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"Small Man, Big Change"

[Luke 19:1-10](#)

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In Luke 19 there is a story of a man named Zacchaeus who had a personal encounter with Jesus. The Bible describes him as having a "short stature" but the change that happened in his heart was huge. Zacchaeus was a hated tax collector who had fleeced his own Jewish people with extra taxation in order to enrich his personal life, but after he put his faith in Jesus, Zacchaeus not only got right with God but he also got right with those he had wronged. When Jesus changes our hearts, we become at peace with God and at peace with others.

1. A blind man receives his sight
 - a. [Luke 19:1-10](#) - *"Then Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not because of the crowd, for he was of short stature. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him, for He was going to pass that way. And 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.' So he made haste and came down, and received Him joyfully. But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.' Then 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.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"*
 - b. Pastor Gary said, "If you were here for our study last week in Chapter 18, you might remember that Jesus was on his way to Jericho when he [encountered a] blind man along the road. Mark tells us his name was Bartimaeus, and Jesus [healed] Bartimaeus and [restored] his sight. What we read here in Chapter 19 is actually a continuation of events. ... [Jesus] was drawing near Jericho

when he [encountered] Bartimaeus. ... Jesus [was] making his final pilgrimage to Jerusalem, where he [would] die on the cross. This is his last traveling through Jericho, so as he enters near Jericho, he encounters Bartimaeus. Now he has come into the city. He's passing through the city, and he encounters another man and his name is Zacchaeus. What we're going to find here is interesting contrast. You have a story in Chapter 18 of a blind man who ... couldn't see, but Jesus showed him not only who he was physically, but who he was spiritually. And now you come to Chapter 19, [and] this is a guy who has his physical sight, but he's blind spiritually. It's kind of kind of the reverse, but his eyes are going to be opened also to see who Jesus is. And so here is Zacchaeus, this man that Jesus encounters now in Jericho. His name, Zacchaeus, is probably a Hellenized or a Greek transliteration of his Hebrew name. He's a Jew. Jesus even specifically says at the end of the story [that] he is a son of Abraham, so he's a Jew. So his name probably was not Zacchaeus. ... The New Testament was written in Greek originally, so they transliterated his Hebrew name. His Hebrew name was probably translated 'Zachayah.' Zachayah is from two Hebrew words: 'zacha,' meaning "pure or innocent," and 'yah,' which is an abbreviation of God's name Yahweh. ... Zachayah means 'the Lord is pure' or 'the Lord is innocent,' and what Zacchaeus is about to recognize is he has not lived up to his name. His life [did] not reflect the purity of the Lord. In fact, what we find out about his life is that he [had] deceived people. He [had] robbed people. He [had] extorted money from people, and so [he had] been anything but pure or innocent."

2. Who Zacchaeus was

a. Professionally

- i. Pastor Gary said, "The Bible says he was a chief tax collector in Jericho, which means that he had other tax collectors under him ... so this was very profitable for him, but tax collectors in general were very despised in this day, very much hated. In fact, Jesus teaches a parable in ... Luke Chapter 18 to highlight how many people had disdain for tax collectors."

1. **Luke 18:9-14** - *"Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men - extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather*

than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

- ii. Pastor Gary said, “Jesus actually [used] a parable there in Chapter 18 to talk about the hatred people had towards tax collectors, but at the same time, he [exposed] the pious attitude, and he actually [elevated] ... a tax collector above the religious elite showing them that ... anybody can humble themselves before God, ... but he does, in the course of the parable, expose how much resentment and disdain they had for tax collectors. ... Why did they resent tax collectors so much? Well, the first is obvious. Nobody likes somebody who comes to get money from you. ... What is true today was very true then also, but there’s another reason. In ancient Israel, a tax collector was an agent of the Roman Empire ... because the Roman Empire included Israel at this particular time, so taxes were collected to pay the Roman government, and what the Roman government would do ... was that they would offer franchises. ... They would offer franchises to individuals, that if you had the means, you could buy a franchise, set up your tax booth, and ... after you would gather taxes, ... you could add whatever additional tax you wanted for yourself. ... [You were] gathering money for yourself and you’re lining your pockets ... at the expense of your own people. ... In fact, if you couldn’t pay your taxes, they had the right to impose interest on what you owed, and they could charge exorbitant interest rates ... and so you were constantly indebted to the tax collector. And so this is Zacchaeus. ... He’s a tax collector and not just an average one. He’s a chief tax collector, and not just in an average place, [but] in Jericho.”

