

The Man Up The Tree

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[0:00] Young people today. Or in my approaches for young people. Adults, if you want to open your Bibles, you can open your Bibles and look at Luke chapter 19 and the first nine verses.

! That's where the Bible story today is. If you want to have a look, if you want to do a check that I'm not jumping away from what the Scripture says, I'm going to talk to the older ones.

I'm going to talk to Max and Isaac and Millie and Abra and Ruby and Matilda and Paula and the girls. I'm talking to you guys. But the older ones, you can listen in. And see if you can understand what we're talking about.

The story is a story that I've told before at church. Did you see this church? It's a story I've shared at different churches. It's a story that some of you may know, some of you may not know. But it is a wonderful story.

I think we're talking about a man called Zacchaeus. Hasn't you heard Zacchaeus before? Yeah? Zacchaeus lived in a city called Jericho.

[1:02] And he had a very, very important job. He was a tax collector. Now, when you ask the adults, who likes tax collectors?

Nobody. Nobody likes a tax man. Zacchaeus was a tax collector. But he was more, he was bigger than that. He was the chief tax collector.

Which meant he had tax collectors that worked for him. Now, tax collectors, they weren't popular people there. People then. And they're not popular people now. They collected money from people. And they gave it to the Romans. And they always took more money than they should have done. The tax was a certain amount.

And that would go in one pocket. And they would give it to the Romans. And they'd also get a little bit more. And keep it for themselves. And in that way, the tax collectors often became quite rich.

[2:02] And Zacchaeus himself, he was rich. He was very rich. And he was also very, very unpopular. He had no friends.

Zacchaeus. When people saw Zacchaeus walking down the street. They didn't say, oh look lovely. It's nice to see you. It's Zacchaeus. Great to see Zacchaeus from along the street. And the other was, oh watch out. Zacchaeus is going.

Hide your purse. Put you all in the way. Zacchaeus had plenty of money. But he didn't have many friends.

He had a big house. But people didn't think he had a very big heart. And even though lots of people knew his name. They never said it with any joy. When they mentioned him.

But one day something happened. Something happened in Jericho. That Zacchaeus did not want to miss.

[3:07] Imagine here. On social media. Or on the news. Or in the newspaper. Or however you get to find out. Your teacher tells you at school. Jesus is coming to town. Jesus is coming to town.

They wanted to know that. Everybody wanted to see. This man Jesus. People had heard about Jesus. They had heard that he had healed the sick. They had heard that he had welcomed people. That normally. Nobody had got time for. They had heard that. The way he taught about God. In a way that made people stop. And listen. Everyone wanted to see him.

And Zacchaeus. And Zacchaeus wanted to see him too. There was just one problem. Zacchaeus was only short.

Just a little fella. And I have no jokes to make. It was just a little guy. Not the sort of. The highway. You just can't reach. The top shelf or something.

[4:05] He was sort of the guy. That when. You were stuck behind the crowd. He couldn't see. Anything at all. It was a complete disaster for him. Zacchaeus.

Tried to see. Over the crowd. As people gathered. For Jesus. Coming down the street. He tried to see. Peeping. I don't know. He couldn't see. He tried to squeeze through the crowd. He couldn't get through. He even tried using his. Authority. Excuse me. Chief tax collector. Coming through. Nobody was interested. Nobody was making room.

Zacchaeus. But Zacchaeus. Was determined. And he looked. Down the street. At where Jesus. Was going to be heading. And he saw something.

That gave him an idea. And we had it in our quiz. He saw. A sycamore tree. Now Zacchaeus.

[5:03] Was a wealthy. And an important man. Wealthy. And important men. Don't normally. Get found. Scrambling up trees. With their robes. Slapping around behind them.

And tripping over their own sandals. But Zacchaeus. Didn't care. He wanted to see Jesus. So. He climbed up. Into the tree. And there he was.

Perched. In the branches. Didn't he go up there. Particularly gracefully. He hoped that nobody saw him do it.

And he hoped that nobody saw him. While he was up there. Hiding. But there he is. Up in the tree. Looking down the road. At last. He could see. The crowds.

Moved closer. The noise. Began to grow. Jesus. Was getting nearer. And nearer. And then Jesus. Is stood.

[6:02] Right. Below. The tree. Where Zacchaeus. Is hiding. This is where the amazing. Bit happens. Because Jesus.

Stops. The crowds. Bit quiet. And then Jesus.

Looks up. Into the tree. Can you imagine. What Zacchaeus. Felt like. At that moment. He climbed in that tree. So that he could see Jesus. Suddenly he realises.

That Jesus. Can see me. And Jesus. Speaks to him. He says. Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus.

Come down. Right away. Come down. Immediately. I must stay. At your house today. Jesus. Knew his name. Can you imagine.

[7:00] Meeting somebody. For the very first time. Addressing you. By your name. Straight away. Jesus. Knew his name. Jesus. Knew his name. He saw him. And he called him. Jesus.

Wanted to be. With him. I'm going to come to your house. Zacchaeus. Was to climb down that tree. A lot faster. Than he climbed up it. This was a slow.

Thoughtful. Dignified dissent. As he got down. He pulled his trippy over. His own sandals. I'm coming Jesus. And Zacchaeus. Welcomed. Jesus. Into his home.

Zacchaeus.

In a situation where everyone starts to mow. Not happy about the situation. They began to mutter to each other. And say. Jesus has got to be a guest.

