

GETTING TO GIVING

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 19:1-10

CONTEXT

Luke's Gospel is broken into roughly three sections. Luke 1:1–9:50 is the initiation of Jesus's public ministry, including His teachings and miracles. Luke 9:51–19:10 tells of Jesus's journey to Jerusalem under the shadow of the cross. Luke 19:11–24:53 tells of Jesus's arrest, death, and resurrection. In today's passage, Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem for the joy set before Him, prepared to endure the cross (Heb. 12:2). But on His way, He needed to make a stop for the salvation of a sinner.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

As you examine Luke 19:1-10:

- Notice that Jesus saw Zacchaeus's eagerness and invited him to fellowship with Him.
- Contemplate that like Zacchaeus, we should respond to Jesus with joy, submission, and repentance.



TIMELINE

Jesus Feeds the Five
Thousand (Luke 9:10-17)

Jesus Heals a Blind Man
(John 9:1-41)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Walks on Water
(John 6:16-21)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Encounters Zacchaeus
(Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus's Triumphal
Entry into Jerusalem
(Luke 19:28-40)

Daily Readings

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| ☐ Day 1: Matthew 17:1-18:35 | ☐ Day 4: Luke 17:1-18:43 |
| ☐ Day 2: Matthew 19:1-20:34 | ☐ Day 5: Luke 19:1-27 |
| ☐ Day 3: Mark 9:1-10:52 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 49 |



Scan this QR code to access
this session's Scripture passages.

JESUS INVITES ALL WHO ARE EAGER TO FIND HIM (LUKE 19:1-5).

Circle the details Luke offers about Zacchaeus, and underline Zacchaeus's actions in this passage.

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. **3** He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because of the crowd, since he was a short man. **4** So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus, since he was about to pass that way. **5** When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is necessary for me to stay at your house."

The Gospels show us that Jesus often extended grace to unexpected people. Zacchaeus is a perfect example. Notice how Luke introduced him as a rich chief tax collector. Zacchaeus, a Jew, would have collected taxes from his fellow Jews to give to Rome. While today an accountant might be given a salary, in Jesus's day, tax collectors routinely collected more than was due, skimming off the top and cheating the people to build their own wealth. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was the boss, which meant his opportunity to collect was large. From his later confession, he made it clear that he made a lot of money through dishonesty and theft.

LEADER NOTE: Jericho was a wealthy, well-traveled trade route in Judea, so it most likely had a customs house. As people traveled in and out, Zacchaeus may have grown rich from their comings and goings. But there was something about Jesus that made him want to see Him. When Jesus saw Zacchaeus up in a tree, while the crowds saw the most corrupt, most sinful, most despised, face in the crowd, Jesus saw one that was lost and sought to see Him. Jesus extended the kind of grace and mercy He would soon put on display at the cross. This further emphasized Jesus's divine mission to seek and save the lost. It reveals the deeply compassionate heart of Christ.

It should come as no surprise that Zacchaeus was a despised man as a traitor and a cheat. In the eyes of the Jews, he was the worst of sinners. Yet in Luke's Gospel, some tax collectors respond positively to Jesus's teachings, including Matthew the disciple (5:27-32; cf. 3:12; 7:29; 15:1-2; 18:9-14). Luke indicated that Zacchaeus, like the tax collectors who previously accepted Jesus's teaching, was eager to see Him.

What kinds of people might we be tempted to classify as the worst of sinners to despise and avoid today?

The text reveals another important detail: Zacchaeus was a short man. Given his reputation, the crowd was unwilling to make room for this short sinner so he could see Jesus walking by. Zacchaeus's desire to see Jesus was so strong that he climbed a tree, a highly unusual act for a man of his social status that exposed him to public shame and humiliation. His eagerness was rewarded, however, as Jesus walked his way. Upon seeing him, Jesus said that it was necessary for Him to stay at Zacchaeus's house that night.

This was a divine appointment. Jesus considered His visit with Zacchaeus as part of His mission. So even though Zacchaeus climbed the tree looking for Jesus, Jesus also was looking for Zacchaeus. More than mere chance or circumstance, this necessary encounter held a redemptive purpose—Jesus came to seek and save sinners, of whom Zacchaeus was one of the foremost of his city.

