

HOW COULD HE BE SAVED?

Luke 19:1-10

Q: Who was the shortest man in the Bible? A: Some think Zacchaeus.

Others believe it was Nehemiah (Knee-high-miah)

or Bildad the Shuhite (Shoe-height).

My sources tell me it was Peter —he slept on his watch!

Many of us learned about this story from the children's chorus:

"Zachaeus was a wee little man . . ."

I love that chorus because it teaches little ones
that Jesus cares about them.

Two problems:

1. **The focus is wrong.** The focus isn't on the fact that he was small.

It's on the fact he was a rich sinner—a traitor—a hated man

—guilty of betraying, cheating his own people.

YET, Jesus came to SEEK him.

2. **He didn't climb the tree "to see what he could see."**

He climbed it because he wanted to see *Jesus*!

REJECTION OF THE SON OF MAN 9:51-19:27

Jesus has demonstrated that He's Messiah.

Now Luke describes Israel's rejection.

At same time, Jesus' determination to go to Jerusalem is noted (9:51).

Instruction for His followers in light of rejection 17:1-19:27

Jesus demonstrates the attitude of the Pharisees toward God's Word.

He then leaves them behind and turns to the disciples.

His instructions are to prepare them for His rejection and departure

Concerning rejection 18:31-19:27

Final series deals with His rejection, death and resurrection

So they'll know what's going to happen

and how it relates to God's plan.

His death and resurrection 18:31-34 which produce ↓

Salvation of Israel 18:35-19:10

Recognition of need 18:35-43

Healing of blind beggar—object lesson concerning Israel's condition

He saw what religious leaders couldn't see: Jesus is Messiah.

He won't let anything stop him from receiving blessing.

Therefore, he's healed of blindness and begins to follow Jesus.

Israel has a similar problem spiritually, and needs to do the same.

SALVATION OF A FEW 19:1-10—small remnant of people

**A few sinful outcasts recognize who Jesus is
and turn to Him.**

* One of Luke's major themes * The point of this story

Zacchaeus is only one individual

—Even worse, he's a tax collector.

Nevertheless, he recognizes his need and trusts Jesus.

He represents the few outcasts who respond appropriately to Him.

As a result, He's saved.

THE TAX COLLECTOR INTRODUCED 1-4 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing

through.² A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was

wealthy.³ He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of

the crowd.⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

He's a chief tax collector. He's wealthy

People hate him—he betrayed them; became rich at their expense.

People think he's a despicable man!

He wants to see Jesus.

He's so anxious that this *rich man* runs ahead, fights the crowd around him, and climbs a tree, because he wants to see Jesus.

People watch him wondering, "*What in the world's wrong with him? Who's he running from? What's his hurry?*"

He doesn't care! He wants to see Jesus.

He doesn't care what people think!

JESUS' INVITATION 5 His invitation, call, response to Zacchaeus.

What does He say to him?

"When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.'"

"Today it's necessary for me to remain/sit in your house!"

Directly, he asks him to put him up.

The implication is more significant: **"I have to abide at your house!"**

ZACCHAEUS' RESPONSE 6 How does he respond to Jesus?

So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

He's excited. He can hardly get out of the tree fast enough.

He welcomes him. — He's celebrating.

THE PEOPLE'S RESPONSE 7 How do they respond? "*All the people saw this and began to mutter, 'He has gone to be the guest of a "sinner."*'"

Are they excited that such a sinful person is reconciled to God?

NO! They complain that Jesus has anything to do with such a lowly creature — a sinful person.

While they're busy complaining, he's busy repenting.

They're too busy crabbing to notice!

ZACCHAEUS' CONVERSION DEMONSTRATED 8

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "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."

He doesn't earn his salvation;

he demonstrates what's happened in his heart.

He always thought he was pretty big. He measures himself by man's standards: money, success, possessions.

When he comes face to face with Jesus, he realizes how small he is.

He gives up everything for something more valuable: *Jesus*.

A total transformation occurs.

He's so grateful to God for the reconciliation, he offers to give away half of his possessions—to the poor.

That's real gratitude!

He promises quadruple restoration to anyone cheated.

The law only required restitution plus a fifth (Lev. 6:1-7);

Corollaries:

if he had violently taken and destroyed it so he couldn't restore it,
he had to quadruple it;

if he was caught with the goods, double.

This tax collector only owes restitution plus 20%.

To remove all doubt, he gives the maximum, far above what he has to!

He quadruples it. He doesn't quibble about amounts.

His heart's changed!

He doesn't take the restitution out of the half he gave away.

He doesn't hang on to much!

If he's as guilty as religious people think he is, he'd be broke!

A woman was contacting her high school classmates about their 35th reunion. Many were excited about seeing old friends again.

One man wrote back, "I have the 5 Bs--baldness, bifocals, bridgework, bulges, and bunions."

