



# Zacchaeus

“Loyal Followers”

*“Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’” Luke 19:9-10*

Zacchaeus was that funny little guy that climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus. Right? Yes, but he was much more than what we all learned in a little song about him. His story is only recorded in Luke 9:1-10. He is an example of how Luke talked about the less fortunate. Zacchaeus was not poor in money, but he was poor in spirit. His story is told to us through Luke for a reason.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, one of the most hated people in Jericho. Tax collectors had never been popular, but under the Romans the citizens of Jericho were not seeing any of the money spent in their area. In Rome the money went to the foreign oppressors, but a percentage went to the local tax collector so he would keep doing the “dirty work” for the Roman government. This scenario has been repeated many times in history. Since the tax collector was allowed to keep a percentage for himself, the more he collected, the more he was able to keep.

Luke tells us that he was a wealthy man, so he must have been really disliked, but he must have also been searching for something. Money was not the answer. He was probably lonely because he wouldn't have many friends, and then he was beckoned by the grace of God to seek out Jesus as he walked through the town of Jericho. Christ is able to look past our physical being into our heart. As Jesus was passing by Zacchaeus thought the only way he could get to see Christ past the crowds was to climb up into a tree. When Jesus saw him, he called him by name and told him he was going to his home for dinner that evening.

The Bible tells us that the people were really upset that Jesus would offer to have dinner with Zacchaeus. It was not right for a Jew to enter the home of a sinner. But Jesus wasn't the ordinary Jew. The Jewish people thought it made them “impure” by entering the home of a public sinner, and that was what they thought Zacchaeus was. But Christ saw something else. He saw a heart that reached out to him. The other people said that Christ was going to be the guest of a sinner not acknowledging that they also were sinners. Zacchaeus protested to Christ and said “Look, 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 19:6. Then Christ offered him a gift far greater than any taxes he had stolen from the people. He offered him salvation. We are called daily by Christ, but we often don't hear the invitation.

I am reminded of a time at a family church camp that none of us there will ever forget. A young man who was mentally challenged loved the Lord, and we all loved him because he was such a nice young man. One evening when we were on our way to vespers, he stood out in the middle of the ball field and sang “How Great Thou Art” loud enough that everyone could hear. He wasn't doing it for public display; he had been moved by the Holy Spirit to sing. It was an unforgettable and moving experience for each one of us.

I am reminded of a passage in Luke 18 when two men are trying to trick Jesus, a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee said “God, I thank you that I am not like other men, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get. “ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’” Christ tells us the humble one was exalted.

I wonder if I would have been tempted to be upset also just like the other people and think it was wrong for Christ to go to this sinner's home. I wonder if I would have been like the Pharisee. We are every day, but we don't stop to realize that “There but for the grace of God, go I.”

Prayer: Almighty God, You have been so good to us. Yet, we want more. We don't see that money and goods can't give us happiness. Help us to have the fulfillment that Zacchaeus and the young man at church camp had by accepting You through Your grace and sharing Your love to others. Amen.

1. What made Zacchaeus change his way of living
2. What does it take to make us change our worldly way?
3. What lessons can we learn from the story of Zacchaeus?
4. Do you think that the young man was moved by the Holy Spirit?
5. Do we sometimes frown on people that praise the Lord instead of glorying in their testimony?  
Are you a son of Abraham?

