



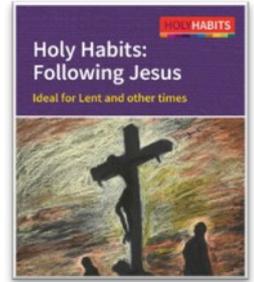
## LENT COURSE - HOLY HABITS: FOLLOWING JESUS

(For use with or without the online Zoom meeting)

### WEEK 5: 18<sup>TH</sup> MARCH - 'JESUS MAKING DISCIPLES'

Focus habits: 'Making more disciples' and 'Eating together'.

Luke 19:1-10



**Opening Song:** 'I am a new creation' by Dave Bilbrough [https://youtu.be/4Yvw\\_eV36sQ](https://youtu.be/4Yvw_eV36sQ)

*Reflect on the words if you do not have access to the music)*

I am a new creation, no more in condemnation, here in the grace of God I stand.  
My heart is over-flowing, my love just keeps on growing, here in the grace of God I stand.  
And I will praise you, Lord, yes I will praise you, Lord, and I will sing of all that you have done.  
A joy that knows no limit, a lightness in my spirit – here in the grace of God I stand.

#### **Prayer:**

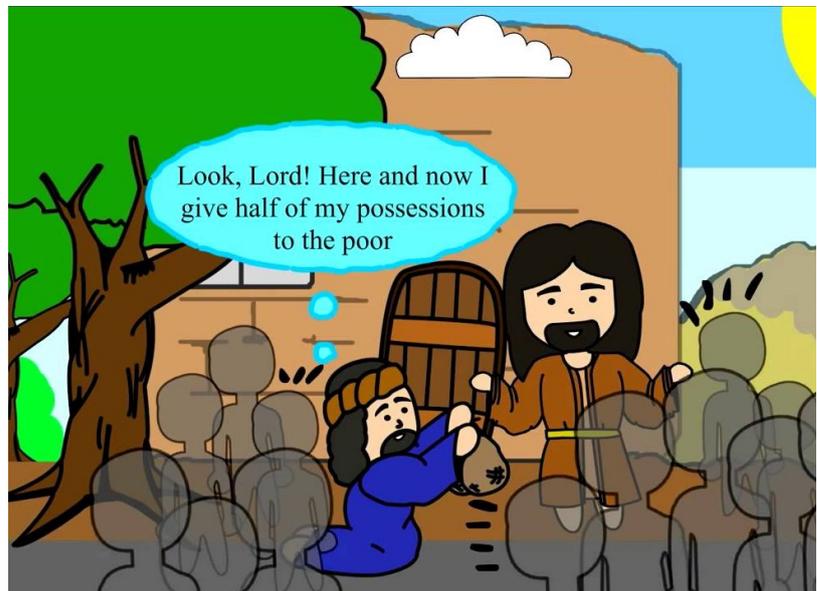
Lord, we welcome you gladly in our midst today. Dwell among us and transform us by your grace, we pray, that we may welcome rich and poor, large and small, and together rejoice in your creation. Amen

#### **Bible Reading: Luke 19:1-10 (NRSV)\***

(As you listen/read - what words or phrases do you notice? Note these and we will return to them later.)

He (Jesus) entered Jericho and was passing through it. <sup>2</sup> A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup> He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' <sup>6</sup> So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. <sup>7</sup> All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' <sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' <sup>9</sup> Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

#### **Reflection:**



When you picture the story of Zacchaeus what do you think of? Do we focus more on the tree or the transformative encounter that follows?

Most of us know that, personally and as churches, we are called to make disciples. We often struggle with *how* we do this. This story gives us some helpful pointers. Jesus had good news for the wealthy as well as the poor. The good news of the gospel is for all. Jesus noticed and was attentive to the little person. Being attentive to those who are ostracised or overlooked, and blessing them, can be a wonderful way of helping others to become disciples of Jesus – as can the simple act of eating together. (Two of the most effective disciple-forming gifts to the church in recent decades – the Alpha Course and Messy Church - have a meal at their heart.)

Those who muttered were quick to label Zacchaeus a sinner – as if they were not sinners too. Jesus makes no mention of this. Rather, he blesses Zacchaeus, befriends him and spends time in his home. This is transformative for Zacchaeus, who demonstrates the change in him through an affirmation of Jesus as Lord, different behaviour and grace-driven generosity.

**Questions for reflection/discussion:**

1. Who are the little people who often get overlooked in your church or community?
2. Who would it be good to eat with? A colleague? A neighbour? An estranged family member? Others?
3. With whom could you eat as a church?

**Further questions for reflection/discussion:**

1. Returning to the words you noted from the Bible passage, which things might you need to pay attention to in responding to the call of Jesus to make disciples (Matthew 28:19)?
2. About whom do you mutter?
3. Does Zacchaeus' changed attitude/behaviour speak to you in any way?

**Respond:** Sing "Go forth and tell!" James Seddon (1915 - 1983) <https://youtu.be/XNyDd9qtuk0>

Go forth and tell! O church of God, awake! God's saving news to all the nations take;  
proclaim Christ Jesus, Saviour, Lord, and King, that all the world his worthy praise may sing.

Go forth and tell! God's love embraces all; he will in grace respond to all who call:  
how shall they call if they have never heard the gracious invitation of his word?

Go forth and tell! O church of God, arise! go in the strength which Christ your Lord supplies;  
go till all nations his great name adore and serve him, Lord and King for evermore

© The Representatives of the late James Edward Seddon / admin The Jubilate Group

**Prayer:** Lord, may your salvation come anew to the people of our community, and to this world that you love, we pray. Amen.

**'Take-home' ideas:**

Be attentive to the those in your community or workplace who might often be overlooked. Bless them with your attitudes, words and actions, and notice any signs of grace at work.

\* *NRSV New Revised Standard Version*