A woman quipped, "I wasn't half the woman then that I am today"

Another said, "I can't wait to see everyone. I've changed completely.

In high school I was the class 'tramp.'

I had no standards and everybody knew it.

But after high school I met Jesus. My life was transformed.

I'm not the person I was, and I want everyone to know about it."

JESUS' PROMISE 9-10 *Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."*

Salvation has come. Again, his works don't buy it.

The people don't see him that way.

For them, he's a traitor—he has forfeited his inheritance.

To Jesus he still belongs.

His transformation demonstrates he's a true son of Abraham.

Rom. 4:11-12, 16 *"He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. So then, he is the father of all who believe but have not been circumcised, in order that righteousness might be credited to them. 12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. . . . 16 Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring--not only to those who are of the law but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all."*

Their attitude shows that while their blood is right,

they aren't really Abraham's children.

Zaccheus is the kind of person Jesus came to save: the lost!

The found/saved don't need a Savior; they can make it without Him.

(At least they *think* they can!)

It isn't *the priests* who come to confess sin

and ask Jesus to forgive them!

He came to save those who can't make it on their own.

If we can make it on our own, Jesus has nothing to give us.

If you're here hopeless and lost, living a godless life, needing a change, I have good news!

JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST!

In WW II, the *Lady-Be-Good* was a fine bomber with a well-seasoned, well-prepared flight team aboard. After a successful bombing mission, they were returning home late one night. The instrument panel was working perfectly. Having made the trip many times, the crew knew about how long it takes.

However, they were unaware that strong tail winds pushed the craft more rapidly than normal. The men were amazed when their instruments told them it was time to land. They didn't believe their instruments. Confident they were still far from home, they kept flying, hoping fuel would hold out until they could spot the lights below. The lights never came and the plane went down in the desert, many miles beyond the base.

All perished because they followed their feelings, instead of the guide. What happened there happens every day. Sincere, people are travelling down a collision course with death, unaware of their destiny. They don't know about the One who came "to seek and to save the lost." They don't know about God's seek-and-save mission, in the person of His Son.

Zaccheus thought he came looking for Jesus.

Jesus tells us that HE had come looking for Zaccheus.

—He knew his name

—He looked up in the tree for him

—"He came to seek and to save what was lost."

Significant issue for us: the attitude of the crowd toward the tax collector.

Not a story about Jesus' love for little people.

It's not about how He loves those cute little children who run the halls, pulling on daddy's pant leg.

This is a story about how God loves sinful people we cross paths with that we can't stand to have around us, the outcasts of society, sinful people out there who are ruining our society and who are "out to get" God's people.

We can't appreciate the depth of their disgust, because tax collectors aren't so significant in our thinking.

[Except Sunday after April 15, we don't think about the tax collector

The religious people of their day did—they hated them!

They were crooks! They cheated God's people.

They were out to get them!

WHAT LESSON DOES GOD WANT US TO LEARN FROM ZACCHAEUS' STORY?

WHO DO WE HATE?

WHO'S OUT TO GET GOD'S PEOPLE TODAY?

Do we care about them? Are we seeking them?

Or, do we just look for "worthy" people—OUR KIND of people?

My concern: conversations I hear

about people around us who are "out to get" God's people.

Don't get me wrong.

We need to be aware of trends in society that may result in persecution of God's people in the not-so-distant future.

But I hear angry words about the opposition and few tears shed about the fact that these people are lost and going to a Christless eternity.

Jesus came to seek, to actively look for, the lost!

*Do **we** care about them?*

What difference does that concern make in our daily schedules?

Samuel Colgate was an active church member. During an evangelistic campaign a prostitute came forward. Broken-hearted, she wept openly, asked God to save her and expressed a desire to join the church. "I'll sit in some back corner," she said. The preacher hesitated to call for a motion to accept her into membership, and for a moment the silence was oppressive. Finally, a member suggested that action be postponed. Mr. Colgate arose and said, "I guess we blundered when we prayed that the Lord would save sinners. We forgot to specify what kind. We'd better ask Him to forgive us this oversight. The Holy Spirit has touched this woman, but apparently the Lord doesn't understand she isn't the type we want Him to rescue."

Paul's efforts towards jailers, politicians, religious leaders—He cared!

Jesus never accepts the lifestyle of the outcasts.

But He does accept *them*.

He identifies with publicans, sinners, even prostitutes.

Jesus not only accepts them when they happen to show up at church, He comes looking for them.

He has gone out looking for them! *Do we?*

It doesn't matter what the crowd may think of you—Jesus came looking for the lost—for outsiders and outcasts!

**When the tax collector comes to Jesus,
he turns around completely.**

God totally changes his lifestyle.

He becomes the opposite of all he's ever been

(while the grumblers are too busy complaining
about what he *used* to be to notice the transformation!