**Sermon Sparkler for the 21st Sunday after Pentecost**

This will be the last set of EMU resources on Luke’s Gospel. I hope they’ve helped you some in your sermon preparation!

Much like last week, I have to convince you that this week’s lesson is worthy of All Saints Sunday. On one hand, if we are trying to scoop up all the saints, and yet we never get to read about dear Zacchaeus, ignored on account of both his stature and the lectionary, then it is truly not ALL the saints. On the other hand, we’re dealing with an acknowledged sinner here, and yet Jesus chases him down and makes him right with God—isn’t that the story of all the saints?

All those Lost parables, sheep, coin, son, are now played out in the situation of dear Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus, which means innocent or clean, is a curious name for a Tax Collector—after all this job can be dirty business. Additionally, we can assume Zacchaeus is far from clean or innocent, as he’s rich. You don’t get rich as a tax collector in the ancient world by being innocent.

Jesus declares to this “innocent” tax collector caught in a tree, that it is a divine necessity that he host a dinner for him. Imagine that, what people would have thought, what the Pharisees did think. Jesus is claiming a divine mandate to dine with this sinner!

Yet look at this innocent sinner’s response, even before Jesus enters his home. He gives half of what he owns to the poor, and then he gives back the money he’s skimmed off the top of his neighbor’s taxes. He is like the shrewd manager who we read of last chapter. He repents and rejoices, and is promised that, unlike the rich man who ignored Lazarus, he and his entire household are sons of Abraham and will be at Abraham’s bosom. The Lost have been found by a God so loving—so crazy—that he saves us!

* Look back at how you’re preached Jesus’ “Lost” parables. How can you bring those images back to make the connection between Luke 15 and Luke 19?
* How does All Saints Sunday strike you with lost, invisible, Zacchaeus as the centerpiece?
* How might your congregation members identify with Zacchaeus?