?

Next Steps/Moving Forward

- Where are you currently on the spectrum of generosity? Rich Young Ruler ----- Zacchaeus
- What is Jesus asking you to do that you aren't already doing?

Closing Prayer

Pray as you feel led as a group following your discussion or pray the following prayer individually or together:

(from 2 Corinthians 9)

Creator and Giver of all good things, grant us the wisdom to decide in our hearts how much to give and the grace to give cheerfully. May we have the faith to trust that you will generously provide all we need with plenty left over to share with others. Give us eyes to see that as we give what you have called us to give, the needs of others are met and those who receive will joyfully express their thanks to you.

Amen.