b. Financially

- i. Pastor Gary said, “Verse two tells us ... he [was] rich. ... There were three main towns where custom booths were set up to collect your taxes. ... One [was in] Caesarea, one was [in] Capernaum and one was [in] Jericho. ... If you owned one of those franchises, and Zacchaeus owned Jericho, you were very, very wealthy. You were one of the wealthiest people in that whole region. This [was] Zacchaeus – very financially well-off, living large, [with a] lavish lifestyle. ... He [had] his own tax booth there, and [he was] over other tax collectors beneath him, collecting taxes constantly. When you passed a customs booth on a major trade route, you had to pay a certain tax on whatever you were carrying. ... This became very lucrative [for tax collectors].”

c. Physically

- i. Pastor Gary said, “Verse three in the story says he was of short stature. ... Archaeologists have uncovered human remains from the first century. The average [height] of Semitic men in the first century ...

[was] five-one to five-five. ... What does that mean about how tall Zacchaeus was? That puts him way under five feet, [as he] ... [had] to be short enough that [it was] going to get mentioned in the Bible. ... This guy was of short stature. Now that said, let me say this: The real stature of a man, or a woman for that matter, is not really measured in feet or inches. The real stature of a person is not how tall they stand, but how low they bow and surrender to Jesus, and Zacchaeus [was] about to become the tallest man in the crowd. ... [He was] going to become very tall here in the Lord because he [bowed] very low in humility and in surrender to Jesus."

d. Spiritually

- i. Pastor Gary said, "This story says that as Jesus was passing through Jericho because of his short stature, Zacchaeus wanted to get a glimpse of him. He couldn't see over the crowd, so he [climbed] this sycamore tree. It [was] probably a sycamore fig tree; it's very common in Israel, so he [could] get a better view, and ... as Jesus [was] passing through, he [noticed] Zacchaeus up in the tree."
- ii. **Luke 19:5** - *"And 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.'"* Pastor Gary said, "Now to American ears, that sounds kind of rude, doesn't it? ... This is the only time recorded in the Gospels that Jesus actually [invited] himself to someone's house, but I want you to know that was very common and still is among Middle Eastern cultures. People will invite themselves to your house and you will think nothing of it. ... [Zacchaeus welcomed] him joyfully, but other people in the crowd were not so joyful."
 1. **Luke 19:7** - *"But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, 'He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.'"*
- iii. Pastor Gary said, "They were appalled that Jesus would go ... into the house of someone who was considered such a sinner. ... If you remember, people had a similar reaction when Jesus befriended another tax collector before Zacchaeus. ... One of his own disciples, Matthew, was a tax collector. Matthew owned the franchise in Capernaum, and when Jesus called Matthew to come follow him, it says Matthew left it all. ... He left the most lucrative position in his entire community to go follow Jesus. ... When Matthew left it all to follow Jesus, he gave a dinner party with Jesus and some of his friends."
 1. **Matthew 9:11** - *"And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'"*
- iv. Pastor Gary said, "Jesus [did] this because he always has a heart and an eye for the outcast. ... We are all estranged from God without Jesus."

We are all outcasts, and Jesus has a heart and an eye for us, too. That's why he died on a cross for us – to rescue us because we were outcasts and estranged from him.

