



JULY 2: JESUS AND ZACCHAEUS I CAN CHOOSE THE DOOR OF SALVATION.

“Jesus responded, ‘Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.’”

Luke 19:1-10

Has someone ever called you a name? Maybe when you were younger and someone made fun of you or maybe as an adult when a friend said something hurtful? Names, labels and gossip can be destructive. They can tear us down and cause us to question who we are and who God has called us to be. We can choose to believe those words and let them tear us down or cling to the beautiful, life-giving names God calls us: loved, saved, His son or daughter.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, meaning he took money from people and was hated by almost everyone. They called him a sinner and looked down on him, constantly whispering and gossiping about him. Even though Zacchaeus was unpopular, Jesus loved him. When He came to the town of Jericho one day, Jesus called out to Zacchaeus who had climbed in a tree to catch a glimpse of Him, saying “Zacchaeus! Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.” Zacchaeus was thrilled to have Jesus in his home, but the other townspeople were furious. Why would Jesus want to spend time with someone so awful?

Jesus did not see Zacchaeus as the cheat and liar as the rest of the town saw him. He saw him as one of His children whom He loved. Zacchaeus was so honored to have been chosen by Jesus that he told Him he would pay back extra money (plus more!) he had taken and give back half of his possessions to the poor. Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house.”

Jesus saw the good in Zacchaeus even when no one else did, and rather than call him out for being a sinner and a liar, Jesus offered Zacchaeus love and salvation. Zacchaeus chose to love Jesus in return for the love that He had shown him. He turned from his old life of sin and emptiness and turned to a life full in Christ. We can choose

to ignore the cruelty and emptiness of the world and all the things that Satan tells us when we choose to love Christ and be reminded of who we are in Him.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

1. Is there someone in your life who is hard to love? Why?
2. Choosing Jesus means choosing to act like Him as best we can. How can you show them love like Jesus rather than think or speak badly about them?
3. What can you sacrifice or give to Christ as a way of showing Him you have chosen Him?