



# APPNOTES

**Date:** October 29-November 2, 2018

**Series:** For NEPA

**Luke 19:1-10** It's natural to want to spend time with people who have the same interests, the same background, the same culture. In high school, all the basketball players sat at the same lunch table, and heaven forbid anyone else tried to sit there! If you ever wander into a Facebook group for a hobby you've just picked up, it feels a little like you've landed in a foreign country; they have their own lingo, and it's hard to follow along. Christians tend to sit at the same lunch table, talk in a language outsiders can't understand, and gravitate to others like themselves. What does the outsider see, except our backs, as we turn in to talk to each other? This is what Zaccheaus saw: the backs of the faithful, and he was too short to see Jesus over the tops of their heads. Let's not block the ability of our community to see Jesus!

**Luke 19:1-10** I heard a musician once refer to his instrument as Zaccheaus, his little man-dolin. Get it? No, it wasn't funny then, either. But who was Zaccheaus? He was short, but that wasn't the most important thing about him. As chief tax collector, his job was to collect money on behalf of Rome; anything collected above that was his salary. Zaccheaus was rich because he charged his fellow countrymen more than Rome required. Tax collectors were traitors of the worst kind, the scum of the earth. But that's not the most important thing about him, either. "Come down, Zaccheus, for today I must eat at your house." The most important thing about Zaccheaus was that Jesus loved him. Who's the worst person you can think of? It's true of him or her, too: That person is loved by God. As Christians, the ones who have accepted the love of Jesus already, the most important thing about us is: will we love them, too?

**Luke 19:1-10** You've heard the saying, "You have to stand for something, or you'll fall for anything." As Christians, we need to stand for our principles. Don't we? Too often when we stand for our principles, we're forgetting the people. Liars, murderers, adulterers, thieves – all of them are sinners. Yep. But so am I, and so are you; we weren't saved when someone threw our sin in our faces. We were saved because someone cared enough to tell us we are loved, we are valued, and we are redeemed by the blood of Christ. Was Zaccheus a sinner? Absolutely. He was, essentially, a traitor working for the enemy. But Jesus loved him, and it was that love that caused him to change. "Behold, Lord, I will give half of everything I have to the poor..." Let's stand on this principle: Jesus came to seek and save the lost. God loves NEPA, and so do we.

**Luke 19:1-10** We've seen it over and over on social media: the keyboard makes us bold. We complain, attack, and shoot down people we disagree with. The religious leaders in Jesus' day didn't have social media, so they stood on street corners. They didn't like Zaccheus, and they didn't like that Jesus was eating with him, and whether or not passersby could hear their words, everyone knew it. Their posture was clear. Jesus' posture was clear, too. He saw Zaccheus in the tree and motioned for him to come closer. In John 13, Jesus knelt to wash the feet of the disciples. Jesus' posture was always welcoming, humble, and service-minded. As we interact with our neighbors in NEPA, are we muttering on street corners, hiding behind keyboards, or are we welcoming, serving, and sharing the truth of God's love with them? Whether they can hear our words or not, our posture will be clear.

**Luke 19:1-10** The Jewish leaders in Jesus' day believed they were superior. They had spent years studying God's word, so they had an edge. Not only that, but Israel was God's chosen people. If you weren't one of the chosen, well, too bad for you. That was never God's intention, and it's not God's intention now. The church was never meant to be a closed-off fortress, keeping out the invaders. It was meant to be a hospital, where the sick and dying could come to have hope. It's meant to be a safe place, but not just for us. For them. The ones who are attacked on all sides and feel alone. The ones who are enslaved to addiction. The ones with bare cupboards and empty spirits. Jesus came for the lost. Will we hoard this love and grace like a castle under siege, or will we take it to those who are perishing?

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