

SERMON NOTES

SUNDAY 07.07.24

PREACHER: PS ANDY MAC

“PRACTICES OF JESUS: HOSPITALITY”

BECOMING CHRISTLIKE

BEING, THINKING & DOING

Conviction of a Disciple: A growing and maturing follower of Jesus will be regularly growing the areas of hospitality and the people at their “tables” will be growing in number and diversity.

OVERVIEW

Through the practice of radical hospitality, we can transform our dining tables into places of healing and restoration, as demonstrated by Jesus' interaction with Zacchaeus in the Gospel of Luke.

ACTION

Step 1: Reflect: How does Jesus' interaction with Zacchaeus challenge your view of who is "in" and who is "out"?

Step 2: Commit: Who can you invite to your table this week? It doesn't have to be perfect; it simply needs to be a genuine expression of love and grace.

Step 3: Act: Make definitive plans to sit across from someone who might not normally be in your “group” of friends. Do this with the intent to get to know them and their story.

THOUGHT

SCRIPTURE: LUKE 19:1-10

In the world of the scriptures, the dinner table holds profound significance. It was a place for celebration, mourning, to show hospitality, and welcome to guests. In doing so it held the profound ability to explicitly make claims on who you considered to be “in” and those you wanted to keep “out”. This dividing line is particularly significant in the Gospel of Luke. Luke regularly narrates Jesus on his way to a meal, at a meal, or leaving a meal. Typically in these accounts, Jesus also makes profound statements about who is “in” or “out”, much to the chagrin of those around him. In particular, he seems to enjoy overturning the expectations and cultural norms of his religious friends and counterparts, the Pharisees.

In today’s text, as Jesus walks through the streets of Jericho, he encounters Zacchaeus, a known tax collector and villain in his community. Being a tax collector meant he was a Jewish man who was colluding with the Roman military to pile further oppression onto his own people, and while doing so ensuring he lined his pockets as well. To say he was hated is no understatement.

Jesus was an influential and widely-known Rabbi. Many people would have wanted to increase their honour by welcoming Jesus into their homes as he passed through the city. But as usual, Jesus turns the whole thing on its head, revealing the true heart of God’s Kingdom.

Jesus astonishes and scandalises the crowd with his radical act of hospitality. He calls out Zacchaeus - the most rejected and worst sinner in the city - and Jesus invites himself over and enters his house, thereby entering his life. He offers acceptance, honour, and hospitality to the one no one else can stand. This radical act by Jesus overwhelms the crowd with anger and overwhelms Zacchaeus with a transformed heart. Zacchaeus then uses the very thing that has caused harm to restore and bring blessing back into his community.

While there is great power in the Church gathering at a Sunday service, there is also a deep importance in gathering at our dining tables. As we learn to practise acts of radical hospitality, we will begin to see the healing and restorative power of the Kingdom happen right before our eyes (and it may not only be the one across from us that is transformed in the process).

DISCUSSION

1. Why do you think Jesus chose to dine with Zacchaeus, and how did this act of hospitality impact Zacchaeus and the community around him?
2. How can we as a small group practice the same radical hospitality that Jesus demonstrated with Zacchaeus?
3. In what ways can our dining tables become places of healing and restoration within our own communities?

PRAYER

Lord,

Help us to embrace the practice of hospitality as Jesus did. Break down the barriers that prevent us from opening our homes and hearts to others. May our tables become places of transformation, where strangers become friends and your love is shared abundantly. Guide us to act with compassion and to commit ourselves to the work of Your Kingdom, both in our church and in our everyday lives.

Amen.