LEADER NOTE: No matter one's social status, it was not common for people to invite themselves over for dinner. In Jesus's day, and in some places in the Middle East now, the community selects the form of hospitality, not the guest.¹ That could be why Jesus sometimes ate with Pharisees who resented Him; they may have been the hosts with the most social standing when He traveled to a town (see Luke 7:36-50). That Jesus invited Himself to a notorious sinner's house was unheard of. For Jesus, however, it was necessary.

How can we determine if we are experiencing a “necessary” encounter with someone for the sake of the gospel?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“The door of hope which the Gospel reveals to sinners is open very wide. Let us leave it open, as we find it; let us not attempt, in narrow-minded ignorance, to shut it. We should never be afraid to maintain that Christ is able to save completely (Hebrews 7:25) and that the vilest sinners may be freely forgiven if they will only come to him.”²

—J. C. Ryle (1816–1900)

Notes



JESUS OFFERS SALVATION TO THOSE WHO ARE LOST AND WANT TO BE FOUND (LUKE 19:6-10).

Underline the response of the crowd, and circle Zacchaeus's response.

6 So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully. **7** All who saw it began to complain, "He's gone to stay with a sinful man." **8** But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord. And if I have extorted anything from anyone, I'll pay back four times as much." **9** "Today salvation has come to this house," Jesus told him, "because he too is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Grace is scandalous. It is unfair, and that bothers us, especially when we see someone getting something good that we think they don't deserve. The crowd in Jericho the day Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree struggled with what they saw when Jesus met and talked to that sinful man. They complained because a tax collector like Zacchaeus should not have received the benefit of salvation coming to His house. Of all the people in the city that day, why would Jesus focus on Zacchaeus? Didn't others deserve it more? Well, that's the problem with grace. It's not dependent on what we deserve. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. No wonder He found Zacchaeus.

LEADER NOTE: Throughout the Gospels, there is a constant complaint that Jesus spent time with sinners. Of course, the complainers did not mean sinners in the general sense but in the sense of people with a lower moral and social status than them. That didn't matter to Jesus, however, because He came for exactly those people. The reason for the complaint leveled against Jesus is the very gospel that saves us. He loves to redeem sinners. That means we all qualify to be in His presence. This passage illustrates the truth that the gospel is good news for all people, for we all are sinners.

Do you find yourself identifying with the complainers or with Zacchaeus in this passage? Why?

While the crowd complained, Zacchaeus rejoiced. Meeting Jesus was the greatest moment of his life. His heart longed to meet Jesus, even if he didn't realize how earnestly until Jesus came to him and invited Himself to his house. His life was now changing, and the change would become evident to all. That's what grace does. It comes to an undeserving soul, changes it entirely, and new works flow out. We can struggle to hold this order clear in our minds, but we cannot obey into salvation; rather, obedience flows from salvation. The truly changed life can only flow from a truly changed heart.

The evidence of Zacchaeus's repentance is shocking. We must not forget his status. He was rich. He had a certain lifestyle he was used to. And there is no indication that he struggled with his occupation before he met Jesus. Yet when he met Jesus, he gave it all up immediately. He repented on the spot—perhaps even before Jesus came to his house.³ The encounter with Jesus was grace enough to move Zacchaeus to give sacrificially to the poor and to vow to repay what he had extorted—four times as much. The rich man was willing to become poor to have Jesus.

Notes

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

REPENTANCE: Repentance is a response to God's gracious call to salvation. It includes a genuine sorrow for one's sin (Luke 5:1-11), a turning away from one's sin toward Christ (Acts 26:15-20), and a life that reflects lasting change and transformation (Ps. 119:57-60). It is the human counterpart to God's work of regeneration; in other words, the human side of our conversion.

LEADER NOTE: Jesus referred to Zacchaeus as “a son of Abraham” (v. 9). To be a son of Abraham was to be a recipient of the covenant promises made to Abraham. As a Jewish man, Zacchaeus was already a son of Abraham by natural descent. But as Paul taught in Romans 9:6-13, not all children of Israel are children of Abraham. But for those who believe in Jesus—Jew or Gentile—God makes us children of Abraham, inheritors of the promises (Rom. 4:9-12; 10:9-13). The thing that makes one a son is not the bloodline of their fathers but whether or not they come under the blood of God's Son.

