

# Receiving Jesus

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Date: 04 June 2023

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 0 0 ] Our first item of worship is Psalm 65. We sing to his praise in Psalm 65, and that's on page 82. And Zion praise awaits you, Lord, to you our vows will pay. To you all people will come near, do you hear us when we pray? When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, you pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away. Psalm 65, these verses 1 to 5, the tune is done firmly to God's praise.

Amen. In Zion praise awaits you, Lord, to you our vows will pay.

To you all people will come near, you hear us when we pray.

When we were overwhelmed by sins and guilt upon us lay, you pardoned all our trespasses and washed our guilt away.

We are blessed, our love, to you to the rain, with a new force of grace.

[ 1 : 5 5 ] We're filled with blessings in your heart, in your most holy place.

With awesome deeds of righteousness, you answered us, O God, our Savior, hope of earth's ease, and of the earth abroad.

Amen. Once again, let's join together in prayer to God. O Lord, our God, our gracious and eternal God, we thank you again that we can gather here this evening as worshipers around your Word, and that we can engage in these aspects of worship that we are so familiar with. We pray, Lord, that you would keep us from a mere familiarity or a mere sense of routine. Give us, we pray, Lord, when we call upon your name that we may do so, conscious that we are speaking with the God of whom we have been singing, and conscious that you have reminded us in these words of your readiness to answer us.

We ask, O Lord, that you would help us as we study your Word and as we come to sing your praises, that we will do so with a thinking heart, the mind ready to receive these aspects of your truth, and to use your Word as we sing your praise. We give thanks, Lord, tonight that we are reminded once again of your greatness, of your claim over the whole of your creation, for you are the God of the whole universe, the God who has reminded us that you uphold all things by the Word of your power, and that it is to you that all human beings are answerable ultimately.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to come in that holy fear by which we would, with awe and reverence and love for you, fall down before you now in the quiet of our hearts, and come, Lord, to give ourselves anew to you in a willing service. We thank you that your Word has already guided us today to those issues to do with the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, to that which he accomplished by his death at Calvary. And we do give thanks, O Lord, for your presence with us, for the way in which you use both word and sacrament to edify your people. We pray that we may carry these things with us from this Lord's day, both then and now, so that they may indeed form in our minds throughout this coming week, the basis of our thoughts. We thank you, O Lord, for all the goodness we receive from you. Lord, we come before you each Lord's day at the beginning of each week, reflecting upon the many aspects of your goodness, and yet we confess that throughout each week we fail to take account properly and tellingly of these aspects of your goodness that meet us in our daily living.

[ 5 : 30 ] For your goodness extends to us not only in the gospel, but in the course of life that you provide us with so much that we are given to enjoy and benefit from throughout each day. And we thank you that you remember us with plenty for our bodily needs, that you remember us in such a favorable situation as you've placed us in, so that we have access to medical resources, access to good education, access to so many things down through the years, O Lord, that you have provided us with in your providence and kindness. And we give thanks for that, and we pray that these may continue with us. For by our own neglect, O Lord, it would be all too easy for you to withdraw them and to teach us of our dependability, of our dependence upon yourself and on your dependability as our God.

We pray tonight, Lord, as we consider aspects of your Word anew, that you might draw us to yourself as we do so, and that we may be conscious that you are here. Lord, we remember Solomon's great declaration as the dedication of the temple took place, that the heavens of heavens could not contain you, much less this building that he had erected. And so it is, O Lord, with this building, this place of worship, this place we are so familiar with and so precious to us. We confess that it is but small, tiny in your own presence compared to your greatness. Yet we thank you that you're pleased at times to fill it with your presence, that you're pleased to use it in such a way as to gather us together so that we experience more of your blessing. We pray that you would enable us to speak and to hear in a way that we truly be aware that you are speaking to us, that you are giving us the ability to speak and to hear. We ask your blessing to be with us as a congregation following our communion this morning. We thank you, Lord, for every occasion when the death of the Lord is remembered by us, and when you enable us to gather in such a fashion. We pray for all today who were at your table.

We ask that you would bless us as we seek your strengthening for that journey of life through which you take us. And we pray that you would strengthen us to be your own living and consistent disciples in the world. We pray that you would protect us and keep us, that you would direct our steps each day in the ways of your truth. We pray especially, Lord, for Anna, who was there at the table for the first time today. We pray for Anna, and we ask that you would bless her as she begins her life as a professing Christian. We thank you for her presence with us. We pray that you would encourage her, O Lord, as she has taken this step. We pray for any who may have been at your table today for the last time. We know not, Lord, what a day or a week or months may actually bring to us.

