

SUNDAY MARCH 29

PALM SUNDAY

2026

The Tree of Ridiculous Grace

03.29.2026

Luke 19:1-10

Dr. David Bennett

Luke 19:1-10

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

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." 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."

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

It is not our task to stare at our religious navels, but to plant more sycamore trees.

Luke 19:7

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

It is not our task to stare at our religious navels, *but through this love and intimate knowing of the Lord*, to plant more sycamore trees.

Luke 19:1–4

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

Faith shows up in the most unexpected places, and often in people we associate as outside the boundaries of faith—the orthodox boundaries, the moral boundaries.

Genesis 22:8

God himself will provide the lamb.

Abraham became the father of faith. So, who are his children?

Luke 19:5–6

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

Romans 4:4-5, 8

Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation. However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness...“Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”

The invitation comes before the change. The invitation creates the guest.

“The Justification of the Ungodly”

Luke 19:7

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

They cannot see the invitation—because they think they already own the table.

The *crowd hears* a rabbi making a bad social call.

Heaven hears the Son of Man doing precisely what He came to do.

Matthew 3:9

“Do not think you can say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham.”

God can raise up children of Abraham from stones—or from sycamore trees.

John 5:39–40, 42

“You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life...I know that you do not have the love of God in your hearts.”

You can quote the promise and still not recognize the Provider standing in front of you.

The crowd in Jericho is not morally outraged. They are theologically jealous.

sykomoros means fig-mulberry
sykon (fig) and moron (mulberry)

mōros — foolishness

“Say what you like, but for our part, let us climb the sycamore tree and see Jesus.”

- Augustine

Luke 19:8

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.”

Because you can only hold on that tight when you believe the provision is all you’ve got. When you meet the Provider, the grip loosens.

And what he is left with is not a plan, he is left with a character. The character of a God who provides.

The idol isn't the money. The idol is what the money promises.

That's the life on the other side of the grip. Not less—free.

Luke 19:9–10

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

Sonship isn't ethnic, moral, or institutional—it's declared over those who respond to the invitation when it comes.

The children of Abraham are not the ones who kept the guest list. They're the ones who said yes when the invitation came.

But the tree of silly fruit and the tree of the cross are the same scandal—the same foolishness of God that is wiser than human wisdom.

It is not our task to stare at our religious navels, but to plant more sycamore trees.

Matthew 8:11–12

“I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness.”

Think of one person or the many people—invite them to Easter to come and see Jesus.

Plant that sycamore tree so they can see Jesus.