

Sermon Notes | December 14th, 2025, | The well Community church – Indian Service

Greetings in the name of the LORD and Savior JESUS CHRIST, welcome to the well community church – Indian service,

JOY TO THE WORLD – WHEN JOY COMES HOME

Luke 19:1–10

1. JOY SEEKS US EVEN WHEN WE ARE HIDING

Luke 19 opens with a powerful but simple statement: *“Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through.”* At first glance, it seems like Jesus is just moving on to the next place, Jesus was not wandering; He was seeking. Jericho was not on His way by accident. There was a man there whose heart was searching even before he realized it.

The Bible introduces Zacchaeus as a chief tax collector and very rich. That description is important because it tells us two things at once: he was powerful and he was lonely. He had wealth but no peace. He had position but no joy. In that culture, tax collectors were despised. They were seen as traitors, sinners, collaborators with oppression. Zacchaeus may have been rich, but he was spiritually bankrupt.

Verse 3 tells us that Zacchaeus *“wanted to see who Jesus was.”* That one line reveals the hunger of a soul. He did not want to see a miracle. He did not ask for healing. He simply wanted to see Jesus. Joy always begins with a desire to see Jesus clearly. Many people want blessings, solutions, or relief, but joy begins when the heart says, “I just want Him.”

Yet Zacchaeus could not see Jesus because of the crowd and because he was short. This is not just a physical description; it is a spiritual picture. Sometimes what blocks us from seeing Jesus is not our sin alone but the crowd opinions, labels, rejection, past failures, and what people say about us. Zacchaeus was literally small in stature, but he was also made to feel small by society.

So he runs ahead and climbs a sycamore tree. This is shocking behavior for a wealthy, respected official. Rich men do not run. Important men do not climb trees. But hunger will make you do what dignity will not. When joy is missing, pride must fall. Zacchaeus did not care how foolish he looked because desperation is louder than reputation.

Here is the beauty of the gospel: Zacchaeus thought he was seeking Jesus, but in reality, Jesus was already seeking him. Luke 19:10 tells us clearly, *“For the Son of Man came to*

seek and to save the lost." Joy to the world is not about us finding God, it is about God coming after us. Even when we are hiding behind trees, behind sins, behind smiles, behind success, Jesus knows exactly where we are.

Joy begins when we realize this truth: we are more wanted than we ever imagined.

2. JOY CALLS US BY NAME AND INVITES US DOWN

Verse 5 is one of the most personal moments in all of Scripture: *"When Jesus reached the spot, He looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.'"* Jesus stops. He looks up. He calls him by name.

Zacchaeus had never met Jesus before, yet Jesus knew his name. This is not information; this is revelation. Jesus knows us before we know Him. He knows our name, our story, our wounds, and our secrets. Joy erupts when we realize that we are personally known by God.

Notice that Jesus does not begin with correction. He does not mention Zacchaeus's sins, his dishonesty, or his reputation. Grace always speaks before repentance. Jesus does not say, "Change first, then I will come." He says, "Come down, I must stay with you today." Joy does not wait for perfection. Joy arrives with presence.

The word *"must"* is powerful. Jesus is saying, "This is not optional. This is divine necessity." Salvation is not a random act; it is God's determined mission. Jesus did not say, "If you clean up your life, I might visit." He said, "I must stay at your house today." Joy does not come because we deserve it; joy comes because God desires us.

Zacchaeus comes down at once and welcomes Jesus gladly. The joy is immediate. When Jesus calls us, delay only deepens misery. Obedience releases joy. But notice the reaction of the crowd: *"All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'"* Religion always complains when grace is extended. The same crowd that blocked Zacchaeus from seeing Jesus now criticizes Jesus for seeing Zacchaeus.

But joy is not controlled by public opinion. If your joy depends on people's approval, it will always be fragile. Zacchaeus did not argue with the crowd. He did not defend himself. He focused on Jesus. Joy grows when Jesus becomes louder than the crowd.

This moment teaches us something crucial: Jesus does not wait for us to climb down before He calls us; His call gives us the courage to climb down.

3. JOY TRANSFORMS THE HEART AND THE HANDS

Verse 8 is the turning point: *"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.'"* This is not emotional joy; this is transformational joy. When Jesus enters a life, something shifts from the inside out.

Zacchaeus does not promise change tomorrow. He says, "Here and now." Joy does not procrastinate obedience. Salvation is not passive; it is active. Notice that Jesus never asked him to give anything. True joy gives freely because it is no longer empty.

Half of his possessions to the poor would have been radical generosity. Paying back four times what he cheated goes beyond the Law. The Law required repayment plus interest, but Zacchaeus goes further. Joy does not ask, "What is the minimum?" Joy asks, "How can I make it right?"

