

Welcome, welcome to Student Sunday again. My name is Mike Otto, I'm the Overland Park Student Ministries Director, and for those of us joining online, welcome. We're so glad you're here as well from where you are at. And like I said, Student Sunday, and we have students that are represented in so many ways, from up front, speaking, praying, singing songs, leading worship. And today we were actually supposed to have one of our summer staff be doing the message today, but throughout the week he wasn't feeling too great, and so, you know, the Lord moves in miraculous ways, and so, you know, my wife and I got back from our vacation yesterday, and you know, God's got a plan, that's right. So, but yeah, super thrilled to be speaking this morning to you guys, and so, but I was just laying in my heart, and what was, you know, kind of laying on Carson's heart before he was going to be speaking was just this idea of service, and serving the Lord, and how we should exemplify that. So we're going to be talking about that this morning. So, a couple weeks ago, as Mason said, we had some of our youth staff put together a local mission trip with our middle school students, which you heard about, and our theme for the week was Jesus is already at work, all right? And so, we partnered with several local missions, and tried to give the students a perspective of service that looked beyond the week, and how God is already working and on the move. As a teenager myself, I can remember several times attending trips with my home church, or mission experiences to raise awareness for the homeless, and while these were all good and great things, is that all that there is to loving and serving others? Is it just about equipping our students, and your sons and daughters to serve for a week, or a few times a month? I would say that it's our goal to help them understand the gospel of the good news, and to love and serve others for a lifetime, all right? So, here's how we're going to answer and unpack this question and some others, is to of course look at the life of Jesus in Christ and explore how he himself was put in a position to love and to serve others. But first, here's another question I'd like to ask you all this morning. Do you think that Jesus' ministry would have been different if his service had been scheduled, or is packed into a few serve days, or service opportunities a month? I would say it would have been vastly different. Jesus would not have been as present. He would have been probably hurried to get on to the next thing. But what we're going to learn about in just a few moments here, is how Jesus himself exemplified serving and loving others in five crucial ways. And so how we're going to do that is, is we're going to be looking at what scripture says about his daily posture, and how he was living a lifestyle of service. And so, as we look at the following passage, and keep an eye out for how Jesus serves, and the substance of his service. So, this morning we're going to be going through Luke 19:1-10, before we read scripture together. I just wanted to give you guys a little bit of a background on Zacchaeus and what was going on at that time. There was a tax collector named Zacchaeus, who was in Jericho and worked for Rome and his character. He was considered by his fellow Jews to be a part of the evil

oppression that had been placed on the Jewish people by the Roman occupation forces. Tax collectors worked for Rome, often collected more than what was due, and they became wealthy in the process of cheating others. Tax collectors were much despised and considered to be great sinners. So, not a great outlook there. You know, not a great outlook for the people, for him. And as you've probably read this story, Zacchaeus was not favored by anyone. But Jesus on that day encountered him and saw him for who he was. So as we read here in a moment, I want you guys to think about five traits or qualities that Jesus embodied how he served others and in his ministry. And these traits are his 1. Awareness, his 2. Availability, 3. Acceptance, 4. Abiding, and 5. Self-Abandonment. So, five A's there, all right? So, it's a little bit more than the three points than we normally do, but you know, five A's, five points this morning. So how do each of these five qualities directly impact Zacchaeus? Let's read that together. So, if you are able, please stand for the reading of scripture together this morning. All right, we're going to start in chapter 19 here, and it says, "He entered Jericho and was passing through. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd, he could not because he was small in stature. So, he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him. For he was about to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.' So, he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled. He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house since he also is a son of Abraham. For the son of man came to seek and to save the lost.'" All right, so as we are looking at this section of scripture this morning, like I said, the thing that we're going to be doing is examining how Jesus exactly served others and the five values or principles that we can then apply to our lives. And the first one is being, Aware. So, Jesus, of course, knew Zacchaeus, even though they had never met until then. He saw him as a man desperate for God's grace, not as a man who cheated on collecting taxes. And that's the main difference there. Have you ever met someone and could instantly tell that not only did they need a good conversation, but they needed a hand up instead of a handout? Kind of a neat story that happened a few weeks ago. The summer staffers live over at the South Kansas City campus. And one night, a few of them were hanging out in the hilltop, which is our high school room. And they saw like a hand, they saw someone knocking on the door. And it was actually a Latino family that their car broke down and they made it to our church, which can be seen for quite a way away. And they saw this church and lo and behold, AJ and Chloe, a couple of our staffers were there. And Chloe knows Spanish decently well. And she

