

April 6, 2025

CFBC... *"Divine Appointments: The Urgency of the Gospel"*

# **"ZACCHEUS"**

## **Luke 19:1-10**

When I'm watching the Super Bowl or the Final Four, I rarely pay much attention to commercials. However, there is one that has intrigued me with its catchy tag line. . .

**"He gets us... *All of us.*"**

Obviously, it refers to Jesus, and it's true. The Son of God and the Savior of the world knows us like the back of His hand. He understands our personality, and He knows what makes us tick. However, there's something missing with this statement...

**"Only a few of us really get Him."**

The context for the story we're going to look at today is important. Jesus and His disciples have left Galilee, and they are traveling to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration. In an effort to prepare them, the Lord pulled them aside and said ...

**Luke 18:31–34...** “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things which are written through the prophets about the Son of Man will be accomplished. **32** “For He will be handed over to the Gentiles, and will be mocked and mistreated and spit upon, **33** and after they have scourged Him, they will kill Him; and the third day He will rise again.” **34** But the disciples understood none of these things, and *the meaning of* this statement was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said.

The beautiful city of Jericho would be the last major stop along the way. There were two guys in this city who had a massive void in their hearts. **Bartimaeus** was a blind beggar. **Zaccheus**, the subject of our sermon today, was wealthy. Despite their differences, both longed for a deep-seated satisfaction that this world could not provide. Considering His fabulous teaching, His mighty miracles, and His growing popularity I’m sure they had heard about Jesus.

Bartimaeus encountered Jesus as He was approaching Jericho. **[Read Luke 18:35-43]** So,

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Jesus showed mercy to the blind beggar. Don't miss the significance of verse 43...

**"Immediately he regained his sight and began following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God."**

Jesus healed the blind beggar and saved his soul. How will Jesus respond to the rich man? We need to remember the encounter with the rich young ruler. He turned down a golden opportunity to be saved and to follow the Lord. Jesus looked at him and said...

**Luke 18:24–27...** And Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God! **25** "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." **26** They who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" **27** But He said, "The things that are impossible with people are possible with God."

Sometimes I think we should overlook the chapter divisions because the stories of Bartimaeus and

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Zaccheus belong together. Keep this truth front and center as we dive into this story...

## JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST!

Here's how the story opens...

**Luke 19:1–4...** He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. **3** Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. **4** So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way.

**Jericho** was a prosperous city. It was located at an important intersection, linking major roads leading north and south, east and west. Expensive and exquisite cargo would pass through Jericho's gates on a regular basis. This made it a major tax collection station, one of three in Israel at the time. Caesarea and Capernaum were the other two.

**Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector.** That means he had a tax franchise with other tax collectors who worked under him. The Jews hated men like him. Their profit came from charging above and beyond what Rome required. Consider the words of John the Baptist...

**Luke 3:12–13...** And *some* tax collectors also came to be baptized, and they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" **13** And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to."

Any Jew who had a tax franchise was filthy rich and they were considered a sell-out. Zacchaeus was "rich."

**Zacchaeus was trying to see who Jesus was.**

Perhaps he had heard about Jesus giving sight to Bartimaeus and how his life was changed. He longed to see this remarkable miracle worker for himself. He's looking for Jesus, but there's a problem.

**For he was small in stature.** For Zacchaeus to be "short" by ancient standards probably means he was

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less than five feet tall.<sup>1</sup> He couldn't see over the crowd that thronged around Jesus as He travelled through the city.

**So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him.** In Eastern culture it was highly unusual for a man to run, especially a wealthy government official. Throwing caution to the wind, Zaccheus ran down the street like a little boy (Matthew 18:3). Then he climbed a tree and positioned himself where he could see Jesus. Maybe he was thinking, *"Who is this Jesus of Nazareth? What am I missing?"*

**Luke 19:5–6...** When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." **6** And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly.

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<sup>1</sup> Craig S. Keener, [\*The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament\*](#) (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), Lk 19:3–4.

**He looked up and said to him, Zaccheus, hurry up and come down.** Don't miss this. Jesus called him by name. It was a personal call and an urgent call to a social outcast, to the most hated man in Jericho. This may have been the first time in a long time that he heard someone use his name in a kind, respectful way. This was a call for immediate action. If He didn't hurry the opportunity might be lost.

