



WEEK 2: "GRACISM" – A NEW WAY FORWARD

Like it or not, those of us who are able to download these notes, and meet in homes to discuss them, are the recipients of privilege in some way or another. Defensiveness, guilt or shame are typical responses to this realisation, but God would call the church to the posture of **humble stewardship** instead.



READ LUKE 19:1-10

Jesus displayed counter-cultural grace within a divided context. Zacchaeus, as a tax-collector for the Romans, would have most certainly been despised by the Jews. Not only would he have been corrupt himself, but his business supported the cruelty of the Roman oppressors. Yet it was Zacchaeus who desperately sought after Jesus. When Jesus saw him up in the tree, which must have been a puzzling site, instead of ridiculing him, he invited himself to dinner at Zacchaeus's house. This must have baffled everyone around him. But Jesus saw the person of Zacchaeus, and not just his position or sin. As a result of Jesus' warmth, Zacchaeus responded with a complete change of heart regarding his business dealings, from one of self-centredness to one of humble stewardship.

Zacchaeus had directly and wilfully benefited from an unjust system. Some of us have too. But there are others of us who recognise our privilege, but do not have the means to give away half of what we have, as Zacchaeus had proposed to do, and so we do not know quite what to do.

The gift of privilege comes the desire and responsibility to *do something* meaningful and impacting for those who were born into the lack, due to our past system of severe injustice, and to continue in that posture for the rest of our lives.

- ❖ Q: Why do you think the crowds would have been baffled by the fact that Jesus invited himself for dinner at Zacchaeus, the tax collector's house?
- ❖ Q: Why do you think Zacchaeus had such a change of heart, after his initial encounter with Jesus?
- ❖ Q: How does this story help us to understand the posture Jesus is seeking from us as the church, and in particular, one of immense privilege?





READ LUKE 10:30-37, 1 TIM 6:17-19 & PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

In addressing the crowd about what it looked like to love others, Jesus told the story of the good Samaritan, which also fits very well into our South African context. The Samaritan man found himself faced with a situation, where in the moment, he was the one with privilege and he had a decision to make. He had physical strength and some money, while the beaten-up Jew had none. Instead of pushing the responsibility onto someone else, he faced the situation with love and responsibility, and did what he could, with the means that he had. The Samaritan intentionally carried the cost as well as the hefty price of inconvenience.

This is what Christ calls us, as the privileged within the church, to do for our neighbour. We could do this in the following ways in order for our privilege to be shared:

1. Financially
2. Intellectually
3. Relationally
4. Spiritually

- ❖ Q: Why does the story of the good Samaritan challenge us so deeply within our South African context? What are the parallels?
- ❖ Q: Read the text again. Do we have any insight into the financial background of the Samaritan, to prove that he was rich, or had huge excess, in order to part with his money? Why do you think this matters?
- ❖ Q: Why is it essential that we admit that most of us in our community are people of privilege (at least at some level)?
- ❖ Q: Why is the gospel the main reason why we should extend ourselves on behalf of those who cannot?
- ❖ Q: What difference do you think it would make to our country if the churches of privilege used their means for those who have very little?
- ❖ Q: Of the 4 abovementioned privileges, which one do you find the easiest to give away, and which do you find the most difficult (financial, intellectual, relational, spiritual)? Explain.

Personal Reflection Q: What is the one big take-away that God is asking you to deal with this week?

