

#1 – THE CALL TO COURAGE (Adam Heather)

- Where have you seen God at work in your life this week? (Share any brief examples and encouragements).
- Was there anything from Sunday's message which you found particularly inspiring or challenging?
- Was there anything else you particularly noticed?

Luke 19:1-10 (NIVUK)

*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.**'*

1. At the time of Jesus, Jericho was famously a city of priests,¹ which is perhaps why 'all the people' - and it wasn't just the Pharisees this time, it seems they were all self-righteously religious – took to muttering about Jesus' choice of whose hospitality he accepted. 'He has gone to be the guest of a sinner', they said. Jesus made it clear that this was precisely the point of his entire mission: 'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.'
 - *Luke tells us 4 things about Zacchaeus: his occupation, his financial status, his appearance, and an example of some rather eccentric behaviour. What do you think it was about him that might have made him the sort of person that others would have avoided getting close to?*
 - *Do you know anyone like that who Jesus might also want to meet?*
 - *What sorts of people do you think Jesus meant by 'the lost'?*
 - *Are there 'lost' people you know with whom you might begin a 'courageous conversation'?*
 - *Do you find that sort of conversation comes naturally to you, or does it feel awkward and forced?*
 - *I don't think Jesus was expecting to see a man in a tree when he came to Jericho but, when he did, he looked past the crowd to just one person. Jesus proved to be both **interruptible** and **invitational**. What might it mean for you to be interruptible and invitational?*
2. Zacchaeus was a seeker. He 'wanted to see who Jesus was', but 'he could not see over the crowd', so, in desperation, first he ran, then he climbed a tree, neither of which were actions to be expected of a dignified first century middle-eastern man. Jesus saw in him the signs of a seeker and spoke boldly.
 - *How does 'the crowd' get in the way of people meeting Jesus today? Who might the crowd represent?*
 - *How do you spot the signs of a seeker – someone who is looking for Jesus (even if it is in all the wrong places)? How could a conversation with a seeker turn to 'kingdom chatter'?*
 - *What difference might it make if we truly believed that Jesus is still seeking and saving lost people and that we are not responsible for doing 'all the heavy lifting'; that we just need to partner with what God is already doing?*

¹ Jesus set the Good Samaritan story on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho – Priests and Levites were always travelling this way from the Temple to their homes 25 miles away.