

Children and family talk for 30th October 2022

Hello everyone, I'm so glad you can join me to hear the story of Zacchaeus today, which can be found in the new testament, in Luke chapter 19 verses 1-10.

Zacchaeus

19 Jesus was going through the city of Jericho. **2** In Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a wealthy, very important tax collector. **3** He wanted to see who Jesus was, but he was too short to see above the crowd. **4** He ran ahead to a place where he knew Jesus would come. He climbed a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus. **5** When Jesus came to that place, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus in the tree. He said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down! I must stay at your house today."

6 Zacchaeus came down quickly. He was pleased to have Jesus in his house. **7** All the people saw this and began to complain, "Look at the kind of man Jesus stays with. Zacchaeus is a sinner!"

8 But Zacchaeus said to the Lord, "I will give half of my money to the poor. If I have cheated anyone, I will pay that person back four times more!"

9 Jesus said, "Salvation has come to this house today. This man truly belongs to the family of Abraham. **10** The Son of Man came to find lost people and save them."

Let's talk about our bible story:

If you were to put yourself in this bible story, who would you be like?

Perhaps you see yourself as Zacchaeus, he was an unusual character, at first, he comes across as selfish and mean, taking too much money from people to make himself rich, not sharing and very unpopular – but then things change – he hears Jesus is coming and wants to see him, being rather on the small side he is forced to climb a tree to do this. And then Jesus, who misses nothing, sees him and wants to spend time with him. Zacchaeus changes, just like that – he wants to help people, and he's really sorry for all he's done – Jesus can have that effect on people.

Of course, you might feel you're more like someone in the crowd, desperate to see Jesus, to the point where you're not giving up your space to let anyone else through! You've heard Jesus can do miracles, and you want to be able to see for yourself.

Or someone else in the crowd, someone perhaps who has followed Jesus from the beginning – and you're very good at it – you have already done a lot to help others, so you feel your place at Jesus' side is guaranteed, not like that tax collector – who does he think he is? You feel angry that Jesus wants to spend time with that selfish man.

Of course, it is Jesus we really want to be like. He sees things differently to others, he always sees the good and bad in people, and wants them to change, to be more like God, to be generous, honest, kind and compassionate, to love everyone no matter who they are and what they have done. That isn't easy, is it?

Let's talk to God now:

Generous God,

we pray for those who never get invited anywhere:

May your love surprise them.

For those who have become rich through doing wrong things:

May your love change them.

For those who are longing for meaning in their lives:

May your love find them.

Amen.

Now let's say the grace together...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out hands as if expecting a present)

And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)

And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)

Be with us all now and for ever. Amen! (raise hands bringing thumbs together on the Amen)