This moment reveals a deep truth: repentance is not punishment, it is freedom. Zacchaeus is not losing wealth; he is losing chains. Money no longer owns him. Sin no longer defines him. His joy is no longer tied to accumulation but to restoration.

Many people want forgiveness without transformation. They want joy without surrender. But biblical joy always changes behavior. Grace does not excuse sin; it empowers change. When Jesus enters the heart, the hands follow. When joy fills the soul, generosity flows naturally.

This is where the gospel becomes visible. Zacchaeus's faith was not proven by words but by actions. The same hands that once took dishonestly now give generously. That is what joy does, it rewrites our story.

4. JOY IS SALVATION THAT COMES HOME

Jesus concludes with a powerful declaration: *"Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham."* Notice the word *"today."* Salvation is not postponed. Joy is not delayed. When Jesus comes in, salvation arrives immediately.

Salvation came not just to Zacchaeus but to his house. Joy is never meant to stay private. When Jesus enters one life, He impacts families, homes, and generations. Zacchaeus's house was once a place of greed; now it is a place of grace. The address did not change, but the atmosphere did.

Jesus restores Zacchaeus's identity: "*a son of Abraham.*" Society called him a sinner, a traitor, a thief but Jesus called him family. Joy is restored identity. When Jesus saves us, He does not just forgive us; He reclaims us.

Then Jesus gives the mission statement of His life: "*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*" That is why this passage fits perfectly in the series JOY TO THE WORLD. Joy came to the world because Jesus came looking for the lost. Joy is not seasonal. Joy is salvational.

This is the invitation for us today. Maybe joy has been missing in your life. Maybe Jesus has been near, but you've been hiding. Maybe you've been climbing trees of success, distraction, or religion, hoping to catch a glimpse. Today, Jesus stops, looks up, calls your name, and says, "I must come to your house."

Joy to the world is not just a song we sing at Christmas.

Joy to the world is a Savior who comes close, calls us by name, enters our lives, transforms our hearts, and brings salvation home.

Today, joy can come to your house.

MISSIONARY ILLUSTRATION: JOY THAT CHOSE OBEDIENCE OVER GLORY

When Jesus said, "*The Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost,*" He was not only speaking about His mission on earth—He was calling people to follow Him with the same joyful obedience. One powerful example of this kind of joy-filled obedience is found in the life of Eric Liddell.

Eric Liddell was a world-class athlete from Scotland, best known for winning a gold medal in the 1924 Olympic Games. He was fast, disciplined, admired, and celebrated. The world applauded him. Fame, success, and honor were within his grasp. But Eric Liddell had already settled one unshakable truth in his heart—his joy came from pleasing God, not from pleasing people.

At the height of his athletic career, Eric Liddell made a decision that shocked the world. He refused to run his strongest race because it was scheduled on a Sunday. He believed the Lord's Day belonged to God. He did not protest loudly. He did not condemn others. He simply obeyed with peace and joy. Many criticized him. Newspapers mocked him. But Liddell was calm, because joy anchored him deeper than public opinion.

Later, against all expectations, he ran a different race and won gold. But even that victory was not the defining moment of his life.

At the peak of his fame, Eric Liddell walked away from international glory and returned to China as a missionary, following the same path his parents had begun years earlier. He did not go as a hero; he went as a servant. He taught children, preached the gospel, and lived quietly among the people. He believed joy was not meant to be displayed on a podium but demonstrated in daily faithfulness.

During World War II, Eric Liddell was imprisoned in a Japanese internment camp. Conditions were harsh. Food was scarce. Hope was thin. Yet those who survived the camp later testified to one remarkable truth: Eric Liddell was the most joyful person there. He gave away his food, encouraged the weak, mediated conflicts, and cared for children. Even in suffering, joy lived in him.

Eric Liddell eventually died in that camp, just months before liberation. To the world, it looked like a wasted life. But to heaven, it was a life fully spent in obedience and joy.

Why does this story belong in Luke 19? Because Zacchaeus also stood at a crossroads. He could cling to wealth and reputation, or he could welcome Jesus and be transformed. Zacchaeus chose joy over security. Eric Liddell chose joy over success. Both understood that joy is not found in what we achieve, but in whom we obey.

Eric Liddell once said, *"God made me fast, and when I run, I feel His pleasure."* Later, he could have said with equal confidence, *"God sent me to serve, and when I obey, I feel His joy."*

Joy to the world means joy that chooses obedience when no one is watching, joy that enters homes and hearts, joy that values salvation more than success. Just as joy entered Zacchaeus's house and transformed his life, joy entered Eric Liddell's heart and shaped his mission.

May the LORD bless you.