was able to translate and talk to this family. And they found out that not only was their car broken down, but they had no place to stay for the night and they needed help. And so, AJ, I get the call from him at like 10 o'clock or so at night, and I'm still up and so I'm like, I don't really know what we're supposed to do here. Let's get ahold of some other people. And so, it was kind of neat. AJ kind of gets to brag now. He was in a group chat with like all the pastors. They're trying to coordinate like, what can we do? Who can help with this way? Who can help in that way? And Pastor Jeff over at our SKC campus, he was able to go get some gift cards for the family, but what was really, neat was that they met a need, which they needed a place to stay. And so, I think for the next week, they stayed over at our SKC campus, and we were able to bless them until they found out what to do next. And I just thought that was such a cool thing because it's easy to kind of just pass by people in the moment, right? It's easy to see people on the street every day that need something, but to do something about it, I just thought was so awesome and showed like the, just the love and the joy that our church must serve others in a time of need. And so, I was just proud of our summer staffers and our pastors for jumping in there. But the thing is that if we do not see people as Jesus saw them, we cannot minister as Jesus did. Before we reach out to help someone, we must first see that a person is having a need. Many people are so turned inward that they don't see others or hear their inner moaning and weeping. And I think that's interesting because we all have problems. We all have worries. We all have temptations and sorrows that nobody probably knows about. But we are called, you and I are called to become sensitive to the needs of others that we know when they need healing and are reaching out to Jesus, even though they may not initially confess their need. And I think that's so important because I know some people in here that you wouldn't know some of the things that they're going through. And for people to share the things that are going on in their inner lives, that is a humbling and an honoring thing for us to be sharing with one another, to be crying out, to confess some things that are going on that are tough. Because here's the reality is that you and I, we're not perfect. There are things that happen in our lives each single day that are hard, that are hard to walk through. And for us to be able to express that need, and for us, if we're on the other side, to not only see that need, but to see a need and to try to meet that need is what Jesus was constantly doing in his ministry. So, I get it. Sometimes it is difficult to get beyond the surface, right? And can even be awkward. But one of my favorite quotes ever is from Theodore Roosevelt and it says this, is "that people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care". Let me say that one more time. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. And I think that's so true. That's true of like, you know, people now, and it's true of people back then. And although you and I are not God in the flesh, if we really strive to, we can seek to understand and to know people for who they truly are and what they need, maybe it's prayer. Maybe it's helping

them move, or maybe it's helping them to simply feel seen and to be understood. We are to serve those in need with confidence, and our service to them can cause them to see Jesus in a renewed and a healing way probably. And so, the second step as we move on here, the second value is Availability. And Jesus was the master of being available, right? Jesus was never too busy to respond to those who sought out his help. When Jesus encountered Zacchaeus, he was on his way to a final week of ministry in the city of Jerusalem, a week that would ultimately culminate in his death on the cross and his resurrection. Nothing was more important than this event, but Jesus had time for Zacchaeus, even though he was a hated tax collector, sinner, and an outcast in the eyes of all who lived in Jericho. Jesus made himself available to Zacchaeus and had time for him. You see, people today, we're starving for the gifts of time and concern. And what I love about our church is that, yes, we are a giving church. We are, I mean, honestly, everywhere else I've been, I feel like you guys are so amazing at giving and giving joyfully. But the thing that we're seeing now, and I've talked about before, is that people are starving for our time. And that's honestly our greatest resource and that we hold dearly, right? Here in Johnson County, I mean, it's hard to want to not be involved in every single thing, our kids in every sport, because these are all good things, right? But to give of our time and our energy, that's what Jesus was truly all about. And so, from place to place, you would constantly read in his ministry of him taking time to see people, to know them, but to also hear what was going on in their lives and to be available. And Jesus expects the same of us today. So, who are those people in your life? Or are you one of those people? Are you one of those people that are available? And when I think about this, I think about my sweet wife, Krista. She's here and she doesn't like getting bragged on, but she makes herself available all the time to people. Whether it's cooking meals for families with newborns or meeting up with a friend last minute that's going through a tough season or going on a run with her friend, Rachel, every single week. And somehow, I don't understand it, somehow, she's able to run and talk at the same time. Does anyone else have that ability? Anyone else here? Not me, not me. So, this woman's amazing at being available and she's a great listener. And so, I'm constantly trying to learn that from her. And we've been married like 11 years and I'm still trying to figure it out. But are you someone that makes yourself available to letting the Holy Spirit work in and through you? Or do you need a little bit of encouragement to break out of your shell or to say yes to more spur the moment opportunities to love and to serve those around you? I know I do. And I hope that you can be encouraged in that as well. Our third step, our third value is Acceptance. So, notice here that Jesus did not say to Zacchaeus, clean up your act. When you stop collecting taxes, I'll come to your house then. That is not what he said at all. He accepted Zacchaeus just as he was. So, what I want to say here is that of course, accepting others does not mean that we accept the way they are without intending to

