

**“WHO’S IN? WHO’S OUT?”****SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS****DATE: DECEMBER 26, 2021****DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker’s message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:**LUKE 19:1-10**

This week’s message in the series leans into the details. So often, we hear a story we’re familiar with, we fail to notice important nuances, the little things that offer us important clues about what’s really going on. Such is the case with Luke’s story about Zacchaeus.

He’s the little guy, the hated tax collector, who climbs into a tree to get a look at Jesus. This story is usually told in a way that casts Zacchaeus as a bad guy who has a chance encounter with Jesus and in that moment repents and is saved. The story is about repentance, transformation, and restoration, but there’s more going on than we might realize at a glance.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Who’s the shortest person you know and what’s a uniquely awesome thing about them?
2. Have you ever tried to catch a glimpse of a famous person in a crowd? If so what was that experience like?
3. What’s one thing stood out to you from the message?
4. What lesson(s) from last week’s message did you try to put into practice this week? How did that go?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what’s been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Where did this story take place and why might that be significant?
2. How does Luke describe Zacchaeus? How do you think you’d feel about him if you lived back in his day?
3. What do you notice about Zacchaeus’ behavior as he strives to see Jesus? Why is it significant?
4. How does Jesus address Zacchaeus when he sees him? What’s noteworthy or awkward about that exchange?
5. How does the crowd react to Jesus’ relationship with Zacchaeus? Why is the crowd’s reaction important? What does it tell us about what’s happening in this story?
6. What does Jesus say about Zacchaeus, who he really is? What do you think Zacchaeus felt as Jesus spoke about him?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Where do you see people in our time being a friend of folks the “good” people reject? The homeless? The “bad” people?
2. What kind of famous people might we “climb a tree” to see or connect with in our time? What about those kind of celebrity encounters attract us?
3. Where, and how, do we decide who’s “in” and who’s “out” in our culture? What are the criteria we use?
4. Where do you think we might find unlikely Jesus-followers in our day? How might we spot them?
5. Where do you think we might see Jesus affirm people in our culture who appear to be “out” and what might he say about them?

CONTINUED:

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to engage the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. If you've heard about Zacchaeus before, how do you feel about the new insights this message offers about a relatively familiar story?
2. Who might you ask about how you appear to follow Jesus? Who is your Zacchaeus person? What might an "outsider" like that say about you? Are you willing to ask them and why or why not?
3. How does Luke's story about Zacchaeus challenge you? What part(s) in particular confronted your preconceptions?
4. Where have you made assumptions about friends, neighbors, family, or co-workers and their relationship (or lack of relationship) with Jesus? How has this teaching challenged you to re-examine your assumptions?
5. How do you decide if *you* are in or out? What do you base that judgment on? Are you satisfied with your self-assessment? Why or why not?

LIVE IT OUT: *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one prompts and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Pray for a specific person this week who, in light of this message, may be more "in" than you thought. Ask God to deepen your relationship with them so you can share a closer and more expressed friendship that includes Jesus.
2. Talk with God, maybe go for a walk or journal about this: ask him to deconstruct (in a good sense, like Thomas in John 20) any unhelpful preconceptions you have about how Jesus makes followers of the people he meets. Ask for a Spirit-led sensitivity to expressions of Jesus' initiative that you may have missed in the past.
3. Remember someone you may have cheated, even unintentionally, and make amends. Be exceedingly generous with any reparations. Do so as an expression of love and devotion to Jesus without expectation that the person you wronged will receive you kindly. Leave the outcome in God's hands.