



Group Leader Guide - Week 1

Sermon Recap 🎬

Josh addresses the question of how to know where one stands with God, especially amid life's mistakes and rough patches. He emphasizes that God's holiness means He cannot tolerate sin, yet He offers grace and reconciliation to those who recognize their shortcomings. Using the story of Zacchaeus, Josh illustrates that Jesus seeks out those who are marginalized or feel unworthy, affirming that everyone is invited to experience God's love and healing. Ultimately, Josh encourages listeners to open their lives to Jesus, acknowledging that genuine transformation comes from allowing Him into the rough parts of our lives.

Ice Breaker 🧊

What is one thing you're looking forward to in the next six months?

Read Scripture

Luke 19:1-10 NIV

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. ² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. ³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

⁵ When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” ⁶ So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

⁷ All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”

⁸ 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.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

Discussion Questions

▼ How does the story of Zacchaeus illustrate the idea that Jesus loves and accepts everyone, regardless of their past?

- *Callback to sermon:* Josh emphasized that Jesus called Zacchaeus by his name, showing love and acceptance despite his status as a tax collector.
- *Application:* In what ways can you show love and acceptance to someone who may feel like an outsider or unworthy in your life? How does this apply to the Jesus Followers' command to love your enemy?

▼ What does the term 'Anawim' mean and how does it relate to feeling accepted by God?

- *Callback to sermon:* Josh shared that 'Anawim' refers to people who are poor, afflicted, and marginalized, feeling rejected by society.
- *Application:* Can you think of a time when you felt like an outsider or unworthy? How did that experience shape your view of yourself and your relationship with God?

▼ 1 John 3:1a says: See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! How can we reconcile our mistakes with God's view of us as His beloved children?

- *Callback to sermon:* Josh discussed how God sees us not by our mistakes, but through His love and the potential for transformation.

- *Application:* What are some personal mistakes or struggles that you feel separate you from God's love? How can recognizing His acceptance change your perspective?

▼ What does Matthew 5:48 mean when it says, 'Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect'?

- *Callback to sermon:* This verse highlights the standard of holiness that God calls us to as followers of Jesus, even amid our rough parts.
- *Application:* How can aiming for spiritual growth and perfection look in your daily life without leading to feelings of shame or fear?

▼ Why do you think Josh emphasized that Jesus changes everything for everyone throughout the sermon?

- *Callback to sermon:* This theme shows that Jesus offers hope and transformation to everyone, no matter how broken or rough their lives may seem. It's never about good and bad people. It's about lost and found people.
- *Application:* How can embracing this truth influence the way you view challenges or difficult situations in your life and the lives of those around you?

Application Challenge

▼ Josh issued two challenges this week. How can we apply these to our lives and live out the message?

- What rough parts in my life need the hope that Jesus brings?
 - Josh challenges us to stop being embarrassed by it and identify it.
 - Pray the prayer of David in Psalm 139:22-24: "Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
- Identify what is holding you back from exploring Jesus.
 - What is stopping you from connecting and learning more about Jesus?
 - In the Bible, the rough crowd loved Jesus and Jesus loved the rough crowd.

Remember: **We are the rough crowd.**

Prayer

- Ask for any prayer requests among the group.
- Pray that we recognize and confront the rough parts of our lives.
- Ask God for strength to apply the lessons of grace and acceptance from the sermon.
- Pray for guidance to help others who are feeling lost or broken.

Rewatch the sermon

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