We have already, Lord, come through years when things happened that we were not expectant of, and yet you brought us safely through, and you enabled us, Lord, to look to you. We pray that that will be the case in these days and weeks and months to come. We pray that you bless again our children, those who are witnesses of the sacrament today, and those who are not, or those who were at home.

We pray that you bless them, bless those, and bless them as they receive the teaching of your word and those who teach them. We thank you, Lord, for every encouragement you give us with regard to our young people. Bless us in the fellowship again this evening. Help us, Lord, as we take an interest in the work of camps, that you would enable us, Lord, to do so prayerfully and meaningfully as we remember the young people that anticipate being at camps this coming summer. And we pray for those who have given of themselves to help with camps as leaders, those who are giving practical help as cooks, those who are helping with transport. In every way, Lord, those who help with the running of our camps.

[ 9 : 53 ] We thank you for the encouragement it gives us to see so many children and young people coming to attend the summer camps. We pray that they will return much blessed in their souls, and that you would encourage, oh, Lord, those who seek to teach them and to give them guidance during that time. We ask your blessing, Lord, to be with us in all the activities that are listed for this week in our bulletin. We pray that you would bless these, whether they be formal times of worship or fellowships or times when we meet with others informally. Bless everything that's done in your name, we pray, and help us as we seek to go on serving you as a congregation, that you would continue, Lord, to encourage us and to provide us with further evidence that you are blessing your word amongst us and that you are taking us as your people as we take you as our God. Bless the world in which we live.

Lord, we are so conscious of so many different aspects of need in our own society and throughout the world. We pray, Lord, for those who are seeking to uphold your truth in different contexts in our own land, whether it be in our schools, other aspects of our community life.

We pray that you would bless every effort made to show the love of God and the authority of God and the gospel of God in our society. We pray for those who rule over us in Parliament.

We ask that you would bless them, and we pray that our prayer and our remembrance of them may not simply be a matter of form, but that in our hearts we will sincerely seek their good and seek for them the wisdom that you alone are able to impart. We pray that that may be their portion during such difficult times as we face. We pray tonight for those who are ill, those of our own number especially, and commend them to you again, as well as those who mourn the passing of loved ones who are always with us from week to week. Grant them your comfort. Grant them your upholding and your strengthening.

And graciously bless throughout the world, O Lord, people in such diversity and sometimes in such great need. We pray tonight again for those facing the terror of war and terrorism of different kinds, those who are fearful for their lives as they declare their faith in the Lord, those who face such opposition for having turned to the Lord and left whatever religions or lack of religion they had.

[ 12 : 36 ] We ask, Lord, that you would be pleased to bless them and encourage them in the way. We pray too for those who have come to face the difficulties of disaster. We pray again for those in India who have lost loved ones in this terrible train crash. O Lord God, we commend them to you and to your grace and to your own compassion. And we pray that you would remember them from your throne on high and give to them the way with all that they need to deal with such a calamity. And so, Lord, we ask that you'd continue to bless us as we live out our lives in this world. And Lord, whatever we may think of ourselves, help us at all times to be concerned to present you to the world as a God who is faithful, a God who is just, a God who is loving and kind, but will by no means clear the guilty.

Hear us, we pray, forgiving your sin for Jesus' sake. Amen. We'll sing again to God's praise this time, Psalm 63. Once again, let's sing Psalms in Psalm 63.

Tune is Cresselius, verses 1-8. That's on page 80. So, verses 1-8. O God, you are my God alone. I seek your face with eagerness.

My soul and body thirst for you in this dry, weary wilderness. Psalm 63, and verses 1-8. O God, you are my God alone. I seek your face with eagerness.

My soul and body thirst for you in this dry, weary wilderness.

[ 14 : 42 ] I seek your face with eagerness. I seek your face with eagerness. I seek your face with eagerness. I seek your face with eagerness. I seek your face with eagerness.

I seek your face with eagerness.

I seek your face with eagerness. Upon my bed I lie away, and in my thoughts remember you.

I meditated throughout the night, and he knew constant love in view.

Because you are my help alone, in shadow of your wings I'll sing.

[ 16 : 33 ] You hold me up with your bright hand, to you, O God, my soul will gain.

Amen.

Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him. And when he came near, he asked him, What do you want me to do for you?

He said, Lord, let me recover my sight. And Jesus said to him, Recover your sight. Your faith has made you well. And immediately he recovered his sight and followed him, glorifying God.

And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God. He entered Jericho and was passing through, and there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.

[ 18 : 28 ] And he was seeking to see who Jesus was. But on account of the crowd, he could not, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today. So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.

And when they saw it, they all grumbled, He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor.

And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold. Jesus said to him, Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Amen. May God bless again a reading of his word.

[ 19 : 39 ] Once again, we'll praise him this time from Psalm 51. Psalm number 51 in the Scottish Psalter, and singing verses 6 to 10. And the tune is St. Kilda.

Behold thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art. In wisdom thou shalt make me know within the hidden part. Do thou with hyssop sprinkle me, I shall be cleansed so.

Yea, wash thou me, and then I shall be whiter than the snow. Of gladness and of joyfulness make me to hear the voice, that so these very bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

All mine iniquities blot out. Thy face hide from my sin. Create a clean heart. Lord, renew a right spirit. Me within.

Singing these verses 6 to 10 on page 281, and the tune is St. Kilda. Behold thou in the inward parts. With truth delighted art.

[ 20 : 49 ] Behold thou in the inward parts, with truth delighted art.

And wisdom thou shalt make me know within the hidden part.

Do thou with hyssop. Do thou with hyssop. Hear ye may know within the inside.■ and of joyfulness make me to hear the voice that's all these very poems which thou hast broken

Mary rejoice all my iniquities slaughter thy face I from my shame create a in our for we you arise let me with him now please turn with me to Luke chapter 19 Luke chapter 19 the first part of the chapter there that we read a minute ago where we find the account here of change in the life of Zacchaeus a very well known Bible incident I'm sure to most of us but one of continuing interest as we look to ourselves and our relationship to the Lord well we're told here that Zacchaeus was small of stature he was a little man and I'm sure as would have been the case in most of these instances and still the case as a little man and he was obviously quite small he couldn't see over the crowd that he would have been

Zacchaeus would have been the case in the case in the case in the case in the case in the case in the case of the Lord and Zacchaeus would have met with that sort of comment many times in the history in his own history in his own experience but we're told here not only was he small in stature but he was big in terms of his riches he was rich he had plenty of money he was a chief tax collector and Jericho was a very lucrative place for tax collectors especially for the chief tax collector because I'm sure you know that chief tax collectors especially not only could gather in the taxes that were set by the government of the time but they very very often extorted extra money from the people just to fill their own pockets and for many reasons but that especially was a reason why they were hated by the public because that's the kind of ruthless attitude they had to people's lives and to people's money they were there to just make a packet they were there to fill their own pockets to make themselves rich and undoubtedly

[ 25 : 22 ] Zacchaeus fell into that sort of thinking and practice in his own life because as we'll see after the change that had come on him was made obvious he said to the Lord if I've defrauded anyone of anything I restored it fourfold and you certainly get the impression from that that Zacchaeus knew very well that he had defrauded people previously and was now making restitution as something that followed on from the change in his life but however rich he was in monetary terms this was a day that made him rich beyond measure made him rich spiritually a day that he could look back upon and say that's the day that I came really to possess true and lasting treasure that's the day I came to know Jesus that's the day I met him that's the day he changed my life that's the day when I realized that all my riches were of no avail to me if I didn't have the treasure of eternal life and that's where he was made rich beyond measure through what happened to him on this occasion and I want to just take the fact that he was a little man small of stature and just use that in our headings tonight to just work our way through this passage and we'll look first of all at the little man's big effort the effort he went to in order to come to see Jesus for himself secondly the little man's big change because the change that came over him is obvious from the way that he then speaks about himself and the way that he now sees things compared to how he once lived the little man's big change and thirdly the little man's big heart because the change that Jesus brought about in his life meant that it opened his heart to remember the needs of others and instead of lining his pockets he was actually opening up his pockets and saying Lord here is what I give

I give half of my goods to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone I restore it fourfold in other words he was going beyond the accepted level of restitution that was in society there at the time and he was saying yes I'm going beyond that I want to restore it fourfold not just twofold so these are the three points that we want to follow out briefly tonight the little man's big effort the little man's big change and the little man's big heart now the effort he made was very clear from the passage his interest in Jesus is itself of significance to us there was a man named Zacchaeus he was chief tax collector he was rich and he was seeking to see who Jesus was he had a certain curiosity about Jesus he'd heard about him no doubt he maybe had seen him or heard about his miracles or his teaching beforehand but for whatever reason he was keen to see him he was seeking to see who Jesus was maybe he had heard about him maybe he had heard some of the remarkable things that Jesus had done and that had quickened his interest and quickened his curiosity so when he heard that

