



Zacchaeus The Tax Collector

Luke 19: 1-10

Story Breakdown

The Man Who Didn't Have Any Friends (none)
Taken from The Jesus Storybook Bible

There was once a man who didn't have any friends (none). Do you have any friends? Well, of course you do, but not Zacchaeus. Poor Zacchaeus didn't have any.

You're probably wondering why. Was it because he was so short? (That's not a reason not to like someone.) Was it because he had a name that was hard to say? (Well, neither is that.) Even though he was short and he did have a funny name, that wasn't it. No, people didn't like Zacchaeus because he stole their money.

Zacchaeus collected taxes (taxes were what people had to pay to the king), but Zacchaeus took more than he was supposed to and kept the extra money for himself and made himself very rich. Everyone knew what he was up to and it made them cross and grumpy. They didn't like Zacchaeus one bit.

So they made sure he knew it by doing things like avoiding him. And walking on the opposite side of the street. And pretending not to see him. And whispering things like, "there's that nobody who thinks he's a somebody!" loud enough so he could hear.

Anyway, one day, a huge crowd gathered by the road. Jesus was coming to their town and everyone wanted to see him.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus too. But everyone was too tall. He tried jumping up and down, but that didn't work. He couldn't see a thing.

Luckily, Zacchaeus had a good idea. "I'll climb that sycamore tree!" He said. So he did. (He was surprisingly good at climbing trees for a man who was so unusually short that he had to take a flying leap just to get into his chair in the morning.)

Suggested Activities:

- Read Luke 19: 1-10 together
- Color the attached coloring page and share it on Stone United Methodist facebook page OR email it to the church office for Pastor Sarah to share in church!
- Sing-a-long with Veggie Tales on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hq-HA5arHYw> "Zacchaeus Singalong"

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank You for sending Your son, Jesus, to help us learn to love and be kind to one another. Help us to share our love with people who may seem different from us, as Jesus did. Thank you for knowing me by name and loving me. Amen.

Service Activity

Make a card for someone you miss and send it to them in the mail! Draw pictures, use stickers or write a special message.

Craft Idea:

- Toilet paper or paper towel tube
- Scissors
- Construction paper
- Tape or glue
- String or ribbon (if you'd like to hang up the finished product)
- Markers/decorative materials
- Clothespin or popsicle stick

Procedure: 1. Decorate your popsicle stick or clothespin with a face and/or hair, clothing, etc. 2. Color your tube (tree trunk) if desired. Add a Bible verse or caption. 3. Cut leaf shapes out of construction paper (likely green color). 4. Glue the leaves onto the tree trunk. 5. Place your clothespin in or on the tree and watch Zacchaeus climb or hang out! Hang up with string, if you like.

From the tree, Zacchaeus had the perfect view – all the way down the road.

Another minute and suddenly Jesus was at the tree. He stopped and looked up. Zacchaeus saw Jesus. And Jesus saw Zacchaeus.

“Zacchaeus,” Jesus said. “I’d like to come over to your house.”

Zacchaeus almost fell out of the tree! Come over to his house? No one ever wanted to come anywhere near his house, let alone inside it.

The people saw this and, needless to say, it made them ever crosser and grumpier than usual. They mumbled and murmured and muttered, “Why is Jesus being kind to that big sinner? Doesn’t Jesus know about him?”

Zacchaeus scrambled down and took Jesus to his house. He was in a big hurry because he didn’t want Jesus to change his mind. Perhaps Jesus hadn’t heard about him. Perhaps Jesus didn’t know about how he had been stealing. And how no one liked him. And how he didn’t have any friends.

But Jesus knew- he knew all about Zacchaeus and the stealing and everything – and he still loved him.

