

Sunday Gathering

The Initiator, Luke 19:1-10 -
Bradley Bell

March 12, 2023

Luke: Upside Down (Spring
2023)

Call to Worship - Ezekiel 34:11-12, 15-16

Friends, we come here today from many different places—whether that's a geographic place like another country, or another part of town, or our own neighborhood here in the South End. Or maybe it's just the different "places" of life—like a prolonged season of grief, a difficult week without electricity, overflowing joy at the birth of a new child, or the celebration of an answered prayer. As we come together from these places, it is important for us to know that we have all been shepherded into this house of worship today. Hear what the Lord says from the book of Ezekiel, chapter 34:

For thus says the Lord God: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. Ezekiel 34:11-12

It is God who has taken the initiative in our lives. It is his grace that says, "I must come to stay at your house today." In order to internalize this good news, and to prepare our hearts to respond in worship, let's speak these words of the Lord God together:

**I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, declares the Lord GOD.

I will seek the lost

I will bring back the strayed

I will bind up the injured

I will strengthen the weak**

Ezekiel 34:15-16

Praise the Lord!

Praise Him Praise Him (Lifeway)

Confession - Isaiah 55:1

Church, last week we saw in the story of the Rich Young Ruler a person holding onto some treasure that kept him from taking hold of Christ. When we observe such stories, we see the foolishness of the characters. As American missionary Jim Elliot wrote,

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Jim Elliot

And yet when we put ourselves in the story, we see that we fall into the same foolishness. When Jesus comes knocking on our door, we are afraid to open it—because we worry what he might take from us. Brothers and sisters, what treasure are you holding onto today? Take a moment of worshipful reflection, and if the Lord brings something to mind, confess it to him.

Brief silence is kept.

Church, God's initiating grace doesn't just cancel our debts, but it leads us to cash in a greater treasure. He says to us in the prophet Isaiah,

Come, all you who are thirsty,

come to the waters;

and you who have no money,

come, buy and eat!

Come, buy wine and milk

without money and without cost.

Isaiah 55:1

Let us respond together:

Thank you, Lord,

for emptying our hands

to fill them with something far better:

yourself.

Amen.

Yet Not I But Through Christ In Me

Build My Life

Evidence of Grace - Acts 13:1-3

Sermon - Luke 19:1-10

Communion - 1 Corinthians 11:23-28

Turn Away From Sin and Sorrow

Cornerstone

Benediction - Luke 19:10

You may be seated. Thank you for joining us in today's gathering! We hope that you have experienced the welcome of Jesus.

Family Groups - We invite you to visit one of our Family Groups, which meet in homes throughout the week. We describe them as "intentional environments to be transformed by the gospel through relationships. If you would like to join one of them, there is info in the hallway, or talk with one of us, and we'll make a direct connection for you.

Giving & Visitors - Also, now is our time for giving—ushers, please come forward. If you are a visitor with us this morning, please grab a visitor card from the basket so we can get to know you more. You can give it to someone with a lanyard or leave it in your seat.

Antioch members, remember that giving is part of how we participate in God's mission. If you prefer to give digitally, visit our website or find us on GivApp.

Announcements

For everyone, here are a few ways to take the following steps:

- 1) Mantioch Bible Study - The Mantioch Bible Study will continue next Sunday at 9 AM in the training room. Even if you missed it so far, still join us next time as we continue to learn about God's rightly ordered priorities and the power to live them out. If any men need an alternative time to meet because of other responsibilities on Sunday mornings, please sign up on the side table.
- 2) Food Pantry - This Saturday is our monthly Food Pantry, where we serve our neighbors not only with food, but with intentional gospel relationships. This is a great way for families to be on mission together. Volunteers need to arrive at 9:30 AM. Urgent: we are in need of help picking up food—this can be on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday mornings. If you are willing and able, even if just once a month, please see Steve Leach. We are also gathering gently used winter coats, please drop them off before Saturday.
- 3) Child Dedication Class - On Sunday, March 26th at 9:00 AM there will be a child dedication class for any parents who are interested. This is an opportunity to intentionally and publicly acknowledge three things:
 - 1) A child is God's gift
 - 2) A parent is God's steward
 - 3) A church is God's harborIf you plan to attend, please sign up at the side table.

4) Prayer and fasting - Our call to church-wide prayer and fasting during the season of Lent continues this week. There are print copies of this week's devotional on the side table if you need them, and we will also post them daily on our Facebook page.

We begin each gathering with a call to worship, and we end with a benediction, which is simply a reminder that we are blessed to be a blessing. I invite you to hold out your hands in a posture of reception:

Church, God has sought you out, canceled your debts, and given you the immeasurable profit of salvation forever. Therefore may you go on your way initiating intentional gospel relationships with those whom Jesus is still seeking out. Based on Luke 19:10

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

We are sent.

Audio/Visual

Audio

Jason Cox

Slides

Dan Gilliss 

Band

Acoustic Guitar

Jeffery Smith, 

Electric Guitar

Aaron Kiefer

Vocals

Winona Miller 