Jesus was on this journey and that he came through Jericho he actually made a point of going to see who he was despite the handicap of his littleness of stature and many people begin their spiritual journey from an interest in Jesus because Jesus evokes your interest you can hardly read the gospels especially without being taken up in some way or other by how remarkable this person is and was at the time when you actually read through the gospels and you begin to realize just what a unique person Jesus was then and is it surely piques your interest to actually find out more about him and to come to know him for yourself it certainly was for this man Zacchaeus he was seeking to see who he was so he went to a great effort to actually find a vantage point where he could see him and you see the description there that Luke gives is quite detailed he was too small to look over the crowd so what did he do he ran on the head and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him for he was about to pass that way he made that sycamore tree his vantage point that he could see over the crowd then and see Jesus and see who he was and finally catch a glimpse if he had not before of this remarkable person and that was a considerable effort for a little man to actually make his way into a sycamore tree to see Jesus and he was not embarrassed to run on ahead of the crowd to climb up into this tree not necessarily the most dignified thing to do but that's what he did because he was determined to see this Jesus for himself and surely that impresses us with the question that we have to put to ourselves what sort of effort are we making to see Jesus because our vantage point you really might say is the gospel the tree if you like from which we see Jesus is the gospel and the accounts we have in the gospel about this Jesus that's our vantage point that's the point from which we look down and see Jesus if you like as he's described for us in the gospel in the Bible the point is tonight for you and for me how much of an effort how much of a concern was it on our part to come here tonight and to see Jesus for ourselves to see him spiritually

I mean to see him in the gospel to see him passing by us in the gospel as it were has it been of such significance to us that we really like this man would go to every possible effort to see Jesus for ourselves or are we just here because it's something we're used to be doing we're used to doing something that we're familiar with something of a ritual for us something of a habit well it's a very good habit I don't want to decry that but are we not here making every effort to see the Lord and concerned above everything else to meet with Jesus to see him for ourselves are we happy tonight just to stay put where we are in our lives and not make an effort to use every means that God has given us and made available to us whether it's in the word preached or in the sacrament that we had this morning which are themselves as we say vantage points from which to see Jesus

I'm not suggesting that it's by your effort or by my effort that we come to be saved that we somehow gain or build up a store of merit by which God is then obliged to bless us that's not what I'm saying but I'm saying that it's so important to know Jesus for yourself to actually see him with the eyes of your soul with the eyes of faith that's important to see him from the eyes of trust to see him from the vantage point of the gospel and say yes now I see him now I know who he is is that your burden is that your concern tonight to actually see Jesus for yourself Zacchaeus used this opportunity and despite the handicap he had he made every effort to overcome that in order to come to see Jesus for himself the little man's big effort secondly the little man's big change and the first thing you find in that is the way that he was addressed by Jesus and it's so significant that when Jesus came to the place he looked up and said

[ 34:16 ] Zacchaeus hurry and come down for I must I must stay at your house today it becomes obvious straight away as you read that that the Lord knew this this man and he knew his name and he knew all about him and he knew what was going to what was going to happen to him that day and he knew his situation and he was calling him to do something about it he gave him his individual attention and that's one of the most remarkable things about the Lord that through the gospel the Lord deals with us so personally so individually so much concern with our individual personal needs that it's as if nobody else exists in the world but ourselves because when Jesus speaks into your soul you're very conscious that he's focusing on you and he's focusing on you with an intent and a concern that really is all about your well-being it's not something in which he takes a passing interest it's not something that he does just because he thinks there's a need to do it he does it because his concern is to do you good to actually come and bless you and for you to come and receive him as this man did it's interesting isn't it the previous incident as well the blind beggar

