



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK 1

We began a new series of messages for the season of Lent (40 days, not counting Sundays, that lead up to Easter). We took a look at a tax collector named Zacchaeus who was the least likely to have an encounter with Jesus. He was despised because of his practice of collecting taxes for Rome and cheating people for his own gain. On top of that, he was short. When Jesus came in a crowd Zacchaeus had to find a high point to even catch a glimpse. We're considering our own desire to see Jesus move through our towns, neighborhoods, and homes. May you experience an increased longing to see Jesus this Lenten season.

Peace of Christ,
Dr. Mark Youngman
Pastor of Discipleship

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt. Pray using words from this song of worship.

God,
Open my eyes, Lord,
I want to see Jesus,
to reach out and touch him,
and say that I love him.
Open my ears, Lord,
and help me to listen.
Open my eyes, Lord,
I want to see Jesus.
Amen.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 19.1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy.³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see

over the crowd.⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

⁸ But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.”¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

- Zacchaeus was wealthy and unpopular. All he really had going for him was a curiosity about Jesus. He was so curious, in fact, that he was willing to risk even more ridicule and climb a tree in order to overcome his height disadvantage. It seems like all he really wanted to do was to see who Jesus was. It turned out that in order to really see who Jesus was, he needed to spend time with him—up close and personal. Jesus noticed being noticed and invited himself to Zacchaeus’ home—bringing salvation with him. **Do you know of people who are curious about Jesus but not so sure about getting too close? Is that you? Have you had your life changed by risking an encounter with Jesus?**
- *Jesus, I’ve heard that you are on the move in my land. I want to see you today and hear your voice calling me to come closer. Amen.*

TUESDAY: PROVERBS 8.15-19

By me kings reign

and rulers issue decrees that are just;

¹⁶ *by me princes govern,*

and nobles—all who rule on earth.

¹⁷ *I love those who love me,*

and those who seek me find me.

¹⁸ *With me are riches and honor,*

enduring wealth and prosperity.

¹⁹ *My fruit is better than fine gold;*

what I yield surpasses choice silver.

- The Wisdom of God is speaking here. There is a promise of God’s goodness bearing fruit in the life of one who seeks God. It may not always feel like we find God every time we look for God, but if we search out of a heart of love for God, we will find Him. **Do you ever feel like God is intentionally hiding in a crowd? In what ways are you seeking God right now?**
- *God of Wisdom, I long for you more than fine gold and choice silver. Let me find you in my searching today. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: PSALM 63.1-4

*You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water.
² I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
³ Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
⁴ I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.*

- The imagery from this Psalm draws us in. We know what it feels like to literally be thirsty for water. Our bodies know when we are dehydrated and desperate. We are designed to thirst for the very thing that can bring us back to life. **Have you ever felt a desperate longing for God apart from the things that God can do for you?**
- *God, this Psalm is my prayer today: I thirst for you. I have seen you and beheld your power and glory. I praise you in my desperate state—quench my thirst with your overwhelming presence. Amen.*

THURSDAY: MATTHEW 7.7-8

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

- These words were spoken at the tail end of the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon taught us what the Kingdom of God looks like. Taken out of context, the verses of Matthew 7.7-8 have often led to a “vending machine” view of God. Ask and out comes the answer to your request. The promise is really this—if we have the heart and mind of Christ within us, then our seeking and knocking will be a search for the things of God. The good news is that even when our prayers come solely from our human perspective, God is kind and gracious and will give us what we need as we seek after Jesus. **What are you asking God for today?**
- *Jesus, in your name I knock and seek after God’s will for my life today. Amen.*

FRIDAY: 2 CHRONICLES 7.13-14

“When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people,¹⁴ if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

- This word from God to Solomon came after the completion of the temple—an enormous undertaking that required determination and at least a little bit of pride. God said to Solomon, *it’s time for humility, it’s time to seek my face and repent.* We often think of seeking God and God’s forgiveness as an individual pursuit, but here it is clear that the people need to collectively repent. **Are you a part of a community that collectively seeks God and collectively repents?**

- *God, speak these words to my community. Give me courage to lead the charge if you choose. We want to build great things for you, but only out of humility, prayer, and repentance. Amen.*

SATURDAY: PSALM 34.4-5

*I sought the LORD, and he answered me;
he delivered me from all my fears.*

⁵*Those who look to him are radiant;
their faces are never covered with shame.*

- There is a deep connection between asking and receiving. God wants to hear our desires so that he can form us in them AND so that He can answer us. King David was experiencing fear and shame, and by crying out to God, he found his life again. **What prevents you from crying out to God? Is it a doubt that he listens or cares? Risk seeking after God and pay attention to God's answers.**
- *God, I cry out to you all of my fears. I trust in you and want to be one who radiates your glory. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Re-read Luke 19.1-10.

- Zacchaeus was in a line of work that put him at odds with a large portion of society. Who fills that role in our society today?
- Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus—and he wasn't alone. Jesus, with his teaching and healing, was causing quite a spectacle everywhere he went. But Zacchaeus was short and could have very easily missed Jesus as he passed by. Do you ever feel at risk for missing Jesus as he comes by? What are the barriers you need to overcome in order to see him?
- Zacchaeus was seen by Jesus. We have evidence that Jesus didn't need Zacchaeus to climb a tree in order to see him. He saw invisible people all the time. But the tree was more about Zacchaeus being able to see that Jesus saw him. It is easy for us to write off Jesus' desire to see us, but when Jesus called out directly to Zacchaeus and invited himself over for dinner, everything changed. Do you have a sense that Jesus is inviting himself to your house today? How can you prepare for him? What might be changed by welcoming him into your home?