point them to Jesus and for them to grow in their knowledge and wisdom and eventually in a relationship with him. But rather it means accepting them the way they are so that we might help them move forward in pointing them to Christ, if that makes sense. So, our motivation must always be to serve people in Christ so that they can become all they can be as God's children. Acceptance is neither a denial of their current condition nor a belief that things can never improve or get better. And I know this can be also difficult for us, church, because sometimes we like to skip the part of recognizing where they're at and eventually get to the product, right? The end result, right? We're point A to point B people. But what we're truly being encouraged and to think about this morning is that space in between, right? Some of my favorite moments from this past year as a youth leader and director has actually been leading our, well, they were juniors, now they're seniors, which is crazy, our senior guys. I've just loved getting to know them and it started out as me just simply showing up and being a part of their small group, but eventually what happens is these young people, they allow you into their lives. And it's one of the most amazing things ever. And eventually I was getting asked to go get dinner with them. I went with one to the gym and that was an experience. He asked me to do flex photos with him and I was like, I'm not doing that, not doing that. But I've been walking with a young man whom you'll get to meet in a few moments. His name is Colby and I've got to walk with him for the past almost three years now and gotten to see him grow in his knowledge of the Lord. And today he's getting baptized. So, it's kind of an amazing thing. I'm excited for you guys to get to meet him. But he is, over the last few years, taken his faith super seriously and grown tremendously. And he's one of our middle school leaders, Wednesday nights, and I could just go on and on. But it's amazing to see how when you show up in these young people's lives, eventually they let you in and they allow you to interact and to impact them on a level that you may have never seen before. And that's trusting in exactly what we know here is this acceptance of seeing them for who they are, not trying to change them, but allowing the Holy Spirit to do the work. And that's what it's all about. And that's what Jesus was all about. This fourth step, this fourth value, I'll tell them to the next one, is abiding. And this is where we get to the trickier ones because I feel like the first three are, yeah, like outward things, but I feel like these last two are big inward things that we ourselves need to work on. And they're the hardest ones for me. So Abiding. What does that word mean? Maybe you've never heard that word before. Other words that are like it are to remain, to stay, to wait, to dwell, and to reside. Luke records that Jesus stayed at the house of Zacchaeus. He was there long enough for a meal and probably an overnight stay. And to serve others best, we must likewise abide with them. We must walk in their shoes, see things through their eyes, and be close enough to them, and to spend enough time with them to be of lasting benefit. It's more than just a few days of us spending a couple hours with them, but throughout the course of time, spending hours

with them, getting to know them, serving with alongside them. And I can't tell you how many times I've heard someone's story and been kind of shocked at what they've been through and how God has brought them to where they're at today. It takes sitting across from someone, seeing them eye to eye, serving along with them, and to appreciate and know who they are, even despite the differences that you may have with them. We are called to abide in Christ always, and to be in such a close relationship with him and his word that it's impossible for people to see the end of our love and where his begins. I know that's a really, tough challenge, right? To be so loving all the time that people automatically see Jesus, but that's what he's called this body of Christ to you, church, that's what he's called all of us to. Is that it's only when we serve others in this way that people can count on us to be there in a time of need. So when we abide with others and remain available to them, our witness becomes truly strong and steadfast. We become more effective for the gospel when we put down roots and choose to abide in relationship with others. So, this past week, my wife and I were in Utah, we hiked several national parks. I don't know how we did it. We somehow squished it into like five or six days. And one of the, probably the coolest place we were at was Bryce Canyon. And I just remember like, we went up and down and like, I think we, they're called like, they're switchbacks, I think. There was like at least 50 switchbacks, I'm gonna say it. Like going up this hill, up this canyon, it was insane. But I just remember being up on top and seeing this amazing view. And if I would have had a little bit more time, I would have put some pictures in there, but I'll just never forget looking over to the right side and seeing this tree. You could see its roots just like barely hanging on to this canyon side. It was literally hanging on by a thread, it looked like. But that, and I leaned over to Chris, I was like, well, there's a sermon in there. And lo and behold, y'all, right now is when I get to talk about it, so. But that's what it's all about, right? Is that this tree, even though it was barely hanging on, its roots were still, it was still rooted in that canyon side. And so, we at times, yeah, we're not going to be all the time be perfect. We're not going to all the time be doing it right. Like I know every day I fail, but I know that if we're staying at least like planted in the, and grafted into the Father, we will be able to be exactly like He is and to serve and to love others just as He has. In a world where it's easy to jump ship and to escape when things get difficult or uncomfortable, we are commanded at times to stay and to put in the dirty work to plant the gospel. And that takes time, consistency, and abiding. This last one, this ultimate step is the toughest one in my opinion, and that's Self-Abandonment. Laying aside all of one's selfish desires and all of one's personal agenda in order to do whatever God asks. Truly and honestly, church, that is the most difficult thing that is for us to do because here I feel like where we live, it is so easy to get comfortable with what we have, who we know, who we talk to, who we're with, the things we have, the schools that our kids go to. It is easy to get comfortable and to get a little bit complacent. But that's not how Jesus was,