Bartimaeus we're told his name is elsewhere very similarly to Zacchaeus when Jesus came and when he was told that it was Jesus who was passing by he cried out Jesus son of David have mercy on me and then you find that Jesus stopped and commanded him to be brought to him and so he was brought to him and there's so much theology and so much spiritual importance attached to these words Jesus stopped he did the same here with Zacchaeus he looked up into the sycamore tree where Zacchaeus had placed himself in order to see Jesus and as soon as Jesus reached the spot he actually stopped and looked up into that tree and called Zacchaeus where he was aren't you amazed at these words aren't you amazed that the son of God would actually make the time to stop over a human life in order to do that life good aren't you amazed as you read that that such a person as you know yourself to be a needy sinner who has rebelled against God who doesn't deserve the eternal life that Jesus died to secure that as he comes to speak to you through the gospel not only does he speak to you as if you're the only person in the world but he stops over you he makes it known to you and makes it clear to you

I am really intensely interested in you and in your salvation and in your well-being and where you will spend eternity he stopped and looked up to where Zacchaeus was he gave him his individual attention and divided attention as if nobody else existed in the world but then you see he called him he looked up and said to him Zacchaeus hurry and come down for I must stay at your house today and you can see that that's in the form of a summons the authority of Jesus is packed into these words the way Luke records them for us he didn't just come to Zacchaeus and look up and say would you like to come down from the tree please I've got something to say to you he said Zacchaeus hurry and come down it's a summons it's a command it's an imperative because when Jesus speaks he speaks with the authority of God the God he is it's no ordinary man and when God has a dealing with your soul and with mine you very soon become conscious that he's speaking to you in a way that no one else can and he's not speaking here to condemn him he's speaking here towards his salvation but he's speaking towards his salvation to draw him into that knowledge of himself by showing Zacchaeus

I am the king I am the Lord I'm the one who has authority over your life I'm the one that's calling you now to come down from where you are and come and see me and it's the same exactly the same in the gospel the call of Jesus in the gospel for you to come and to know him if you're here tonight and you haven't yet closed in in your heart with him and received him as Zacchaeus did that call is coming to you with the full authority of heaven with all the authority of the son of God that's why it's such a really serious thing to actually not comply with that summons from God that summons where God is calling you to himself it's such a deep and serious sin just to bypass that or let it go and not reckon with it seriously because that's really what's happening in this building tonight

I'm being addressed by God you're being addressed by God I know you're hearing a human voice in this pulpit but it's not the human voice you're listening out for though you're listening to it it's the voice of God in his word the voice of God in the exposition of his word the voice of Jesus as he looks up up to your vantage point and as you look down on him as it were in the gospel with the authority of God himself he is saying hurry up and come down respond to the fact that I'm here and you see he's saying hurry go to it now he's saying to Zacchaeus Zacchaeus hurry and come down Jesus didn't come to this sycamore tree and look up at Zacchaeus and say there look Zacchaeus you really ought to come down from there and if you want to do that that's fine but you can leave it until tomorrow if you like Zacchaeus hurry and come down for today

[ 41 : 15 ] I must abide at your house Jesus is saying I must abide at your house not just saying I'd like to do it if you actually will have me I'd like to do it if you feel it's right for me to come and spend time in your house no this is the same Jesus the same authority the same summons the same voice saying I must abide at your house and because I must abide at your house hurry and come down because I must do it today and so it is the way he's addressing you and I tonight and especially those of you who have not yet responded positively to his call on the gospel who are still not saved who have still not come to yield obedience to Christ and he's saying to you tonight today

I require of you to do this today I need to spend time in your house today I must stay at your house really rich again in spiritual imagery that isn't it because when he says here I must stay at your house today as you turn that into what the gospel is saying to you what Jesus is saying through the gospel what he's really saying amounts to the same thing I actually need I am I'm calling on you to respond so that I can make a home for myself in your soul Jesus is not asking us to actually give ourselves to him in a part time fashion as if his living in your life was just on a B&B; basis Jesus doesn't do B&B; in a spiritual sense when he comes to call us in the gospel to open up our heart to him to give him a home in our hearts he's saying that's where I want to be that's where I want to live that's where I want you to know me as the occupant of your soul not just now and again not just part time but all the time and forevermore today

I must abide I must stay at your house and what's the next thing you read so he hurried and came down and received him joyfully see the correspondence with the manner in which Zacchaeus responded and the call of Jesus the summons that Jesus gave him the summons said hurry and come down the response was he hurried and came down he didn't say to Jesus I'd like to but can I leave it till tomorrow can I leave it until I feel better about it can I feel can I leave it until I feel sure about my bearings he said he hurried and came down and received him joyfully there is no delay on the part of Zacchaeus the kind of delay that you and I know of in our own lives the kind of delay that perhaps is right now in your mind in your exercise where you're saying well I hear the call of Jesus in the gospel

