



IN A TAX COLLECTOR'S HOUSE

Luke 19:1–10

¹Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. ²Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. ³And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. ⁴So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. ⁵And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, “Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” ⁶So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. ⁷But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.” ⁸Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.” ⁹And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; ¹⁰for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

—Luke 19:1–10

Read Luke 19:1–10

Paul the apostle declared, *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief* (1 Timothy 1:15). This is a faithful saying because it is true and needs to be kept at the forefront of our perspective on others. We must not be quick to condemn those Jesus is seeking to save. The mission of the followers of Jesus is to be in unison with the mission of Jesus: *to seek and to save that which was lost.*

We lose this perspective when we:

- Forget that we were once sinners who needed saving

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The chief tax collector leased a region from Rome to extract taxes and oversee lesser tax collectors, from whom he required a commission. He would have been a very wealthy man.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jericho was an oasis eighteen miles northeast from Jerusalem, five miles west of the Jordan, and ten miles from the Dead Sea. It is the lowest city and one of the oldest cities in the world.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

For Zacchaeus to be “short” by ancient Mediterranean standards could mean that he was shorter than five-feet-tall.²¹

- Fail to realize how dependent we are on the grace of Jesus for our own righteous standing.

Therefore, we must always remember that *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance* (2 Peter 3:9).

If ever there seemed to be a man who could never repent or be saved, it must have been Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector. These men were considered traitors to the Jews. They were known for extorting money and goods from their own people to enrich themselves and pay into the coffers of the oppressors (Romans). They were blatant in their sin, callousness, and disregard for God’s people. Therefore, most people considered tax collectors beyond salvation. However, it was this very outcast that Jesus sought out, addressed by name, and stayed with.

Jesus was never and is never ashamed to associate with, speak to, and save sinners. This was Jesus’ mission then and it is still His mission through His followers now: *Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations* (Matthew 28:19).

As you study Luke 19:1–10 this week, may you be reminded of God’s great grace in seeking and saving you, and may that sense of God’s grace propel you to a mercy-minded perspective and mission toward the lost!

1. Use Luke 19:1–4 to answer the following questions concerning Zacchaeus:
 - a. Where was he from?
 - b. What was his occupation and financial status?
 - c. Why couldn’t he see Jesus?

- d. What did he do?
2. From Luke 19:5–6, comment on the following:
 - a. Jesus' encounter with Zacchaeus
 - b. What Jesus said to Zacchaeus
 - c. Zacchaeus' response to Jesus
 3. Remark on how the people who saw it reacted. Luke 19:7
 4. Use Luke 19:9–10 to elaborate on:
 - a. Jesus' declaration
 - b. Zacchaeus' identity
 - c. Jesus' purpose
 5. Remark on the following phrases from Luke 19:1–10:
 - a. *Make haste*
 - b. *I must stay at your house*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The sycamore tree could grow to thirty feet, and had low branches making it an easy tree to climb from the ground up.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Normal restitution for a wrong committed was to add twenty percent to the value of the goods lost (Lev. 5:16; Num. 5:7), though the penalty for theft of an animal was four or five times its value (Exod. 22:1). Zacchaeus apparently regarded his financial gains as theft and promised the required restitution.²²

- c. *Received Him joyfully*
- d. *A guest with a man who is a sinner*
- e. *I give*
- f. *False accusation*
- g. *I restore*
- h. *Salvation*
- i. *He also is a son of Abraham*
- j. *Seek and to save*

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

—Galatians 3:7, ESV

6. What is your greatest takeaway concerning Jesus in a tax collector's house?