How have you seen the grace of Jesus produce true change in your own life?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus's ministry and mission was to bring salvation to those who are lost and looking to be found.

Notes

ARRIVAL

ENGAGE: As your group arrives, ask the following opening questions: “What have you lost and found this week? What was the most valuable thing you have lost and found? What emotions accompany losing and finding something that really matters?” After each question, invite one or two volunteers to share their answers briefly.

TRANSITION: We hate to lose things. Even in today’s world, where we can digitally track our phones or cars, we still lose the stuff we want to keep. And like how we find ourselves longing for the things we lost and never found, we’re going to see today that Jesus has that same longing yet deeper: He came to seek and save the lost, and He goes out of His way to find them.

CONTEXT

OVERVIEW: Pass out copies of **Pack Item 10: Encountering Jesus** and briefly highlight people’s varied responses to Jesus. Say: “Today’s narrative occurred not long after a rich man asked Jesus how to obtain eternal life (Luke 18:18-30). When Jesus told him to sell his possessions, he ‘became extremely sad, because he was very rich’ (v. 23), and Jesus remarked, ‘How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!’ (v. 24). Yet Jesus entered Jericho to find another rich man: Zacchaeus. (*Point out the city of Jericho on Pack Item 2: Jesus’s Ministry Map.*) These two rich men provide us a contrast: one claimed he had kept the law from his youth (v. 21), the other was a thieving tax collector and a sinner (19:7); one bowed, the other climbed; and one left in despair, while the other received salvation with joy.”

RECAP

ASK: What stood out to you in the story of Zacchaeus during your personal preparation this week? What might be different about reading this story as an adult if you first heard it as a child?

SAY: The story of Zacchaeus is appropriate for the young and old alike. You may even remember the kid’s song about the “wee little man.” But let’s remember that the focus of Zacchaeus story is Jesus. As we walk through the passage today, let’s keep our eyes on Jesus and consider Zacchaeus through His eyes.



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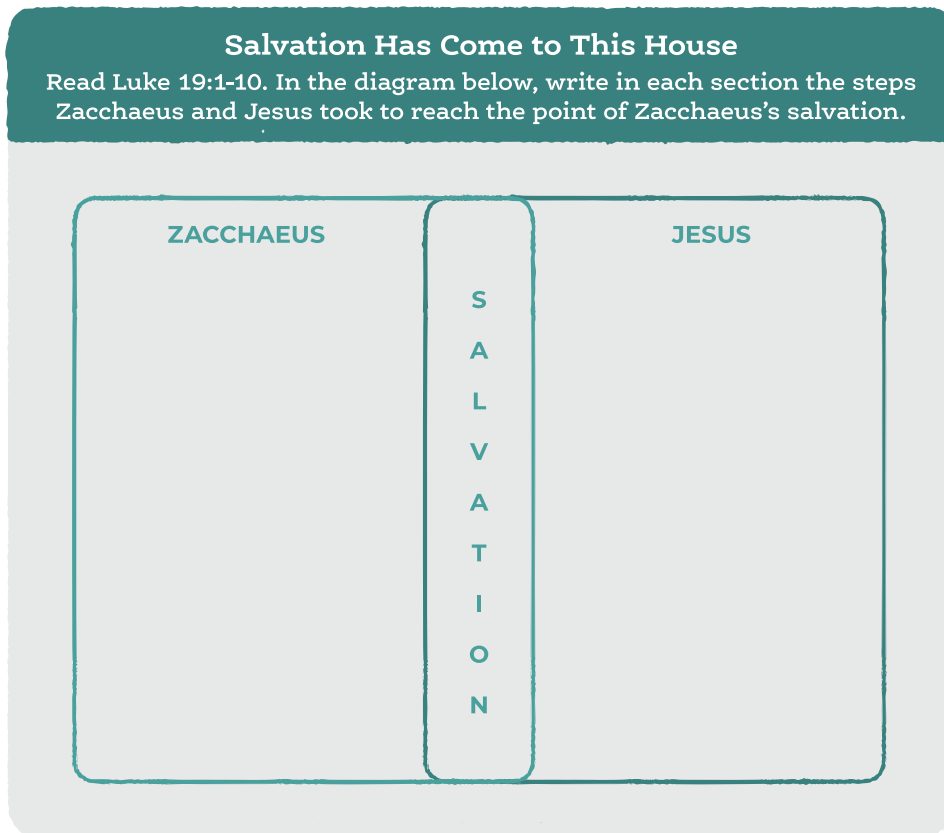
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GROUP ACTIVITY

Notes

DIAGRAM: Direct your group to page 100 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a diagram for the actions of Zacchaeus and Jesus in Luke 19:1-10. Recreate this diagram on a board in your room so you can record the group's responses as they interact with the Scripture.



READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 19:1-5.

DISCUSS: Based strictly upon what the Scripture tells us, what do we know about Zacchaeus? What do we observe about him? What might we assume?

ANALYZE: Engage your group in sharing aloud from verses 1-5 the actions of Zacchaeus and Jesus, writing them in the diagram. Point out the eagerness of Zacchaeus as revealed in his desire to see Jesus, his running, and his climbing.

CONNECT: Invite a volunteer to read John 6:44 aloud, and explain that Zacchaeus had not come to his eager desire to see Jesus on his own; he had been drawn by God the Father. Note that Jesus looked at Zacchaeus and called him by name though He and Zacchaeus had never met—Jesus was looking for the man with an invitation to fellowship.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read aloud Luke 19:6-10.

ANALYZE: Continue completing the diagram as a group by considering the actions of Zacchaeus (vv. 6,8) and Jesus (vv. 9,10) and adding to the board.

CONNECT: Direct your group to circle the preeminent step involved in Zacchaeus's salvation. (*Jesus came to seek and save the lost.*) Stress that Jesus graciously offered salvation to Zacchaeus in His invitation to fellowship. While Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, Jesus was seeking Zacchaeus to save him. Emphasize that Zacchaeus's subsequent actions of repentance were not a condition of his salvation but an overflow of a changed heart through meeting Jesus.

DEBRIEF

What is our response, knowing Jesus seeks to fellowship with us?

How might Zacchaeus's salvation story compare to your own testimony?

SUMMARIZE

Did you, like Zacchaeus, do whatever it took to see Jesus clearly and to yield to His lordship in your life when you first encountered Him? Eagerness to follow Jesus is not only for the newly saved; it's for all of us who have been walking with Him for ten, twenty, or seventy years because what was true then is still true today: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 101). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Heart** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



HEAD: What made the difference in Zacchaeus's life that changed him from a sinner to a saint? It was nothing other than an encounter with Jesus. That's what this sinful world needs, and that's what God offers in the preaching and sharing of the gospel. We don't need to overcomplicate it. The simplicity of the gospel is enough: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

What does Zacchaeus's story teach us about the transforming power of meeting Jesus?



HEART: It is not a hard-and-fast rule that Jesus will call everyone away from their wealth, but He does call us all away from whatever holds our hearts. He may call us to give away our possessions as Zacchaeus did. He may call us away from some of our dreams and plans for our lives. But whatever Jesus calls us to do, it is a call into deeper intimacy and joy with Him.

What might joyful repentance look like in your own life as Jesus calls you into deeper intimacy with Him?



HANDS: Following Jesus can look a million different ways, depending on what obedience to Christ looks like in our lives. But it is, at the very least, a change in direction. We no longer seek to get whatever we can however we can to bolster our selfish desires. Instead, we joyfully lay aside our wants and follow Jesus wherever He leads, knowing that we can trust Him to be with us along the way.

What will it look like for you to lay aside self-focused desires and follow Jesus with joy wherever He leads?

NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this week's session.

- Review this week's passage as you spend time in God's Word, setting your mind and heart to seeking Jesus, seeing Him, and fellowshiping with Him.
- Consider your own sin and repentance, bringing that to Jesus and inviting Him to show you how to respond.
- Pray for friends and family members who do not have a relationship with Jesus to encounter Jesus, and pray that the Holy Spirit would use you as a reminder of Jesus's power to change people through saving faith.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 101 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

CLOSE: Pray through Psalm 49:5-9 with your group, confessing that no amount of wealth can save. Thank God that He sent Jesus to redeem and save us and to give us eternal life with Him.

References

1. Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 180.
2. J. C. Ryle, *Luke, Crossway Classic Commentaries* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997), Lk 19:1-10.
3. Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, vol. 24, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 468.

Notes