1. **Luke 19:10** – *“... for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”*
- v. Pastor Gary said, “We are all lost without Jesus. ... You see our story here in Luke 19 is about someone who ... came to realize how lost he was - that no amount of money, success or status could fix it. No relationship could fix it. No conquest could fix it. No adventure could fix it. No nothing could fix it. ... He was empty. ... It is possible to live a full life and yet still be so empty. In the same way, it's possible to be surrounded by many, many people and yet still be so lonely; to have material riches and yet be so poor; to be able to have physical sight and yet be blind. These are the great dichotomies of life, and the one who can fill us up and the one who can make us whole and satisfy the deepest longing of our soul is Jesus.”
 1. **Ephesians 3:16-19** – *“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”* (1984 NIV)
- vi. Pastor Gary said, “This is what Zacchaeus needed, and this is what he understood he needed, ... and so in this one moment when Zacchaeus, perched on this tree limb, [and saw] Jesus, ... he [exercised] faith in this moment, and he [put] his trust in the one who [could] save him from his sins and transform his life from the inside.”

3. The transforming power of Jesus

- a. Pastor Gary said, “The only thing that will transform a culture is when an individual heart is transformed, and that can only happen through Jesus Christ. That's when a transformation will happen. We don't need to get woke. If there's any kind of wakefulness we need, we need to wake up to the truth of who Jesus is and see our own lost condition because ... with all that is wrong in our culture ... the difference will be made when people have a transforming change in their hearts, and when they become more like Jesus, they'll love like Jesus. When they have a heart like Jesus, they'll have a heart for people like Jesus. See, that's the solution for our culture. It's not trying to make bad people better or good people even better because no one is good. There's 'none righteous, no, not one,' the Bible says. We're all lost. We're all sinners.

We need a Savior. His name is Jesus. And what happened with Zacchaeus is, Jesus got a hold of his heart, and he surrendered his heart to Jesus, and he got saved.”

- i. [Luke 19:9](#) – *“And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house...’”*
- b. Pastor Gary said, “This guy got saved. Salvation [had] come to his house, and then Jesus [added] in verse ten, ‘for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.’ ... So we know he got saved in this moment, not just because of what Jesus said, although that would be enough, but also because of what Zacchaeus did to demonstrate the fruit of his salvation.”
 - i. [Luke 19:8](#) – *“Then 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.’”*
- c. Pastor Gary said, “He acknowledged his sin before God. He acknowledged his sin before man. ... He wanted to make restitution for the wrong. Now, remember, he’s a Jew, and he should [have been] following the Mosaic Law. ... The Mosaic Law tells us in Numbers Chapter 5, verse seven, that if you ever rob someone of anything ... you are to give it back to them and repay it with twenty percent. ... Do you see here what Zacchaeus [was] doing because of the transformation of Jesus in his heart? He [was] going above and beyond what the law required. ... He says, ‘I’m going to give half of my goods to the poor and I’m going to pay restitution for those who I’ve wronged ... and so I’m going to give them back ... four hundred percent.’ Why does somebody do something so radical like that? It’s because Jesus radically changes the heart. The word restitution is the Hebrew word ‘shalēm.’ It is the verb form of the noun ‘shalom.’ ... To make restitution literally means shalom. I make peace. Zacchaeus had come to a place in his life where he made peace with God, and he made peace with his fellow man because that’s what happens when you meet Jesus – You get right with God, you get right with other people. ... This is the transforming work of God in the heart of Zacchaeus, and he can still do the same for you today. ... He still is changing lives today. ... He came to seek and to save that which was lost.”

Discussion Questions

1. Read [Luke 19:1-10](#) to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Who was Zacchaeus professionally? (See #2a-i and #2a-ii above)
3. What was Zacchaeus’ financial situation? (See #2b above)

4. What does the Bible tell us about Zacchaeus' physical appearance? (See #2c above)
 5. What was Zacchaeus' spiritual condition? (See #2d-v above)
 6. Read [Ephesians 3:16-19](#). What did Zacchaeus need? (See #2d-v-1 and #2d-vi above)
 7. Reread [Luke 19:8-9](#). How do we know that Zacchaeus was saved?
 8. What is the only thing that has the power to transform hearts? (See #3a and #3c above)
 9. What implications does this passage of Scripture have for us?
 10. Close your meeting by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.
- * Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James Version (NKJV)