

# THE HALL CLOSET

(My Heart, Christ's Home; Message Nine)

Luke 19:1-10

## A. We're willing to distort truth in order to spare ourselves

*"The awareness of sin used to be our shadow. Christians hated sin—feared it, fled from it, grieved over it. A man who lost his temper might wonder whether he could still go to communion. A woman who for years envied her more attractive and intelligent sister might worry that this sin threatened her soul. In today's group confessionals, it's harder to tell. Our newer language fudges."*

(Cornelius Plantinga, *Not the Way It's Suppose to Be: A Breviary of Sin*)

## B. In our study of *My Heart; Christ's Home*, we're at the hall closet

### C. When Jesus preached, there was one word he often used: Repent

*"In those days, John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea and saying "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 3:1-2)*

*"Jesus began to preach, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 4:17)*

*"After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" (Mark 1:14-15)*

*"When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:37-38)*

## NAMING OUR SIN

### A. Repenting isn't excusing, rationalizing or blaming someone else for my sin

*"When I kept silent, my bones wasted away...your hand was heavy on me. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the Lord"—and you forgave the guilt of my sin" (Psalm 32:3-5)*

### B. Repentance needs to happen one sin at a time

### C. Repentance means being painfully honest with God

### D. In repentance, it's good to ask, "Why did I sin? What's the reason?"

## SEEKING HIS HELP

### A. When you don't know what to confess, ask God to point out your sin

*"The heart is deceitful above all things..." (Jeremiah 17:9)*

#### 1. Sin is not just specific acts that we do our fail to do

#### 2. It is a brokenness inside that leaks out all the time

*"Who can discern his errors? Forgive my hidden faults." (Psalm 19:12)*

### B. Ask God for a change in attitude about the sin that has trapped us

*"Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up." (James 4:8-10)*

#### 1. God isn't saying we need to grovel before He'll forgive us

#### 2. But we do need a godly sorrow that leads to repentance

*"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." (2 Corinthians 7:10)*

## MAKING AMENDS

### A. This is the difference between genuine repentance and damage control

### B. Zacchaeus is a classic example

*"Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount." (Luke 19:8)*

## EXPERIENCING GOD'S GRACE

### A. Repentance should always lead us to experience God's grace

#### 1. Jesus loves it when someone hands him the keys to their hall closet

#### 2. Grace is God's specialty. That's why He went to the cross for us

#### 3. This creates a community where people are so aware of their brokenness and God's grace that there isn't any room for judging other

*"I was shocked, confused and bewildered as I entered Heaven's door. Not by the beauty of it all, by the lights or its décor. But it was the folks in Heaven that made me sputter and gasp. The thieves, the liars, sinners, alcoholics, and the trash. There stood the kid from seventh grade who swiped my lunch money twice. Next to him was my old neighbor who never said anything nice. Herb, who I always thought was rotting away in Hell. Was sitting pretty on Cloud Nine looking incredible well. I nudged Jesus, What's the deal? I'd like to hear your take. How did all these sinners get up here? God must have made a mistake. And, why is everyone so quiet and somber? Give me a clue. Hush child, He said, they are all in shock, no one thought they would see you.*

### B. Truth is, we all have an odor coming from our hall closet

#### 1. Repentance is the death that leads to life

#### 2. Jesus loves when His people humble themselves and repent

*"The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever. He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love towards those who fear Him. As far as the East is from the West, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. And as a father has compassion for his children, so the Lord has compassion for those who fear Him." (Psalm 103-8-13)*

#### 3. Jesus just loves to clean our closets. It makes his Father's heart glad