

# Love & Light: A New Affection

September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Luke 19:1-10



## Begin with Prayer

In silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide you. Then pray: *Empowering God, we pray that you will send your Holy Spirit to move us to understanding; to help us to believe the gospel; to give us strength and wisdom to live by it. Amen.* (Worship Sourcebook Q.3.5.8)

## Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a moment to check in with one another (2 minutes each).

1. *What person, place, and food do you love? (Don't overthink it! Just give one example of each.)*
2. *How do you handle competing loves in your life? For example, you may love a certain movie or restaurant that your friend or family member does not. What do you do when it comes to choosing between competing loves?*

### Introduction

Whether we gather in person or online, our goal remains the same: to be a people apprenticed to the life of Jesus. His life and teaching is our example and our source of truth. Remember the commitments we make to each other to foster safety and freedom as we pursue spiritual growth together:

- Whenever possible, please listen to the sermon prior to gathering (Sunday or online).
- While we are meeting (even online), commit to focussing rather than multitasking. Be all here.
- Give every person an equal opportunity to share, even if it takes time to form or finish their thoughts.
- Be respectful and non-judgmental.
- Honour sharing boundaries z Honour sharing boundaries (only what you have permission to share, no gossip) and guard confidentiality (what we share here stays here).
- Don't try to fix, problem-solve or rescue; keep pointing one another to the truths of the gospel for our lives.

## Listening to God's Word

Our life is filled with loves. We love a type of food, we love certain hobbies, we love certain people, we love time together (or time alone). Whether or not we recognize it, we also live lives in order of our loves. If we love reading over walking, for example, we will choose a book rather than heading outside. However, what happens when our loves are out of order? Perhaps we prioritize a sport over our spouse, the food we enjoy over our health, or the pursuit of money over "seeking God's Kingdom first." When this happens, our need for the Gospel is revealed and Jesus invites us to 'reorder our affections.'

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## Small Group Discussion

### Read Luke 19:1-10.

- Israel was occupied by the Romans in Jesus' day, and the Romans would employ locals to collect the taxes on their behalf. As a *chief* tax collector in a prosperous city, Zacchaeus had become wealthy by taxing his fellow citizens (v. 2). He would have been seen (perhaps accurately) as a greedy and corrupt traitor. *Who are the people in our community whose job, choices, causes, or lifestyle cause us to despise them? How might Jesus see those people differently from us?*
- Jesus' lunch with Zacchaeus (v. 7) was controversial with the crowds – Zacchaeus (or his employees) might have been the ones who collected *their* taxes, perhaps cheating them personally. *What feelings*

*or thoughts arise as we consider Jesus extending grace to those who have wronged us personally, or who have wronged someone we know? Why would we feel or think this way?*

- Zacchaeus willingly responds to the grace of Jesus with a radical display of repentant generosity (v. 8), though Jesus did not ask him to do it. *How have you experienced grace like Zacchaeus, and how did you initially respond? How does that grace continue to impact your life? Does that grace still stir your heart, or does it feel like ‘old news?’*
- We likely wouldn’t say that Zacchaeus’ response to Jesus was excessive, but we might hesitate to respond in a similar manner. *What would have provoked his extravagant response? What would that kind of response look like in our own lives?*
- Zacchaeus realizes that the loves in his life had been out of order. In his response, he demonstrates a ‘re-ordering’ of his loves – Jesus, justice, humility, and generosity now take precedence over wealth, possessions, and power. Zacchaeus’ generosity would have directly impacted his community, particularly the poor and those he had cheated. *What is one thing in your life that tends to be a higher priority than it should? What would a ‘radical response to grace’ look like in the ordering of your loves, and how would this impact those in your family, your school or workplace, and in your community?*
- **Read Matthew 28:18-20.** Zacchaeus met Jesus through an invitation to a meal. Alpha is a key ministry at NLCC at all three of our campuses that seeks to do the same thing – introduce people to Jesus through a relational invitation, a conversation, and a meal. (Alpha starts this week at Walnut Grove and Yorkson, and in January at Aldergrove.) *Where in your life is a simple way to introduce people to Jesus? Who could you invite to Alpha? If you aren’t attending Alpha, how can you be praying for those people who don’t yet know Jesus?*
- ***How do you sense the Holy Spirit calling you to respond to or act on what we have read and discussed?***

## **Practices – Praying for the Impossible**

**Read Luke 18:24-27.**

We hear Jesus say that it is ‘hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God,’ which doesn’t give much hope for Zacchaeus when we meet him moments later. However, Zacchaeus’ transformation reminds us that ‘what is impossible with man is possible with God.’

Take some time to share, either all together or in groups of 2 or 3. *Is there someone you know who seems as far from God as one could be, and perhaps you don’t have a lot of hope that things could change? Take some time to pray for those names, remembering to respond to vulnerability with trust and compassion. As you do, lean into Jesus’ words – what is impossible with us is possible with Him.*

## **Caring for One Another**

- *Pray for the names you shared earlier.*
- ***Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?***

Using **the Lord’s Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you’ve shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.