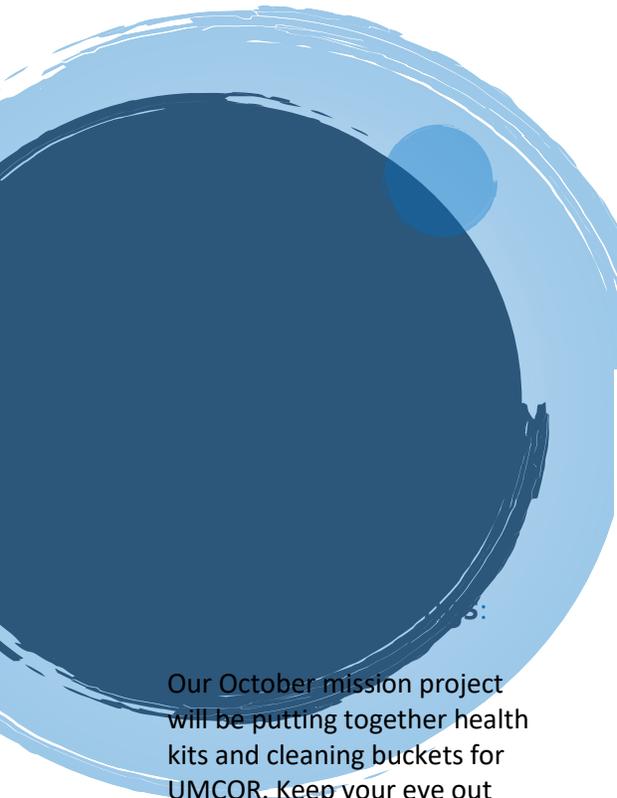
Zacchaeus was ashamed. “Lord,” he said, turning pale, “what I’ve done is wrong. But now I want to do the right thing. I will give the money back to everyone – four times what I stole!” And that’s just what he did.

Jesus smiled. “My friend!” he said “Today God has rescued you!”

Jesus loved Zacchaeus when nobody else did. He was Zacchaeus’ friend, even when no one else was. Because Jesus was showing people what God’s love was like – his wonderful, Never Stopping, Never Giving Up, Unbreaking, Always and Forever Love.

Questions to Ponder:

1. What did Zacchaeus do to show Jesus he was sorry?
2. Have you ever done something wrong?
3. How did you show you were sorry?



[A helpful background note to parents](#)

Taken from missionbibleclass.org

Our October mission project will be putting together health kits and cleaning buckets for UMCOR. Keep your eye out for the church newsletter for more information!

What child has not had to stretch and climb on top of something to get a good view. This is a great story for them because they know what it is like to have their view blocked by a bunch of adults! Jericho was about one mile west of the Jordan River and about 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem. This a city rebuilt by Herod the Great. The Romans ruled the land and Jews were subject to Roman tax. The Roman government paid Jews to collect taxes from their own people. Zacchaeus is referred to as a “chief tax collector”. This is the only time the term is used in the bible. Perhaps he was manager over a large number of tax collectors. Because of this and because Jericho was in a prosperous region, Zacchaeus would have been quite wealthy. The Romans expected a set amount from the tax collectors. Any money the tax collectors raised above that amount was theirs to keep. This set-up invited corruption. Tax collectors were hated because of the way they cheated the people. The Jews especially hated the Jewish tax collectors because they saw them as traitors of their own people. Some have suggested that short Zacchaeus was willing to climb a tree because it had the added benefit of keeping him out of the way of a crowd of potentially hostile “former customers.”

If Jesus were concerned about being popular then he would certainly not have gone to the house of someone whom the people hated ([Luke 19:7-9](#)). Verse 9 explains exactly why Jesus chose to go to Zacchaeus’ house. He did not come to praise the people that were already good. He came to “seek and to save what was lost.” Zacchaeus must have been ready for a change of heart because he was eager to see and hear Jesus. The scripture does not record the conversation that took place between Zacchaeus and Jesus. Possibly Jesus showed him the error of his ways and then Zacchaeus repented. More probably, Zacchaeus already knew what he was doing wrong. The fact that Jesus took an interest in him and came to his house humbled him in such a way that led him to do what he needed to do. Zacchaeus was a Jew when he was cheating and stealing from people. But in verse 9 Jesus points out that it was on this day that salvation truly came to Zacchaeus. Just being born into a Jewish family was not being a true Jew. His repentance showed that he really was a Jew- son of Abraham. Sometimes children (and adults) know the right thing to do and even want to do it. Changing just seems too difficult. We need to let children know that we will love them and help them be better. Jesus believed in Zacchaeus and gave him the encouragement he needed. We can do the same for others. Even children know how to encourage their friends and tell them “I know you can do it.”