I know what he's saying to me but I'm not ready yet no Jesus is saying today it's so important that you don't say tomorrow about it it's so important that you don't put it off it's so important that you respond now while you hear his voice echoing in your heart while you're aware of his summons calling you to himself you may not hear that tomorrow you may find tomorrow that it's gone you may find tomorrow that there is no sense of his summons left in your soul and you go on with your life and you die without him today I must so he hurried and came down and you see he received him joyfully if you are delaying tonight and coming to know the Lord and you're saying well it's it's my intention to come



I do want to come it is my intention I will do it well it's not just the case that you may never have the opportunity again to do it but just think of what you're doing in that very moment of saying yes I intend to do it because intention by itself means present delay and present delay equals refusal have you ever thought about delaying and coming to Christ is actually a refusal of him of his summons on your life but that's what it is what is your reason if you're delaying tonight coming to the Lord what is your reason why are you doing that would you go to himself tonight and say

[ 46 : 56 ] Lord I hear your summons I know that I ought to do it that it's my intention to do it but here is why I cannot do it now though you're calling me to do it now can you say that to the Lord of course you can't because you know he knows better than that and that as he's calling you to himself and as he's calling you to himself today here and now so he's impressing upon you you cannot afford to leave this beyond today because the delay is equal to a refusal and a refusal to the offer of the king to the claim of the king to the summons of the king is the most serious thing you can do it's the most serious thing you can do in your life and you see he received him joyfully

I love that word and you love that those of us who know the Lord love that emphasis there we can relate to it he received him joyfully Zacchaeus didn't climb down from that tree and hurry down to meet Jesus reluctantly he didn't come down from that tree and said well I have to do it I suppose I have to do it so I'll just go through with it he came down from that tree and received Jesus you see that's what it's saying he came down and received him joyfully there's such an emphasis there on an embrace by Zacchaeus of Jesus the person of Jesus and all that came to him in Jesus he received Jesus the summons was really a call to receive Jesus as his savior and he came down and he hurried and came down and he received him joyfully you had asked Zacchaeus years after this if he was still living Zacchaeus if you look back over your life what was the most important day in your life what was the thing that gave you the greatest joy there might have been many things that gave Zacchaeus great joy in his life much satisfaction but he would undoubtedly have said oh I can tell you easily what day is the most important in my life and I can tell you equally easily what it is that gives me and gave me the most joy and it is this to have Jesus as my savior to have come to receive him as he offered himself to me the most joyful day for me

Zacchaeus would say is the day I did not let Jesus stand and just go away without me responding the most joyful day for me was the day that Jesus summoned me and I responded and gladly came to receive him and surely that's how it will be for yourself surely to look back over your life and even tomorrow to look back and say well I know now what happiness really is because I received Jesus I responded as he called upon me to do and hurried to take him to myself I received him joyfully gladly with relief that's what this teaches us friends the little man's big effort and the little man's big change he was addressed by Jesus and he accepted Jesus and you can see before your eyes the change taking place

Jesus is addressing you and addressing me tonight will we also add the sub paragraph subheading that's true of Zacchaeus not only was addressed by Jesus but he accepted Jesus he received him joyfully and so thirdly you see the little man's big heart now it's important that you actually see that as soon as he received Jesus joyfully they all saw it and grumbled he has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner because receiving Jesus doesn't make for an easy life and the Lord is not saying this to us so that it will put you off receiving him or responding gladly to his call his summons to come to receive him to accept him but he's putting this in here for us so that we will have that realism that realizes that the world is going to be in many ways a different place for us when we've come to receive Jesus and people have come to realize that he has changed our lives that we've become his disciples his followers that we've become people who love him and follow him and want to obey him and commend him to the world around us but then you see you have to say well yes that makes me question whether

I should do it or not that's going to be a real challenge for you yes of course it's going to be a real challenge but who's going to be beside you who's going to strengthen you who's going to assure you as you go through with life from that point on that you receive Jesus that all is well with your soul he is he's going to be the one beside you and you can have the whole of the world beside you and in your support but if Jesus is against you what good will it do and if you have Jesus with you what harm is it going to do if the whole world is against you because it's all about being true to him and coming to know that he will never leave you he will never forsake you he'll never be untrue to his promises he'll never do anything other than what he's promised to do and to be for you so as he received him gladly he met with this opposition but he was not diverted and he was not intimidated into undoing what he had just done he came and the proof of change is in the words that he said

