

Sermon

God's Grace is Always More than we Realize

Pastor Lisa Giacomazza

Bacon Memorial Presbyterian Church

November 2, 2025

Today we gather around a story that shatters expectations and redefines grace. It's the story of a man named Zacchaeus—a tax collector, a social outcast, a man who had likely given up on ever being welcomed by God. And yet, in just ten verses, we witness a divine encounter that flips his world upside down.

Luke 19:1–10 isn't just about a short man climbing a sycamore tree. It's about a Savior who sees beyond our failures, our reputations, and our shame. It's about a grace that doesn't wait for us to clean ourselves up, but meets us in the branches of our brokenness and calls us by name.

Zacchaeus climbed that tree hoping to catch a glimpse of Jesus. What he didn't know was that Jesus was already looking for him. And what he received that day—a personal invitation, a transformed heart, a new purpose—was far more than he ever imagined.

So today, let's lean into this truth: **God's grace is not just sufficient—it's extravagant. It's not just available—it's personal. And it's always, always more than we imagined.**

Verse three says “He was trying to see who Jesus was...” (v. 3)

Zacchaeus was wealthy, powerful—and deeply unpopular. As a chief tax collector, he was seen as a traitor to his people. Yet, despite his status, he was spiritually hungry. He climbed a tree like a child, desperate just to catch a glimpse of Jesus.

What was Zacchaeus seeking? Did he want a changed life? Was he even aware that he needed to change? By societal measure, he had much of what we are told will bring us happiness. Wealth, power, security. And yet something in him is wanting – something inside of him is telling him to reach for something else – something different – something perhaps more meaningful. Grace begins with a stirring in the heart—a longing we can't explain. Zacchaeus didn't know what he was looking for, but grace was already drawing him in.

Did Zacchaeus climb the tree to hide amongst the branches so he could see Jesus but Jesus couldn't see him? Hoping he could find something more but not truly willing to give up what he had. Or perhaps he just felt he was too far gone – that he wasn't worthy of this transformation that his spirit so desired. It is inconsequential what Zaccheus thinks- all that truly mattered is he made himself available to be saved, to be reborn, to be remade.

And what does Jesus do? He doesn't just "see" this man – he says, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." (v. 5)

- Jesus didn't just notice Zacchaeus—He called him by name.
- He didn't wait for Zacchaeus to clean up his life. He invited Himself in.

- This wasn't just a social visit. This moment when Jesus penetrates Zaccheus's life – Jesus doesn't want some of us – he wants all. In that culture, to stay at someone's house was to extend friendship, acceptance, and honor. But that wasn't the purpose of this moment – this was the crossroads for Zaccheus and his family and his community. God's grace doesn't wait for us to be ready. It shows up, calls us by name, and says, "I'm coming in." Are we willing to let Him?

This story of transformation isn't a someday story. It is a today, right now story. Zaccheus responds to this moment of grace in a profound way – he gives away half his wealth. Willingly, joyfully, happily – and in doing so not only transforms his attitude, his spirit – he transforms the entire community – he is restored to fullness, the community is restored as well by having the provisions needed returned to them.

When grace truly touches us, it changes how we live, how we give, and how we treat others. What does radical grace look like in your life? Are you here to be seen by Jesus or are you hiding in the branches of a tree – here to listen but hoping to slip out the door or click off the view before you are noticed. Are you ready to be returned and restored to your community? Not just for your sake, but for ours! This community needs your spirit – needs your talents, your love and your dreams to help us renew and refresh what we do and how we impact those around us and in the world.

- Zacchaeus didn't earn salvation—he received it. Jesus ends with a mission statement: “The Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.” That includes Zacchaeus. That includes us.

God's grace is not just for the good, the polished, or the religious. It's for the lost. And when we receive it, we become part of His mission to share it.

Zacchaeus imagined he might see Jesus. He never imagined Jesus would see him, call him, and change him. That's the nature of grace—it always exceeds our expectations.

Where do you need to let grace surprise you today? Where do you need to extend that grace to someone else?

We all know our world is undergoing a profound transformation. The pace of change is relentless, and none of us will remain untouched. But amid the uncertainty, one truth remains: we have a Creator—a God who formed the heavens, the earth, and every soul within it. And this God created us not to stand alone, but to love one another, to lift each other up, and to receive that same love in return.

So the question is: can we truly answer that call? Can we strengthen our resolve, open our hearts, and allow ourselves to be seen—not just as individuals, but as part of something far greater than ourselves?

You are not helpless. Zacchaeus climbed that tree with a simple hope—that maybe, just maybe, he'd see Jesus. What he received was far more than

he imagined: a personal encounter, a transformed heart, and grace that spilled over into his entire household.

Let that be a reminder: give Jesus the reverence He deserves. We are here for only a short time, and though we may feel small in the vastness of creation, smallness didn't stop Zacchaeus from making a mighty impact. It shouldn't stop us either.

Believe in your divine calling. God's grace is not reserved for the polished, the perfect, or the religious elite. It's for the lost, the searching, the overlooked. And when we receive it—truly receive it—we become part of His mission to share it with the world.

Closing Prayer

Gracious and loving God, We thank You for the story of Zacchaeus—a reminder that no one is too far, too small, or too broken to be seen by You. Thank You for Your grace that reaches beyond our expectations, beyond our limitations, and beyond our past.

Today, we ask for the courage to climb whatever tree we must, to seek You with open hearts. Help us to hear Your voice calling us by name. Help us to welcome You into our lives—not just as a guest, but as Lord and Savior.

May Your grace transform us, just as it did Zacchaeus. May it stir us to love more deeply, give more freely, and live more boldly. And may we never forget: Your grace is always so much more than we imagined.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.