

SEPTEMBER 05 ---- **WHY AM I NOT WHERE I WANT TO BE**
Luke 19:1-10

CONTINUING IN OUR SERIES THE BASIC OF OUR FAITH

Today were looking at the question:

WHY AM I NOT WHERE I WANT TO BE?

This concerns the question about,

How can we be good and bad in the same day?

How is it that we can desire to do right but end up doing wrong?

Complimenting a person one minute, and gossiping about them the next?

Singing praise to God and cursing his name.

Wanting to walk in perfection but falling to temptation and sin?

We are a dual-natured people.

Living with our carnality and our spirituality.

A survey asked college student to check which one of the following fit them?

1. I am extraordinarily generous, ecstatically loving of the right person, supremely knowledgeable about what is wrong with the country, and about people, capable of moments of insight unsurpassed by any scientist or artist or writer in the country.
2. I am of all people in the world probably the most selfish, hateful, envious (take pleasure in reading death notices in the newspaper and hearing of heart attacks), the most treacherous, the most frightened, and above all the phoniest. (Walker Percy)

The surprising thing was that 60 % of all students checked both.

There are times when we become so taken with ourselves

We become the star of the show and

Everyone else, including God, are just stagehands.

And then there are times when we can't see ourselves more than a stagehand.

Because we are too comfortable with low expectations and our limitations.

Either way this kind of thinking can cause us

To miss out on the kind of life that God wants for us.

Thomas Merton said:

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end... But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you.

The man in our scripture today asked the question

WHY AM I NOT WHERE I WANT TO BE?

That man was a Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus was a Tax collector for Rome.

But he was more than that.
 He was the Chief tax collector
 That meant that he was not only the richest man in town,
 But he was the most despised man.

The Jewish law at the time said: "If a murderer comes into your house, you are to scrub the area in which he stood. If a tax collector comes into your house, you are to scrub the entire house."

To add insult to injury Zacchaeus was
 not only an overcharging loan shark,
 But he was a Jew who had sold out his own people

Zacchaeus was not happy with this life.
 So he went out to see Jesus .
 He climbed into a Sycamore tree.
 Jesus met him under the Sycamore tree.
 Went to his house
 And he was never the same again.
The Good , the Bad and the Ugly,
 Were all characteristics of Zacchaeus
 Just as they are of us.
 Because no other creature in all creation is capable of what we are.

On the one hand we establish Habitat for Humanity houses,
 and the other Holocaust furnaces.
 We ship great semis of goods collected for the Hurricane victims while others
 Loot the very stuff we have shipped.
 We set up rescue and shelters for abandoned children
 And still abuse the children in our homes.
 We are capable of love and compassion, hate and cruelty and mass destruction
 Paul said:

**I do the things I don't want to do and what I hate I do. What a wretched man I am!
 Who will rescue me from this body of death? Romans 7:16, 24**

Jesus went to Zacchaeus home and the stingy miserly, loan shark –changed
**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." Luke 19:8**

Friends I want to warn you this morning that
 It is a dangerous thing for you to meet Jesus here!
 Because you will never be the same again.

What happened to Zacchaeus

WHY WAS HE NOT WHERE HE WANTED TO BE?

I'm afraid as a Jew he lost his focus.

WE ARE NOT WHAT WE WANT TO BE BECAUSE

1. WE LOSE OUR FOCUS

Zachaeus lose his focus:

To love the Lord your God with all your heart soul, mind, and strength and your neighbor as yourself. Matthew 22:37-38

No one plans on taking a wrong turn.

Nobody nurses a grudge in hopes of becoming a bitter, resentful person.

I don't think there is a mother that gave birth to a child

intending to be to busy that her kids don't know her.

I don't think there's a teenager here who intended to become addicted

To Alcohol or drugs when they took that first beer or smoke.

Nor did they intend to have a child when they went out on that date.

Galatians 5:1 It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

IN other words don't loose your focus.

Paul list the things were to focus on:

Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Philippians 4:8

Stay the course **OR** you will face the consequences

A camp counselor was sharing how God created everything with a purpose:

Clouds and trees rocks and rivers.

One campers ask: Why did God create poison ivy?

The poor counselor struggled with that until another camper said:

“The reason God made poison ivy is that He wanted us to know that there are certain things we should keep our cotton-pickin' hands off of!”

I AM NOT WHERE I WANT TO BE, BECAUSE

1. LOSE FOCUS

2. PEOPLE SIDETRACK AND CONFUSE US

I Corinthians 15:33 Do not be misled: “Bad company corrupts good character.”

People can sidetrack us!

A lady walked into a drug store and told the pharmacist she needed some cyanide.

The pharmacist said, "Why in the world do you need cyanide?"

The lady said, she needed to poison her husband.

The pharmacist's eyes got big and said, "I can't give you cyanide to kill your husband!

That's against the law! I'll lose my license, they'll throw both of us in jail! Absolutely not!" The lady reached into her purse and pulled out a picture of her husband

in bed with the pharmacist's wife. The pharmacist looked at the picture and replied,
"Well, now. You didn't tell me you had a prescription."

**Zacchaeus didn't intend to rob his own people.
 He probably had been an outstanding man in the synagogue.
 But his association with Rome and all its corruptions and
 its lies and deception rubbed off on his morals.**

**Come back to your sense as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are
 ignorant of God—I say this to your shame. I Corinthians 13:34**

People can wear us down, confuse us--Even children.

Three little boys were bragging about how tough they were.

