



**Dear Crossroads Family,**

My upcoming 1-month sabbatical begins next Monday, July 13. I will be back in the office on August 10<sup>th</sup>. I want to thank you for caring for me and Angela, allowing me this special time to relax and recharge for our days of ministry and worship together ahead. As I reflected on this privilege you have afforded me and on the generous offering you have given to enable us to do some special things during the sabbatical, I thought about my title, “pastor.”

That Biblical word is literally translated “shepherd.” Peter used the verbal form of the word in **1 Peter 5:1-2** when he wrote, “To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, . . .” The role of a shepherd was well-known to Peter's first-century audience. A shepherd was to ensure that the sheep with which he was entrusted were well-cared for and protected from their natural predators like wolves and lions. David described the role of a shepherd in **Psalms 23** when he wrote, “The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths. . .”, and Jesus made clear what might be expected of good shepherds when He said in **John 10:11**, “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

When I think of the high standard the Bible places on the role of a shepherd, I can't help but think of ways that I have fallen short in my role as a shepherd to you. Yet you continue to love me and serve the Lord so faithfully under my imperfect leadership.

That's when it hit me. I am so blessed to be the pastor of you, Crossroads, because as I try to shepherd you, *you shepherd me!* What a humbling but wonderful thought. Thank you for all you have done and all you continue to do for me. No “shepherd” has had a better “flock.”

Sunday's sermon is the last in the current series entitled “Connecting with Others Like Jesus Did.” (Sermon notes are provided below.) The following Sunday, July 19, Shad Purcell will be preaching, and he will kick off a new sermon series entitled, “Essentials for Christian Living.” Shad is a faithful follower of Christ and an excellent preacher. Then, for the next 3 Sundays, Bro. Mauricio, Kevin Flowers, and Bro. Stuart will fill the pulpit. Each will be a great blessing to you as they share the Word of God. I hope you will be as committed to Crossroads in my absence as you are when I am present. I will try to join the live worship services online when possible. I know that the services each week will be rich and meaningful. You will be in my prayers.

Thanks again for your love, support, and provision. I can certainly understand St. Paul's sentiment and join him in his expression in **Philippians 1:3-6** – “I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Love,  
Bro. Doug

\*One additional note: Sunday is our monthly Food & Diaper Drive. It was delayed one week due to the holiday weekend. You are always so faithful to this ministry every month, but with the extra week added to the time and the fact that school is out and food sources are not as readily available for some that rely on them, food requests have increased and our pantry has gotten a little bare. Please try and be a little extra generous this month with your donations if you are able. As always thank you for sharing your provision with others! In case it is needed, a shopping list is provided on our website on the Announcements page.

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***Standing with Our 4 AM Father***

***Luke 19:1-10***

Have you ever lost anyone or anything very precious to you and you were willing to do \_\_\_\_\_ to get them back? Remembering that will help you better understand Luke 19:1-10.

Usually, the lesson we draw from the story of Zacchaeus is that he was a \_\_\_\_\_ guy who became a \_\_\_\_\_ guy and righted all the wrongs he had committed \_\_\_\_\_ he accepted Jesus as his Savior. Something like that happened, but Luke is making a different point. Notice that Jesus doesn't say, "Today salvation has come to this house, so this man has \_\_\_\_\_ become a son of Abraham." He says that Zacchaeus \_\_\_\_\_ a son of Abraham who had become lost, and that's why salvation came to his house.

Two words help us get Luke's point. First, Jesus said, "I must...." The word "must" in the Bible means something is necessary because \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus didn't just need a place to rest up and have lunch. He HAD to go to his house because it was an obligation placed upon Him by the \_\_\_\_\_. The second word is "salvation." The name *Jesus* literally means "Yahweh is \_\_\_\_\_" or simply "Salvation." Luke wants us to see that Salvation came to the house because the \_\_\_\_\_ arrived to do the work of seeking and saving. He did so because Zacchaeus was a son of Abraham, a \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ who needed to be found.

It is easy for us to look at the disruptive, difficult, and even evil things that people do, and consider those people to be inconvenient, annoying, even \_\_\_\_\_ to our well-being who must be \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. Is that how do you see the broken world around you? Do you view them like the people in the story who began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner." Or do you consider every person like a lost child that needs to \_\_\_\_\_?

Zacchaeus' story is here to encourage us to \_\_\_\_\_ our Heavenly Father at the window of heaven, see His love for the world, and sense the \_\_\_\_\_ He feels for His creation, His children who are lost and so desperately need to come home.

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