

**“Back to the Basics Part 1: The Journey;
“Encounters that Transform Us”**

In our sermon series, Back to the Basics, The Journey, we are focusing on the basics of our Christian Faith. This week we look at Encounters that Transform us. I believe one of the basics of the Christian faith is the power that Christ has to transform human beings. In fact, I believe that part of the deep truth of the church is that we are transformed in our community through the relationships we have with God and each other. The scriptures this week are a reminder of how an encounter with Jesus can turn a life upside down and how God continues the good begun through that encounter. Pastor Cindy

Things I'd like to remember from today's sermon: **“Encounters that Transform Us”**

Prayer for the Week

Lord, we pray for strength and trust in times of trouble. Equip us to be your hands and feet in the world. May we bring good news to all we meet this day, with our words and our lives. May your transforming love and grace be made real in all we say and do. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen

This week's sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, 9/18/17 Luke 19:1-6

This story is very familiar for people who were raised in the church and attended Sunday School and Vacation Bible School as children. Many learned this song and these verses basically by singing it, "Zacchaeus was a wee little man, a wee little man was he!" We have assumed that it is Zacchaeus who was short, but scripture is not terribly clear, only that Zacchaeus couldn't see. The song ends with Jesus going with Zacchaeus to his house. Zacchaeus was happy to have Jesus come to his home. Who wouldn't be? By this time, Jesus is quite the celebrity and everyone wanted to be in his presence. Do you think Zacchaeus was surprised by Jesus' response? *What kind of encounter in those first moments do you think occurred between Jesus and Zacchaeus?*

Tuesday, 9/19 /17 Luke 19: 4-7

Let's go back to re-read a couple of verses from yesterday and add verse 7. Zacchaeus climbed a tree to see Jesus, which was not very dignified for a grown man. For whatever reason, Zacchaeus wanted very much to see Jesus. When Jesus sees him and invites himself to Zacchaeus house, Zacchaeus was happy, but many others were not. "Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.'" (CEB) Tax collectors were hated and despised because their riches came from getting money from their people and giving it to the oppressors. *As you consider the Christian walk, is this the kind of person you would really want Jesus to spend time with? Who do you think might be more deserving?*

Wednesday, 9/20/17 Luke 19: 8-10

In response to his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus offers half of what he has to the poor and to those he has cheated he will repay four times! That was far more than the law required. Scriptures asks for voluntary restitution of what has been taken to be returned plus 20 percent. Zacchaeus is doubling the voluntary restitution and offering not a tithe, but 50 percent of what he has the poor. Jesus proclaims because of this encounter salvation has come to him and his household!! Zacchaeus encounter with Jesus transforms him and his life and his way of interacting with others. *How is your life transformed by your relationship with Jesus?*

Thursday, 9/21/17 Philippians 1: 3-7

Paul's letter is considered by some scholars to be his last. He has such love for the church at Philippi. Throughout this letter, he writes with passion and encourages the church to let God transform each of them through Christ. In these verses Paul has absolute faith that God is doing good things. He prays with gratitude and joy and delights in the partnership he has with this church. Paul has seen how Christ has transformed the Philippians in their encounter with the Divine. *What good work do you see happening in your life because of your encounter with Christ and with your community of faith?*

Friday, 9/22/17 Philippians 1: 8-11

It isn't enough for Paul to believe that a good work would be completed in the church and the people, he prayed that their relationship with Christ might grow deeper. Paul wanted the Philippian's discipleship to grow, that love might be more real in their words and actions that they could focus on what really mattered. Like Zacchaeus, an encounter with Jesus is transformative, not just for a moment, but for a lifetime. That transformation continues through prayer, worship and study. *How is your transformation continuing in your life?*