**For today I must stay at your house.** Jesus wanted to have a *relationship* with Zaccheus, beginning with a meal and time spent together.

**Revelation 3:20...** "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."

**And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly.** Jesus would only come into the house of Zaccheus if He was *received*. Well, he received Jesus gladly! Zaccheus is a model to everyone who longs to have a relationship with Jesus.

## JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST!

Is Jesus calling your name this morning inviting you to open the door of your heart to Him? Respond to Him with a sense of urgency. Trust Him today. Commit your life to Him today. There may never be another moment like this.

**Luke 19:7–10...** When they saw it, they all *began* to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." **8** Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much." **9** And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. **10** "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

**When they saw it, they all *began* to grumble, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."** No self-respecting Jew would ever pollute himself by staying at the house of the chief tax collector. This same crowd who praised

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God for the healing of Bartimaeus now unleashed their displeasure against Jesus and Zaccheus. They seem to think that if Jesus were really a prophet or a rabbi, then he should have known to avoid this sawed-off traitor to the Jewish people. Why he was a known sinner!

**Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."** Zaccheus perceived the holiness of Jesus (Luke 5:8). He acknowledged Jesus as Lord. Conviction of sin led to repentance (*change of mind that leads to a change in one's life*) and restitution. The genuineness of his salvation was made evident by the transformation of his behavior.<sup>2</sup>

**And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son**

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<sup>2</sup> John MacArthur, [Luke 18–24](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 74.

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**of Abraham."** How do we know for sure Zaccheus was saved? Jesus said he was! The impossible happened—*a rich man was saved*. He was no longer just a son of Abraham by genetics. He became a son of Abraham by committing himself to Christ. He was justified by faith just like Abraham was.

This story should remind us that there is always hope for people whose lives are messed up and whose hearts are empty. Don't give up on them.

**For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.** Jesus came to save people like Zacchaeus. MacArthur stated...

**Jesus came into the world not, as some suggest, to be a good teacher, or a moral leader. He did not come to espouse ideas that would raise people's spiritual consciousness. Nor did He come into the world to provide a human example of a noble, religious life. The divine Lord Christ came into the world to rescue doomed sinners.... That is the biblical message and**

**the foundation of the gospel. Everything in the Old Testament points to that truth; everything in the New Testament explains it.<sup>3</sup>**

**Matthew 1:21**... "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

**1 Timothy 1:15**... It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.

This story gives us a remarkable who, what, where, when, why, and how of receiving Jesus.

- **Who**—Jesus is seeking you; He wants to save you.
- **What**—Jesus wants to have a relationship with you.
- **Where**—Jesus wants you to come to Him.

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<sup>3</sup> John MacArthur, [Luke 18–24](#), MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2014), 68.

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- **When**—Jesus wants you to believe in Him today.
- **Why**—Jesus wants to change your life.
- **How**—Jesus wants you to receive Him gladly.

**JESUS CAME TO SEEK AND TO SAVE THE LOST!**

## **CONCLUSION**

Perhaps you have everything you ever wanted in life, or perhaps you have very little of this world's goods. Without Jesus you are lost.

- **You can be a lost nobody or a lost somebody.**
- **You can be lost and living on the streets or lost and sleeping in a mansion.**
- **You can be lost in personal darkness or lost in a crowd.**

Jesus is calling your name. He wants you to repent of your sin and receive Him as your Savior and Lord by faith. He's calling you to follow Him as a committed disciple.

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**Revelation 3:20...** "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me."

but if you're really honest, you would have to admit that there's something missing. There's still that sense that there is a void, an infinite abyss, in your life. There is hope for you if you turn to Jesus. Turn from your hell-bound race. Do it like Zacchaeus: do it at once. Come to Jesus, the Son of Man, who came to seek and save lost people like me, lost people like you.

Bartimaeus and Zacchaeus had more in common with one another and with us than you might imagine. Blindness kept one of them from seeing Jesus. Shortness of stature prevented the other. What keeps you from seeing Jesus?

Jesus gave three pictures of lostness just days before entering Jericho. He said that to be lost is to be like a sheep separated from its flock—alone and

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vulnerable. To be lost is to be like a coin that has fallen between the cushions of a couch—valuable but useless. To be lost is to be like a runaway child—exploited and famished.