[7:57] And Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus is a sinner. they couldn't understand it they knew that Zacchaeus had done wrong they knew that he was greedy they knew that he had taken money from people and they thought why would Jesus want to go to this guy's house Jesus had not because Zacchaeus had already done good he'd come because Zacchaeus was lost and something changed in Zacchaeus that very day he stood up and said to Jesus Lord here and now I give half of all my possessions to the poor can you imagine if your mum or dad took you to his bedroom and I said right you've got to get half your toys you can keep half of them and you've got to give the rest of them to the poor then he said and if I've cheated anybody out of anything

I'm going to pay them back four times as much simple maths for you right for every 100 quid that Zacchaeus had stolen he was going to give 400 quid back this was a big change Zacchaeus had spent his life grabbing money now he was giving it all away he had taken from people but now he wanted to put things right he had lived for himself but now he was listening to Jesus then Jesus said to him today salvation has come to this house then Jesus said something really really important and this is probably one of the key phrases in the Luke's gospel it says this the son of man came to seek and to save the lost that means that

Jesus came looking for people like Zacchaeus people who had done things wrong people others had pushed away people who were known for the worst things that they'd done people who needed forgiveness and that's good news for me and for you because Jesus still sees people Jesus can see General Linda sat at the front he can see the man who walked and the family sat at the front he can see Josh the guys in the back he can see James dying down the computer he can see the loud ones like me he can see the quiet ones like Isaac he can see the confident ones he can see the

worried ones he sees the people that everyone notices and he sees the people who feel like they've forgotten

Jesus saw Zacchaeus in the truth and he sees us today Jesus knew Zacchaeus by name does it just blow your mind that God in heaven knows that you're called James Chandler that you're called Millie Chandler that you're called James Jesus loved Zacchaeus before Zacchaeus had fixed everything and Jesus loves us before we had fixed everything and when Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus his life began to change and there's three simple things I want you to remember from the story of Zacchaeus first is Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus but Jesus saw Zacchaeus first that's really important

Zacchaeus thought he was the one who was looking for Jesus but Jesus was already looking for him and that's true for us today we might come to church we might say a prayer we are by more ask a question about God and all those things are good but the amazing truth is that Jesus sees us before we even see him clearly the second thing I want to remember is this everyone else saw Zacchaeus saw Zacchaeus do wrong but Jesus saw Zacchaeus couldn't be called the crowd looked at Zacchaeus and they saw a cheat they saw someone who was greedy and someone they didn't like Jesus did not pretend that Zacchaeus sin didn't matter it did matter Zacchaeus had been wrong he needed forgiveness he needed to change but Jesus looked at

[13 : 38] Zacchaeus with love Jesus saw a lost man who could be found he saw a selfish man who could be generous he saw someone whose life could be changed this word called grace and thirdly when Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus his life changed Zacchaeus didn't you say thanks for visiting that was great to pop it around Jesus great chat lovely to speak to you no his life changed change the man who had been taking money suddenly started giving money away the man who had cheated people wanted to put things right the man who had lived for himself suddenly began living differently that's what Jesus does he does not make us feel a little bit better for a few minutes he changes our hearts he changes our lives he changes the way we should treat other people and that brings us to the best news in this whole story because Jesus said the son of man is come to seek and save the lost the son of man is come to seek that's why

Jesus came to this world that's why God put him into a little baby why he was born in Bethlehem not to teach good people how to be better not to give religious people more religious things to do Jesus came to seek and save lost people people like Zacchaeus perhaps you have sometimes felt invisible as if you have ever felt like you just don't exist you say I'm invisible maybe you weren't chosen for the team perhaps nobody noticed when you were upset maybe everybody else was talking and it felt as though nobody was listening to you or perhaps people think they already know you and they know what you're like maybe you are known as the quiet one the noisy one the naughty one the clever one or the one who always gets things wrong adults can feel like that too sometimes people remember that one mistake that you've made and they decide that's all they need to know about you but

Jesus didn't look at Zacchaeus and simply see a short man a tax collector or a cheat Jesus saw Zacchaeus he knew his name he knew where he was he knew what he'd done and he still wanted to be near that is true for us as well in a crowded classroom at school in a busy playground in a full church a half empty church or a noisy home Jesus sees you he knows your name he knows the things that make you happy he knows the things that worry you he knows the things that you've done wrong and here's the wonderful part Jesus does not see all of that look as walk away he comes near he loves us he forgives us and he invites us to follow him but being

Jesus also changes us Zacchaeus could not carry on cheating people as everything had happened he returned what he had taken and he became generous instead of greedy so if someone's hurt you you can apologize if we've taken something we can return it if somebody is feeling left out we can take notice and include them we do not do those things to make Jesus laws we do know because Jesus already loves us and his love begins to change us the crowd saw a man who they thought was too bad for Jesus Jesus saw a man who he had come to save and Jesus sees us too and he knows us and he loves us and he can change us so this we want to remember that Jesus sees you Jesus knows you and he can change you let's pray for Jesus speech of stank you that you saw Zacchaeus and you see us as well thank you that you know us by name thank you that you loved us before we knew even you existed thank you that you came to seek and to save with us help us to welcome you in the same way that Zacchaeus did help us to listen to you help us to change where we need to change and help us to remember that you all will be strong enough to

change in your heart you see us if you know us
[20:07] I bet you know us Amen