



the Source

Let anyone who is thirsty come to me...

He was indeed a *wee little man*, and a *wee little man* was he. Society viewed Zacchaeus that way, and his physical stature confirmed what everyone thought of him. To them he was neither fish nor fowl...a half-breed, a Jew, working for the Roman government that occupied their land and took their money. Everyone knew his type...a corrupt exploiter of his own people. The degree of his dishonesty wasn't important. All tax collectors were rotten, and he was a chief tax collector! He was also rich. Wasn't that proof enough? Jesus said how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom. Surely there was no hope for the *wee little man*.

The crowd watches as Zacchaeus hurries past them. Now what is he doing? That little man is making a spectacle of himself, climbing a tree like that! But Zacchaeus is no longer aware of the crowd or their grumbling. He is only aware of a golden opportunity, if only he can get high enough to see him, or be seen by him. Eyes meet, the moment of truth. What Zacchaeus sees in the eyes of the Son of Man is no longer the look of contempt he had grown used to seeing in the eyes of others, but compassion and acceptance, which for the *wee little man* was nothing short of salvation. From that moment on, the life of Zacchaeus, son of Abraham, would never be the same.

I think of times when I may not have been as gracious as I could have been. I know there have been times, but I just can't remember all of them. Some things I suppose you try to forget as soon as they happen, but they never quite go away, do they? I wonder about them, those times when I acted in *wee little ways*, when I could have been much bigger about it, less selfish, more generous, more giving, more forgiving, more accepting and loving. I find myself stumbling for the nearest sycamore tree, hoping to climb up and be seen, hoping to make amends, hoping to hear a word of grace, afraid that perhaps this time Jesus won't look at me, only to find that he has been searching for me, again, and has found me.

— Rev. Van Dickens, Retired Clergy-in- Residence

A Family Affair

Zacchaeus is a Bible story that is only 10 verses long. It may be a little story about a little man, but Zacchaeus makes a big impact.

Read Luke 19:1-9. Zacchaeus desperately wanted to see Jesus. Imagine the shock he felt when Jesus chose him out of the crowd, perched high in a tree, and called him by name. Zacchaeus cheated people and did not make good life choices. Most people did not like him. Yet Jesus knew his name and wanted a relationship with him.

Zacchaeus needed God in his heart and in his life. When Zacchaeus accepted Jesus into his heart, his life was transformed. Jesus knows your name and wants a relationship with you, just like he did with Zacchaeus.

Jesus knows your name! He loves you and he knows you. It is amazing. Create a family collage of your names. Use colorful chalk and write each person's name in different colors on the sidewalk. Your family could also turn plain white paper into a masterpiece with everyone's name written in marker or crayon. Look at the names and remember that Jesus knows each person's heart. You are special. You are unique. There is only one you.

Dear Lord, Zacchaeus' life changed because of Jesus. Please help us strengthen our relationship with Jesus every day. We are blessed because he knows our names. Amen

— Tammy Parks, Elementary Coordinator

Monday: Luke 19:1-2

He was a tax collector and he was rich. With those descriptions, the crowd easily summed up Zacchaeus as a loser of biblical proportions. What he was doing there and what was going on in his heart was not important to those who mentally condemned him. It was what he was that no one could stand.

- Are there any who fit the mold of Zacchaeus today? Are there any who fit the mold of the crowd?
- What must it have been like for Zacchaeus to be who he was in that society? Scripture reports that he was rich. Were there ways in which he was also poor? What are you rich in?

Tuesday: Luke 19:3-4

Zacchaeus had heard about the man from Galilee, but had not met him. He heard that he was the one sent from God. Was he? Zacchaeus determined himself to find out. He was willing to do whatever it took, even embarrass himself in front of others.

- What are you willing to do in order to see Jesus? Would you be willing to look silly in the eyes of your friends and family?
- What changes would you make if you were given the opportunity to encounter Jesus? Does Jesus encounter us throughout our lives, and if so, how do we respond when he does?

Wednesday: Luke 19:5-7

Jesus initiates the conversation even though Zacchaeus climbed up to see who Jesus was. Without demanding repentance or restitution, he demands to go to the house of Zacchaeus, thereby giving Zacchaeus restored status in his community. Head held high, he is not the *wee little man* everyone thinks he is.

- Zacchaeus responds to Jesus' entering his house by rejoicing upon hearing the good news. He knows he is being offered the gift of being reckoned a person of equal standing, no longer small and scorned. In worship, we experience God's fellowship and words of life. What does rejoicing look like to you?
- Jesus crossed a barrier when he spoke to Zacchaeus. He was associating with harlots, sinners, and tax collectors! What sort of messiah is he? Whose messiah is he? For whom does he come today?

Thursday: Luke 19:8

Upon realizing the gift Jesus has given him, without merit and without price, Zacchaeus makes a conscious decision to change his life. Emboldened by the One who empowers, he promises to do his job impeccably well and restore those he may have wronged, and then some!

- Zacchaeus made some clear-cut decisions about his professional conduct, lest anybody would doubt his sincerity to be an honest and fair chief tax collector. Are there any changes you need to make in the way you conduct business in order to conform to the ways of the Son of Man?
- Zacchaeus now sees clearly what he needs to do, having clearly seen Jesus for who he is. What keeps you from clearly seeing Jesus? What are you willing to do in order to see him?

Friday: Luke 19:9

Zacchaeus is no longer a *wee little man*, but a son of Abraham. He can stand tall among the people without shame or remorse. Jesus has entered his home. Salvation has come to him. That is what acceptance means for those who do not experience it.

- Is there anyone you know who has not heard the message that they too are fully and completely a son, a daughter of Abraham? Are you willing to tell them they are?
- Zacchaeus remained a chief tax collector, doing his thankless job, but now with close attention to ethics. In God's eyes, he is no longer lost, but found. Will he be treated differently? How might Zacchaeus be a role model for your life?