

The 15th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, September 1, 2024

“Close Encounters: The Unworthy Tax Collector”

Luke 19:1-10

The people around us can sometimes fail to recognize our _____ and see us not as a masterpiece, but as a cheap knock-off or fake. When this happens, we can find ourselves discarded or _____.

One of the most basic human needs is to know that we’re OK, and that we’ve got what it takes, that we’re _____, that our life matters, that we’re needed, that we have meaning and purpose, and that we’re _____ for who we are.

Unfortunately, we live in a world that tricks us into believing that we can satisfy this basic need—that we can find our value and worth—in _____ things.

The 4 “A’s” of WORLDLY WORTH

- ◆ _____ How do I look? The better I _____, the more worthy I am in people’s eyes.
- ◆ _____ What have I accomplished? “If I am _____, then they’ll accept me.”
- ◆ _____ How well am I liked? If people _____ me, I must be o _____
- ◆ _____ Do I have it all? Things will _____ my value.

None of these standards are _____—they’re constantly changing—and there’s always going to be someone who is _____ than we are.

Our sense of value and worth needs to be based on something that doesn’t _____, but that will last. And there’s only one thing that doesn’t change—one thing that’s going to stand the test of time—and that’s what God _____ of us.

“I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.” (Jeremiah 31:3)

When we understand that our value and our worth come not from external things, but from the fact that we were made in God’s _____ and that He _____ us with an everlasting love, we begin to see ourselves differently. This shift in understanding plays an important role in the _____

_____ of our hearts.

“A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.” (Lk 19:1-4)

By the world’s standards, Zacchaeus may have had a lot going for him, yet he was _____ bankrupt. Here was a guy who had it all, yet something was _____.

3 TRUTHS THAT UNCOVER OUR HIDDEN VALUE

Truth #1. Jesus _____ us.

Luke tells us that when Jesus entered the city of Jericho, Zacchaeus was _____ to see Him.

2 SIGNS OF ZACCHAEUS’ DESPERATION

- ◆ _____ There was something inside Zacchaeus that made him _____.
- ◆ _____ He was willing to take a _____ and step out because he had nothing to _____.

“When Jesus came by, He looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! For I must be a guest in your home today.” (Luke 19:5)

Jesus not only knew Zacchaeus’ name, but also his _____.

Like Zacchaeus, we can find ourselves up a tree at times—we can find ourselves out on a limb—when we believe that because of what’s happening in our life that God has _____ us.

God is not only there, He’s also _____.

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight. But even the hairs of your head are all counted. Do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.” (Luke 12:7)

The deepest expression of love is _____.

What kinds of things have you done to get attention?

Truth #2. Jesus _____ us.

Jesus acknowledged that Zacchaeus was a _____—that he had value and worth—that he had a unique identity—that he had a unique _____.

Jesus _____ him up, while everybody else was putting him down.

HOW VALUABLE ARE WE TO GOD?

- ◆ God _____ you long before He knit you together in your mother's womb; long before the foundation of the universe. And at just the right moment, God _____ you in His _____.
- ◆ Jesus _____ for you—for all the wrong things you've done and will do.
- ◆ God put His _____ within you to _____ and equip you.
- ◆ God wants you to _____ with Him forever in _____.

VALUE IS DETERMINED BY

#1. The _____ who made it.

“Everything God created is good and nothing is to be rejected if it's received with thanksgiving.” (1 Timothy 4:4)

#2. How much someone is willing to _____ for it.

“God paid for you with the precious life blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God.” (1 Peter 1:19)

“Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion for the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you. See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands!” (Isaiah 49:15)

Where do you find your sense of worth? How valued do you feel?

Truth #3. Jesus _____ us.

One of the greatest _____ of Christianity is that no matter who you are or what you've done, God still wants to have a _____ with you.

“But the crowds were displeased” they said, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner.’” (Luke 19:7)

Like Zacchaeus, we've all done things that have _____ others—and not one of us here this morning is _____. Thankfully, in His grace and mercy; in His compassion and love, Jesus is far more interested in _____ us than He is in _____ us—and His love for us is _____.

“But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.” (Lk 15:20)

Our Heavenly Father longs for us to come _____—He longs to shower us with His _____ and welcome us when we return to Him.

Jesus always promises to _____ us when we come to Him.

Have you experienced Jesus' unconditional love for you?

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Zacchaeus had an encounter that day that _____ his life forever.

“Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, ‘I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have overcharged people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much.’ Jesus responded, ‘Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost.’” (Luke 19: 8-10)

The story of Zacchaeus shows us that Jesus came to seek and save the _____, so that He can _____ us to our original beauty and display us for all the world to see.

What area of your life or heart might benefit from a little restoration?

When was the last time you experienced Jesus?

Zacchaeus was willing to climb a tree to encounter Jesus—what are you willing to do?