"I'm so tough," said the first boy, "that I can wear out a pair of shoes in a week."

the second little boy said, "Well, I'm so tough, I can wear out a pair of jeans in a day."

The third boy, said: "That's nothing I'm so tough, I can wear out a pair of grandparents,
 in just one hour."

Why am I not where I want to be?

BECAUSE OF PEOPLE, YES,

BUT ALSO BECAUSE OFF

3. WE LIMIT OURSELVES

THROUGH IMPERFECT THINKING & LOW EXPECTATIONS

I believe all his life Zacchaeus thought he wasn't good enough.

**Bible says: He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not,
 because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed into a sycamore-fig tree to see
 him, since Jesus was coming that way. Luke 19:3-4**

Sometime physical limitations can cause us insecurity in all our lives.

I believe Zacchaeus struggled all his life wanting to see and be more than he was.

But he was always came up too short.

Great expectation but no results.

So he tuned his back on his faith and his family and his God.

How is your thinking today?

I believe there are people here today

Who feel they are not good enough for God to use them?

So they just let themselves be used by the world.

But remember the next time you feel God can't use you.

~ Noah was a drunk

~ Abraham was too old

~ Jacob was a liar

~ Leah was ugly

~ Moses stuttered

- ~ Samson had long hair and was a womanizer
- ~ Rahab was a prostitute
- ~ Jeremiah was too young
- ~ David was an adulterer and a murderer
- ~ Isaiah preached naked
- ~ Jonah ran from God
- ~ Naomi was a widow
- ~ Job went bankrupt
- ~ John the Baptist ate bugs
- ~ Martha was a worrier
- ~ The Samaritan woman was divorced (more than once)
- ~ Timothy had an ulcer
- ~ Lazarus was dead!
- ~ Zaccheus was too small

God used every one of them.

Don't let your imperfect thinking and missed expectations keep you from Serving God.

WE ARE NOT WHERE WE WANT TO BE, BECAUSE 4. WE STOP PRAYING AND LET DOWN OUR GUARD

Zacchaeus stopped praying

Because of his profession he was forbidden to enter the synagogue.

Forbidden to take part in the sacrifices and feast days.

When he stopped praying

He started decaying.

Jesus said to the disciples in the garden

Watch therefore and pray that you enter not into temptation. Matthew 22:46

In other words when we stop praying our guard began to fall down.

I heard the prayer of an alcoholic businessman,
as he got ready for a company party. He prayed:
Dear God, help me not to drink any alcohol.
But if I do, help me not to drink too much.
But if I do, help me not to get drunk.
But if I do, help me not to faint.
But if I do, help me to fall face down, so my name tag won't show."

That not quite the prayer Jesus was talking about.

Ephesians 6:18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.

The Church is not made up of the whole people,
rather of the broken people who find wholeness
in a Christ who was broken for us." Mike Yaconelli said:

Charles Wesley wrote

He breaks the power of canceled sin,

**He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me.**

**I AM NOT WHERE I WANT TO BE, BECAUSE
5. DELAY AND POSTPONE ----THE OPPORTUNITY**

Jesus said to Zacchaeus

"Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." Luke 19:5

Jesus gave Zacchaeus an opportunity.

He could have missed it.

He could have stayed in the tree

Said well what about tomorrow.

But the bible says;

So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. Luke 19:5-6

Felix the Roman emperor after hearing Paul

Said; Go away for now. Almost you have persuaded me.

Do you know how many people will be in hell because of **almost.**

Almost believed.

Almost saved

Almost prayed

“Almost persuaded” now to believe;

“Almost persuaded” Christ to receive;

Seems now some soul to say,

“Go, Spirit, go Thy way,

Some more convenient day

On Thee I’ll call.”

“Almost persuaded,” harvest is past!

“Almost persuaded,” doom comes at last!

“Almost” cannot avail;

“Almost” is but to fail!

Sad, sad, that bitter wail—

“Almost,” but lost!

-Phillip Bliss 1871

Today God is merciful and just and he will give every one of you

That same opportunity that he gave Zacchaeus

To come down

To come down from our loneliness

To come down from your emptiness.

To come down from your self-centeredness, and sinfulness..

To come down from what you are to what you want to be.

Freddie Mercury, lead singer of the British rock group Queen,

Who died at the end of 1991, wrote in one of his last songs on
 “The Miracle Album,

Does anybody know what we are living for?”

in an interview shortly before his death he said,

“You can have everything in the world and still be the loneliest man,
 an that is the most bitter type of loneliness. Success has brought me world idolization and
 millions of pounds, but it’s prevented me from having the one thing we all need—a
 loving, ongoing relationship.”

Today, Maybe you are not happy with who you are

Maybe like Zacchaeus your not happy with what you have become.

The good news is that you don’t have to stay that way.

Make a decision to come down to Jesus.

Make a decision to believe God’s word.

Make a decision to invite the Holy Spirit into your life.

Make a decision to walk in new life with Christ,

And meet with like minded believers.

And then you will hear Jesus say to you what he said to Zacchaeus:

**"Today salvation has come to this house....For the Son of Man came to seek and to
 save what was lost." Luke 19:9a-10**

Will you pray with me to come back home to Jesus?

And discover all that God intended for you to be?

LET PRAY TOGETHER THE PRAYER YOU SEE ON THE SCREEN.

Lord God,

I feel your invitation on my life today.

I want you to come into my heart.

Come into my home.

Come into my life.

Let me walk in new life with Christ,

and with like-minded believers.

I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.