

Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time – C – 2019
Wisdom 11.22-12,12///2Thess.1.11-2.2///Luke 19.1-10

→this past week I heard some very disturbing news that upset me terribly and I am sure it will upset you as well...

→[news is this] because of budget cuts and lack of funding...the IRS will be unable to conduct the same amount of individual audits of taxpayers this year as it has in the past year

→[now]...isn't that a shame!!!!

→isn't it amazing that the words "tax collector" evokes the same meaning today as it did almost 2000 years ago

→say the word "tax collector or IRS" and it still can cause people to wince...

→I would say that, for me... "dentists" also fall into that same category...dentists and tax collectors are two people that make me nervous....

→in part because....they are both known for their painful extractions...if you will

→well in today's gospel reading...we hear the story about Zacchaeus

→a successful tax collector....indeed a very good one who was successful at getting painful extractions from people.

→now....besides being a good tax collector.....the other claim to fame about Zacchaeus...was that he was a short man

→and today our gospel story tells us that he was so short that he climbed a sycamore tree in order to see and catch a glimpse of Jesus passing by

→however, I would suggest that the term “short” in this story--- means **more** than just a physical limitation or quality as it pertains to Zacchaeus

→because you see.....besides being short in stature, Zacchaeus was also short-sighted.....

→as we hear.....his entire life was focused on his work....in fact given the reaction of the gathered crowd...his whole identity was tied to his work....

→he was successful at it...he worked hard at it...and he was very focused

→he even says... “look Lord, I am very conscientious about what I do... I cheat no one, and I am sure of it because if I do, then I pay it four times over....I do my job and I do it well

PAUSE

→then we discover that in addition to being short in stature and being shortsighted... Zacchaeus was also short on love and acceptance

→as a tax collector...Zacchaeus was considered an outcast...he was seen as selfish and greedy.... and he was rejected by the community

→one senses that the townspeople really didn't have anything to do with him...and nor did they want Jesus to have anything to with him...

--/--

→and yet, even though Zacchaeus was short...in so many ways.....

--in spite of his reputation

--in spite of his rejection by the people

--in spite of his admitted sinfulness

Jesus decides to go to his house and have dinner...PAUSE

→on that day SALVATION comes to Zacchaeus

→and as a result, Zacchaeus.....the tax collector..... changes

--Zacchaeus discovers a new and wonderful friend that comes to his houseand

...his life is changed and transformed forever...

→what he was is gone...and what he becomes is now present

PAUSE

→now....the parallel to all this...is that at times,just like Zacchaeus... you and I are also just as short ...short-sighted ...and short on love and acceptance.....

--in the way we sometimes live out our lives

--in the way we sometimes treat one another

--in the way we sometimes act and speak and think

→....we are just as short.....when we are centered on ourselves and our needs and our desires.....without being concerned about others.

→AND just like Zacchaeus in today's gospel.....Christ also wants to come to our house...to be with us and change our lives.

→in a sense...Christ is knocking on the door of our life....asking us to open it and let him in....

→to welcome [him] Christ into the house of our spirit...into the rooms of our lives

→perhaps today more than ever we are being challenged to let CHRIST come into our minds and thoughts so that we can know and love and serve each another

→today might just be the day ...that Christ is knocking to come into the dining room of our lives so that our appetites can be quenched with his mercy

→to come into the work room of our lives so that our talents and gifts can be shared

→into the family room of our lives so that our relationships may be rooted in his message

→and finally, maybe we are being called let CHRIST come into our hall closets...--/--...that secret...solitary place --/-- where no one else knows about us....so that he might shine forth in our hearts and souls

→because you see.....it is Jesus who wants to come to us...to sit across the table from us...

--to change and heal us from all that causes us distress and anxiety....just like the day Christ came to Zacchaeus' house and changed his life forever

PAUSE

--on the day of our baptism Christ came to us...and he continues to be with us...in the midst of all our uncertainty and insecurity....to give us comfort and courage.

PAUSE

-----today's gospel message is about opening the doors of our lives to Christ
---about accepting the invitation to sit down to dinner in our own lives with Christ and to let HIS love and HIS presence change us

---you see --- at times we may be short in so many ways...but not one of us has to climb a tree to see Jesus....because you see, HE right here before us...at this table...in the person next to you....and in our hearts

→wanting and waiting to change our lives

→and perhaps...just like Zacchaeus....it's time to let Him do just that!