and that's not what He's called us to today is that He's called us to a place of being uncomfortable, abandoning, self-abandoning everything that we know. That's probably not initially, maybe you are selling everything you have and moving somewhere else. Maybe that could be what He calls you to, but it could also mean that you need to die to your attitude, your entitlement, maybe how you view people of another nationality. It could be so many different things. Abandoning yourself means emptying all those things and allowing Jesus to flow more through you. So, when Jesus entered the home of Zacchaeus, He abandoned any concern for His public reputation. So that kind of reminds me of like, we flew out of Vegas yesterday, and it was funny 'cause our hotel was right. You could see that spaceship Raider Nation Stadium from where we were staying at, and it just so happened, I was just sporting my Chief socks and my Chief sweatshirt, and we were just loud and proud. We didn't care, and that's maybe a little bit like what Jesus had to go through, probably not. But it's all right. But His reputation, He abandoned any concern for His public reputation, yet He was willing to risk a loss of public esteem in order to bring salvation to this household of Zacchaeus. And that's what's most fascinating. Likewise, in the book of Acts, we read how Peter went to the house of Cornelius, abandoning years of prejudice against the Gentiles. Peter was willing to go because it was clear to him that God was calling him to go, even if it meant stepping outside the bounds of his own comfort zone. And in the same way, kind of a call back to my sermon from last year, if you guys are here, is that four men, they carried their paralyzed friend to Jesus on a stretcher and tore a hole in the roof in order to lower him down into Jesus's presence. And that's honestly, they abandoned their own schedules and their desires. Now, I know those are very extreme instances, right? But what does that mean for you and I? What does that mean for you and I today? Where are you at in your service? Which one of those five things do you need to work on or give to Jesus to work on in you this next week? Once again, the pattern toward full service is awareness, availability, acceptance, abiding, and self-abandonment. Where are you in this pattern of service? To what next step is God calling you? You must become aware of the needs of others before you can ever try to meet those needs. You must become available if you are to serve. You must accept others fully just as they are, and if you are to give them the unconditional love of Christ. And it's making sure that you abide with others over time so that your service becomes steadfast. And finally, as a servant, you are called to exercise abandonment, not merely serving others some of the time, but living in a constant state of outreach, on the job, at home, at church, in your community, wherever God has led you right now at this point. And there's so many ways at our church that you can do that, honestly. And one of the biggest things is this upcoming week, you've seen the decorations, you know it's happening, summer blast, right? I know that there are going to be hundreds of kids, your kids, running around here for the next few days, and how awesome would it be for you guys to, even last minute,

just to show up and to help out. And so, I know you can go to our website and find the sign up to register and to help, but there are so many ways for us to be a part of what God's doing. And you've probably seen even the huge building that's being constructed right now at our garden. Or even, shameless plug here, as this summer is kind of weirdly ending, we are always needing amazing servants, people like you that love Jesus, love the church, and that love young people, and want to see them know who their creator is. And so, if that's you, if you want to even just learn more about all of our opportunities, just find me, find Riley and Cassidy, or one of us, to even just hear about them, because we would love for you to even just have a conversation about what that looks like, because as we've seen, and as you're going to see in a moment, God does miraculous things in and through these young people and how amazing would it be for you to be a part of that. And these young people weren't here just on happenstance, they had amazing youth leaders, parents, grandparents, coaches, teachers, all pointing them towards a loving creator. And so, we hope that you would want to be a part of that, if that's you, and if not, we would, you know, just want to point you to the several things that we have here at Colonial that you can be a part of. So, thank you guys so much, I'm going to pray, and then we are going to continue on with our service, and we got a few baptisms going on this morning, so yeah. Father God, we thank you so much for this morning, we thank you so much for everything that you've blessed us with, getting to see these young people do so many amazing things, Lord. We thank you so much for just the words that you were given to me, gave me this morning, Lord, that I hope that it was impactful, and that we walk away with at least one thing that we can work on this week, and taking those values and applying them into our lives and how we serve and love others, and that comes from you, Father, and how you loved Zacchaeus and saw him for who he was and abided, and how you just gave us so many great examples of what it means to live on mission, Father. So, we thank you, we praise you, and we just want to lift up this time and continue to lift up this service to you. In your name we pray, amen.