[ 53 : 33 ] Lord Lord behold Lord I half of my goods I give to the poor and if I have defrauded anyone of anything I restore it fourfold there's the proof of the change just see the way the passage began he was a tax collector he was rich he gleaned from people as much as he could for his own benefit but he's a different man now Christ has changed him inwardly and what he's saying here about what he's going to do outwardly in giving away half of his goods to feed the poor and restoring fourfold to anyone that he has defrauded he would never have said that before he ran up the sycamore tree what's happened to this man well Jesus has given him the kind of heart we were singing about and praying for in the prayer of

Psalms 51 create Lord in me a clean heart change my heart make it a generous heart make it a heart that reflects your generosity to me he showed that the change was real because of his vow to be generous to the poor and make restoration the change that Jesus brings is a total change not just a change of mind not just a change in the resolutions you make to yourself it's a change of heart it's a new view of life it's a new way of living it's a new way of ordering your life it's an entirely new behavior because even if we were very civil and decent people all the way through our lives that doesn't mean we don't need a new heart when God gives us that new heart takes on a whole new perspective the way it looks at the world the way it looks at the poor the way it looks at the disadvantaged the way it looks at people with a desire to support them the way it doesn't belittle people the way it doesn't disparage people who are not so well off as ourselves the way it refuses to look down upon people thinking that we somehow are best these are the evidences of a new heart that shows itself outwardly in behavior the faith that does not lead to our doing good really isn't faith the whole epistle of

James is an exposition of that great principle that point faith without works is dead if Zacchaeus had come down from that tree gone back into the house and entertained Jesus and said well it's been good having you thank you for your attention but I'm just going to go on the way that I've always lived I'm still going to rake in the taxes I'm going to be an extortioner I'm going to take as much as I can for myself it's a complete opposite it's a turnaround isn't it if he had come and still been determined to live as he lived it was a sign that he had never given his heart to the Lord but he did the little man who made the big effort the little man who experienced the big change and the little man who had come now to have the big heart today

Jesus is saying today I must abide at your house hurry don't waste time come down let's pray Lord we thank you for the way in which you address us in your word forgive us we pray any mishandling of your word that takes place in our attempt to give an exposition of its teaching forgive us Lord we pray for the many times that we do refuse to hear your voice and although we hear it refuse to comply forgive us Lord for our delays forgive us for the many times that we have heard your voice and not complied forgive us Lord even tonight if we have not been as we should be in your presence and responded as we should to your claim upon us make us thankful

Lord that we heard your voice make us thankful for your promises that are true make us thankful for the provision you make for us in the abundance of life that we have in knowing our Lord Jesus Christ and we ask that you would bless this word to us and enable us Lord from this day forth to go forth with that new resolve to be your people to be known as your people to make you known to those around us and to walk closely with you as our God hear us we pray for Jesus sake Amen well our final psalm this evening is Psalm 119 119 the Scottish Psalter version that's on page 404 we're singing four verses from verse 57 down to verse 60 tune is Belmont now my sure portion art alone which I did choose

[ 59 : 30 ] O Lord I have resolved and said that I would keep thy holy word with my whole heart I did entreat thy face and favour free according to thy gracious word be merciful to me I thought upon my former ways and did my life well try and to thy testimonies pure my feet then turned I I did not stay nor linger long as those that slothful are but hastily thy laws to keep myself I did prepare these four verses in conclusion are iph oh oh

The Lord is home, and set the time to give Thy holy word.

With my whole heart I descend thee, Thy grace and favor free.

According to Thy gracious word, He menscheeful to me.

I thought upon my former ways, And did my life well die?

[ 61 : 39 ] Until Thy testimonies pure, My feet then turneth I.

I did not sin nor linger long, As those that sorrowful are.

But history I lost to keep, Myself I did prepare.

We'll give thanks for the food prepared at the fellowship, and then after the benediction I'll go to the side door here to my left. Lord our God, we give thanks for all the provision You make for us.

And at this time we thank You for the food prepared. We thank You for those who have prepared it for us. And we pray that You would bless it to us, and help us, Lord, to wait upon You, even for our ordinary course in this life, that we may live and move and depend on You with our being.

[ 63 : 04 ] We ask that Your blessing from the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, may be our portion now and evermore. Amen. Amen. Amen.