

Faith At Work: ACCEPTED!

Scripture used: [Romans 15:7 \(NLT\)](#); [Luke 19:1–8 \(NLT\)](#)

OVERVIEW

As we continue our focus on formation, we return to the central question: *Who am I becoming?* This week's message explored how acceptance plays a foundational role in that process. If faith is meant to work *in us*, *between us*, and ultimately *through us*, then we must first understand what we receive from God before we can practice it with others. This week, we go deep with the idea of acceptance, summarized by the truth: "*You are claimed before you change.*" Pastor Hurmon shared personally about growing up with deep wounds of rejection—being disowned by his father, marked physically by injury, and excluded socially. Those experiences shaped a belief that he was fundamentally unacceptable. Many people carry that same belief, whether consciously or not. Scripture shows us that Jesus consistently moves toward people who feel unacceptable to the world. Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector, embodied this reality. He was despised by his community, enriched himself through exploitation, and was seen—and saw himself—as morally beyond repair. Yet Jesus did something unexpected. He saw Zacchaeus fully, called him by name, and chose to stay at his house. Before Zacchaeus changed his behavior, Jesus extended acceptance. That acceptance created space for repentance, generosity, and transformation to follow.

KEY POINTS

1. **Formation begins with what we receive from God.** Faith grows as we ask two questions: *What do I receive from God?* and *What do I practice with others?* We cannot give what we have not first received.
2. **Acceptance means being claimed before being changed.** Jesus did not approve of Zacchaeus' actions, but He loved him without reservation. Grace does not excuse sin—it creates the space where change becomes possible.
3. **The crowd is not the Christ.** Zacchaeus refused to let the crowd keep him from Jesus. Christians are works in progress, and sometimes we send the wrong signals. We must encounter Jesus for ourselves.
4. **Grace cannot be earned or lost.** As [Ephesians 2:8 \(NIV\)](#) reminds us, grace is God's free gift. We don't need agreement to practice acceptance, and radical acceptance does not mean tolerating abuse or harm.
5. **Acceptance leads to transformation.** Once accepted, Zacchaeus responded with repentance, generosity, and surrender—calling Jesus "Lord," giving away half his wealth, and restoring what he had taken.

DISCUSSION

- 1) **HEAR** - Where have you believed that you were unacceptable to God or others? How might that belief be shaping your relationships or the behavior you tolerate from others?
- 2) **UNDERSTAND** - In [Luke 19:1–8](#), Jesus calls Zacchaeus by name and chooses to stay with him before Zacchaeus changes his behavior. How does this reflect [Romans 15:7](#) and what does it reveal about how Christ has accepted **you** personally?
- 3) **DO** - Practice these affirmations daily this week:
 - With God, I am radically accepted.
 - With God, I am radically loved.
 - With God's love, I will learn to radically accept others.

- With God's help, I will learn to radically love.