

(Invite people in the pew to say) Neighbor, it is as easy as one, two three:

1. Jesus moves towards us.

Jesus walking through Jericho. (very accessible)

Afraid of no one. Available to all. Narrow streets of Jericho.

Jesus walking towards Jerusalem. (very focused) suffer, die and rise;

Inviting others to join him.

There are 3,000 churches in Detroit. 3,000 faith communities. Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in their midst.

How much more accessible can God make himself. There are many ways we make God accessible in or community.

Just this week, the work of faith communities : St. Christine Soup Kitchen; Trunk or Treat; young couples dinner.

It's simple as what? One, two, three

1: the risen Lord moves towards us.

2. We make a move towards Jesus.

Zaccheus wanted to see Jesus.

Zaccheus was in search of something , of someone.

His search in life (position of power and wealth) had led him to be rejected by his peers.

- **Tax collector: Jew hired to collect taxes from his own people to give to the Roman government who occupied Israel. Typically, he took some of the profits for himself. Despised by the people.**
- **Closest comparison today to how they felt in today's world is the drug dealer.**
 - **He is in search of his own happiness at the expense of others.**
 - **He does not care how much suffering it is causing others.**
- **He does not care how much it costs him; he will seek happiness at all costs.**
- **He hears about Jesus. Someone who is bringing people hope and a new Spirit.**
- **He climbs a sycamore tree to SEE, he does not care how others think.**
 - **Can you imagine the guts it took. Just think if a noted drug dealer came in church today and sat in the front pew seeking to know more about Jesus.**

Which brings me to us. Are we willing to approach Jesus with open hearts?

- **It does not matter how many faith communities are around us,**
- **it does not matter how great of music or preaching is,**
- **It does not matter how large or rich or famous the faith community might be,**

If the person is not actively seeking the Lord, God can do little for us. God simply will not force his will on us.

It is as simple as what? One two three.

1: the risen Lord moves towards us.

2: We make a move towards Jesus.

3. Jesus invites us into deeper union with him.

In today's story, when Zacchaeus moves towards him, Jesus immediately stops, looks up at this person desperately seeking the fullness of life and says, "Zaccheus, come down, I wish to eat dinner at YOUR house tonight."

Many curious people were on the road in Jericho that day, probably people who seemed much holier than Zacchaeus, but Jesus ate with only one man, the man who yearned for more and was open to him.

Every Sunday the risen Lord comes into our midst and invites us to dine with him.

- **He invites us to come close.**
- **He invites us to the fullness of life.**
- **Jesus shares with us a whole new way of living which**
 - **can transform our lives,**
 - **cause true conversion,**
 - **radical change,**
 - **total life commitment.**

How many of us are tired of the life we are leading, seeking after the pleasures of life which ultimately do not satisfy, seeking those things which separate us from God and causes pain to our families and our community. Yet, how many people along the road simply ignored Jesus, and went on their way.

This weekend we pray for those who have died, especially this past year. Did you see the names as you came in?

Our Catholic tradition says that after death most of them end up in purgatory. What is purgatory? I am afraid we get stereotyped ideas about it being like the supposed fires of hell, but that is just does not last so long. Really, purgatory is realizing that we have been one of the crowd standing in the road as Jesus passes by. We have stood there day after day and have not approached him. After death we come to the terrible realization that we have been avoiding the only one who could call us to fullness of life.

This month of November we pray for them.... And we pray for ourselves....that we say with the blind man at the gate of Jericho, “Jesus, Son of David, have pity on me... and on my loved ones”.

Continue to come to us so that we have the opportunity to look you in the face, see your loving invitation, and join you at the banquet.

Remember, it is as easy as one, two three.

- 1. He comes in our midst.**
- 2. We approach him with open hearts**
- 3. He offers us a way of life and a seat at the banquet which will never end.**

“Come, I wish to eat at your table today.”