



Sustaining Faith

MCG Study

Fall 2023

City Awakening Church

Week 1 – Focused Faith Luke 19:1-10

Week of 10/22

1. What is the significance of Zacchaeus being a chief tax collector? Who did he collect taxes for? What was his place in society?
2. Why do you think Jesus said it was necessary for him to stay with Zacchaeus?
3. There are three main characters or groups of people in this story. Briefly point out key differences between the three.
 - a. Zacchaeus:
 - b. Jesus:
 - c. The crowd:
4. Why did Zacchaeus' response to Jesus lead him to say that "salvation has come to this house?" Do you think it was a necessary response for Zacchaeus to payback what he had taken, and to pay it back four-fold? (*Read Luke 7:41-48 for more insight*)

5. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15. What does it look like to “decide in your heart” what you should give? What does Paul say will be the result of cheerful giving? (*There are at least 4 different outcomes or benefits*)

6. How do your current practices of generosity reflect your understanding and hope in the Gospel? (*This includes our time, talent, and treasure*) What would it look like to stretch your faith in generosity?

7. Zacchaeus was focused. He desperately wanted to see Jesus. It would have been easy for him to give up or even intentionally hide, but he ran ahead and positioned himself so that he would be able to see Jesus above the crowd. What or who is the crowd in your life? And are you willing to put in the effort to stay focused and see Jesus? What would that look like?



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Week 2 – Deeper Faith

Week of 11/5

Mark 4:1-9, 14-20

1. Try to read this story through the lens of the crowd. This was a largely agrarian society, and planting and harvesting were part of their everyday lives. How does that impact how you hear the story? Why did Jesus teach in parables like these?
2. What do you notice about the sower? Where did he sow the seed? Why?
3. What similarities do you see among the different soils? What differences?
4. Which type of “soil” seems to more prevalent in Orlando? Which type of soil are you most likely to identify with personally and why?
5. Read Psalm 1:1-3. How does the tree in verse 3 relate to the parable in Mark 4? Would you say that you are currently in season or out of season? What’s an example of fruit in your life currently or in the past?

6. Take a minute to encourage one another in your group. What are some fruits you've seen in others' lives over the past few months to a year?

7. Our first question pointed out that the seed (the Word) was sown on all types of soil. How does that relate to Jesus' ministry, Paul's ministry, and what does it say about our role as sowers? *Read 1 Corinthians 3:6-8 for deeper insight.*

8. In gardening, once the seed is planted there are multiple factors that affect growth: water, sunlight, nutrients, temperature, etc. If we want to have a deeper, more fruitful faith, what are some of the elements that affect our growth? You can include obvious answers but try to think deeper.

9. How would you use this parable to explain the Gospel? (*one hint: where does the power/authority lie in the parable?*)

Week 3 – Risky Faith Matthew 25:14-30

Week of 11/12

1. What stands out to you about this parable? What questions does it raise?
2. What do you think this parable teaches about the character of God? Does this challenge your view of God in any way?
3. Why did the master give varying amounts of talents? What does that say about each of our abilities and expectations? Does that feel like a relief or a letdown, or neither?
4. A talent was a lot of money (millions of dollars) and the servants were expected to yield a return by investing the money entrusted to them. How does the high value of a talent impact the way you read the parable? What talents do you feel like God has given you? (*think about anything God has equipped you with or entrusted to you*)
5. Making investments are risky. Do you feel like you've invested your talents well? What keeps you from doing so?

Week 4 – Persevering Faith

Week of 11/19

Matthew 14:22-33

1. Quickly read over the first part of Ch. 14 to gain insight on the context of this chapter, then focus in on verses 22-33. What do verses 22 and 23 teach us about Jesus? What is significant about the timing of Jesus' actions. *Refer to verses 13-14.*
2. Keeping in mind the context of what happened the previous day, what do we learn about the disciples from this story?
3. Obviously, the disciples were not expecting Jesus to come to them in the way that he did, walking on water. How does his unexpected arrival reflect the rest of his life and purpose?
4. Does Peter's response and request to Jesus surprise you? Why or why not? Do you think his was the right response? What do you think your reaction would have been in that moment?

