Sermon: **He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed a sycamore tree to see Jesus** (Luke 19.4)

Pope John Paul II came to Canterbury, UK on 29 May 1982 in his pope-mobile. I stood on a shop window ledge to see him go by. Reminds me of the Zacchaeus story.

[1] TEXT. Get away from the crowd

In my case I could easily got away from the crowd but then would not have seen the pope!

The crowd for Zacchaeus was not automatically wrong, just in the way. What is crowding us out?

Do we need a space to think? Time out to reassess issues, what we think of Jesus/God?

[2] TEXT. Climb up a sycamore tree

Zacchaeus could simply have let the crowd stop him seeing Jesus, but climbed up to see. It is so easy to allow barriers to prevent us seeing God afresh. What are the barriers to seeing God more clearly?

Do we simply repeat what we learned at home, in Sunday School, school, or habits of thinking learnt as a young adult? Do we need to acknowledge that God might be showing us some new way?

At the next General Election there may be two referenda – cannabis legalisation, euthanasia – it is easy simply to spout our opinion without true reflection, or seeking God’s will. This does not necessarily mean our old opinions are wrong, but we still need to ask what God is saying today about them.

NB. There is a barrier to admitting mistaken thinking – those ‘wasted’ years, but better late than never.

So what is your sycamore tree? How will you find a refreshed vision of God, or see things from God’s view?

[3] TEXT. Seeing Jesus

This is not just reading the stories of what Jesus did and said, but rediscovering who Jesus *is*.

This is not just what others think, but what is true for you.

Zacchaeus had to get his own perspective; so do we all.

This is all true also of issues, opinions, relationships, etc.

For Zacchaeus this incident led to change and transformation.

It is never too late to allow God to change and transform us. None of us is perfect, none have ‘made it’.

TEXT. For Zacchaeus it all began with wanting to see Jesus, wanting to change. How about you?