

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Welcome

Intro: This week I read a true story about a two-year-old Chinese boy who was Kidnapped and sold to another family. It was 1988 and at the time it was illegal in China to have more than one child. Therefore, every family wanted a son who would carry on the family name. Often little boys were kidnapped because families were afraid of having a girl when one child was the limit. These little boys would then be sold to other families. This boy's mother searched for him for 32 years. For the last 20 years she worked with an agency that used DNA to help families locate their missing children. After helping dozens of other families be reunited with their lost children, she finally found her son. It became a big media story in China. This is the picture of their reunion. (Get Picture, <https://www.bbc.com/news/stories-53566460>)

How would you feel if you lost your child? How do you think God feels? What would you do to find him or her?

Read: Luke 19:1-9

- **Verse 9, "The Son of man came to seek and save the lost!"** Let that sink in. Jesus, the Son of God is on a **rescue mission**. He is **determined to find** and rescue his lost kids.

1. Jesus chose an unexpected place; Jericho.

Explain: Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and passes through Jericho. This is the same Jericho from the Exodus story. Remember, Joshua and the Israelites, crossed the Jordan river, on their way to the promise land but they had to pass through Jericho, which was a military outpost. Israel was a group of runaway slaves facing a trained and well-equipped military. It was impossible. God told Israel to march around the city seven times, blow their trumpets, and God brought the walls tumbling down. In the same way, Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem. He is on mission. He is determined to rescue his kids but he has to pass through Jericho. He came to destroy every barrier keeping us from God. He is here to give Zacchaeus a new beginning and a future hope!

Illustrate: Often, when we have drifted from God, He shows up in unexpected places:

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| - Abraham- Ur | - David- wilderness | - Ruth- Moab |
| - Joseph- Egypt | - Gideon- threshing floor | - Matthew- tax b... |
| - Moses- Wilderness | | - Peter- boat |
| - Jacob- Jabbok R. | - Rahab- Jericho | - Paul- rd. to Dam... |

Testimony: Salvation, eighth grade, College, Seminary, first church, 2021- God found me

Argue: **Psalm 139:7-12, Ezekiel 34:11-16, John 10:16**

Apply: If you are lost, God is coming for you! When you encounter people, who have lost their way, often that is your best opportunity... watch

2. Jesus chose an unexpected person; Zacchaeus.

Explain: Remember, Luke loves to highlight the mercy of God. In his gospel we see Jesus reaching out to outsiders, even notorious sinners like Zacchaeus. Luke says Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, meaning he oversees all the other tax collectors in the region getting a cut from what they all bring in. He is wealthy, powerful, connected, and he is a Jew. Which

means he is viewed as a traitor. He is working for Rome and collecting taxes from his own people to support an immoral, pagan, empire. He was hated! And yet:

- **Jesus sees Zaccheaus.** He sees his spiritual hunger. He sees him climbing that tree not only to see but to be seen. In ancient Judea, the average male was around 5'5". So, Zacchaeus was probably under 5 feet, think Danny DeVito.
- **Jesus calls him by name.** Jesus wants Zaccheaus to know, I know you. You cannot hide from me. There is no need for pretense. The name Zaccheaus actually means pure or innocent. Jesus sees beyond appearances. He sees your heart.
- **Jesus visits his home.** I want to spend time with you. I want you to know. I love you like you are but I love you too much to leave you that way.
- **We all want to be seen, known, and loved!** Jesus sees you, knows you and loves you. Everyone in your life wants to be seen, known and loved. **The greatest experience in life is to be fully known and loved.**

Testimony: Dr. Bennett loved me despite where he found me.

Illustrate: In 1989, the famous televangelist Jim Baker, the co-founder of PTL, was convicted of fraud and conspiracy to commit fraud and sentenced to 45 years in prison. Like Zaccheaus, he was a traitor. He got rich and lived extravagantly by stealing millions of dollars from his ministry supporters. Not long after being incarcerated Billy Graham went to visit Jim. He was the first person, who was not a family member, to visit Jim. Jim says, he was sitting alone in his cell when a guard approached and said, Jim, Billy Graham is here to see you. Jim just wept. Billy was not there to correct Jim but to love him. In fact, 5 years later, Jim was released and actually went to live with the Grahams for a while.

Quote: "Billy came into my cell, put his arms around me, and said, 'Jim, I love you.' That man of God never once even hinted that I had let him down. He simply loved me."

Sounds like Jesus!

Argue: **Luke 5:27-32**

Apply: Like Jesus, we all encounter people, who have lost their way. They want to be seen, known and loved. These unexpected encounters can be life changing for you both. They can fill your life with adventure, beauty, friendship, and love if you see them, if you get to know them, if they feel your love? Some of my closest friends are people I met this way and we have experienced God together in such a beautiful way.

3. Jesus chose an unexpected path; the Cross.

Explain: The Jews assumed the messiah would be a political, military leader who would use power to free Israel from Rome. The Jews assumed the law was the key to their freedom. However, His kingdom was not of this world. Jesus was headed to Jerusalem, on his way to the cross. He came to do what the law was powerless to do. He came to win and transform our hearts. **Often, a person's money is the last thing they surrender.** Jesus says in **Matthew 6:21**, "where your money is, there your heart will be also."

Luke 19:8-9, Zaccheaus gives sacrificially and puts Jesus in charge of his money, why? He has been with Jesus and what is true of Jesus is becoming truer of him. Notice, Jesus did not talk to Zaccheaus about giving. Jesus did not have to explain tithing. Zaccheaus was so moved by

the generosity, mercy, grace, friendship of Jesus that he wants to pass it on. He wants people to experience with him, what he has experienced with Jesus.

Argue: Galatians 2:20

What does this look like each day? OYB

- **2 Chronicles 1:7**, “what do you want” ... “Give me wisdom and knowledge to lead...”
- **2 Chronicles 2:1**, “Solomon decided to build a temple to honor the name of the Lord”
- **Romans 6:1-5**
- **Romans 6:12-14**
- **Romans 6:15-18**
- **Psalm 16:1-11**
- **Proverbs 19:20-21**

Apply: We live in the presence of God for the glory of God!

Invitation- I surrender all!