

## NOVEMBER 2, 2019-SUMMARY SERMON-JOHN TSCHUDY

### SCRIPTURE LESSON Habakkuk 2:1-4, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12, Luke 19:1-10

Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus, “there’s a children’s song by that name I believe. How well I can remember learning that story in Sunday School as a child. The story of God’s unforgiving love for even those who might seem unforgivable. To the Jews, Zacchaeus was unforgivable. Not only did his job require him to do the most hated thing in Israel, collect Roman taxes. Because he worked for the Romans and they enjoyed humiliating their Jewish employees, from the Jewish point of view he was always unclean and unfit to enter the Temple, offer sacrifices, and observe certain other rituals of the faith. But in this story here comes Jesus and Jesus does what no one either Roman or Jew had ever done for him. Jesus reaches out to him and offers him God’s forgiveness and the new life within the Jewish Committee. He can have relations with his lifelong friends and family. He can be right or righteous with in his relationship with God. It is the idea of being a “Child of Abraham” that is of most importance to Zacchaeus, because that means he can be in a right relationship with God.

This is what being made righteous and at peace with God that is of most importance to Zacchaeus and that is what should be of most importance to all of us. It isn’t just about eternal salvation. The goal of Christianity is about living our entire life in the right relationship with God. For to many today their religious life is about what happens to them when they die or what happens to them when Jesus “comes again.” If we look at our text from Habakkuk, notice where it starts out. It is about the here and now. Habakkuk is worried about what God will say to him at this moment and he is already to answer God because he is at his post, ready to go. God gives to Habakkuk the message he is to carry and instructs him that he is to take it and proclaim it and speak the truth to all people. God’s message is true. It is the same message and promises God made before to Abraham. And now God makes us know them and they fit for today and will work tomorrow.

Paul thanks the Thessalonians for proclaiming God’s message and giving witness to it, even in the midst of their suffering. It is a sign of their remaining Faithful to God even in hard times. And it is a message to us of both their faithfulness and courage,. It reminds us how we are to do the same. We are to see God’s messages proclaimed and give witness to in our modern world. Despite the hard times and suffering we endure.

It took courage for Zacchaeus to reach out to Jesus. Jesus reaching out to him puts him in the middle of what we call “The Public Eye” and that may not be where we want to be any more than he did. It isn’t about him going to heaven when he dies. It isn’t about “Being Saved.” It is about Jesus coming to spend the night at his house and share a meal with him and that message being delivered in public. It’s about what is happening to him and his family here and now. He is being put back into his proper relationship with God.

To God we are all individuals and deserving of a personal relationship with God. We are entitled to the same rights as all others have, no matter who or what we are. Our God is our creator and Christ is our savior. We are all children of God, just like the Thessalonians and others we know were created by God. Like Zacchaeus we all sometimes do things we shouldn’t have done. But like Zacchaeus, God is ready to take us back and invites us to have the relationship God intended to have with us in Jesus Christ. Thanks be to God.