



**FAITH**

**& LOVE**

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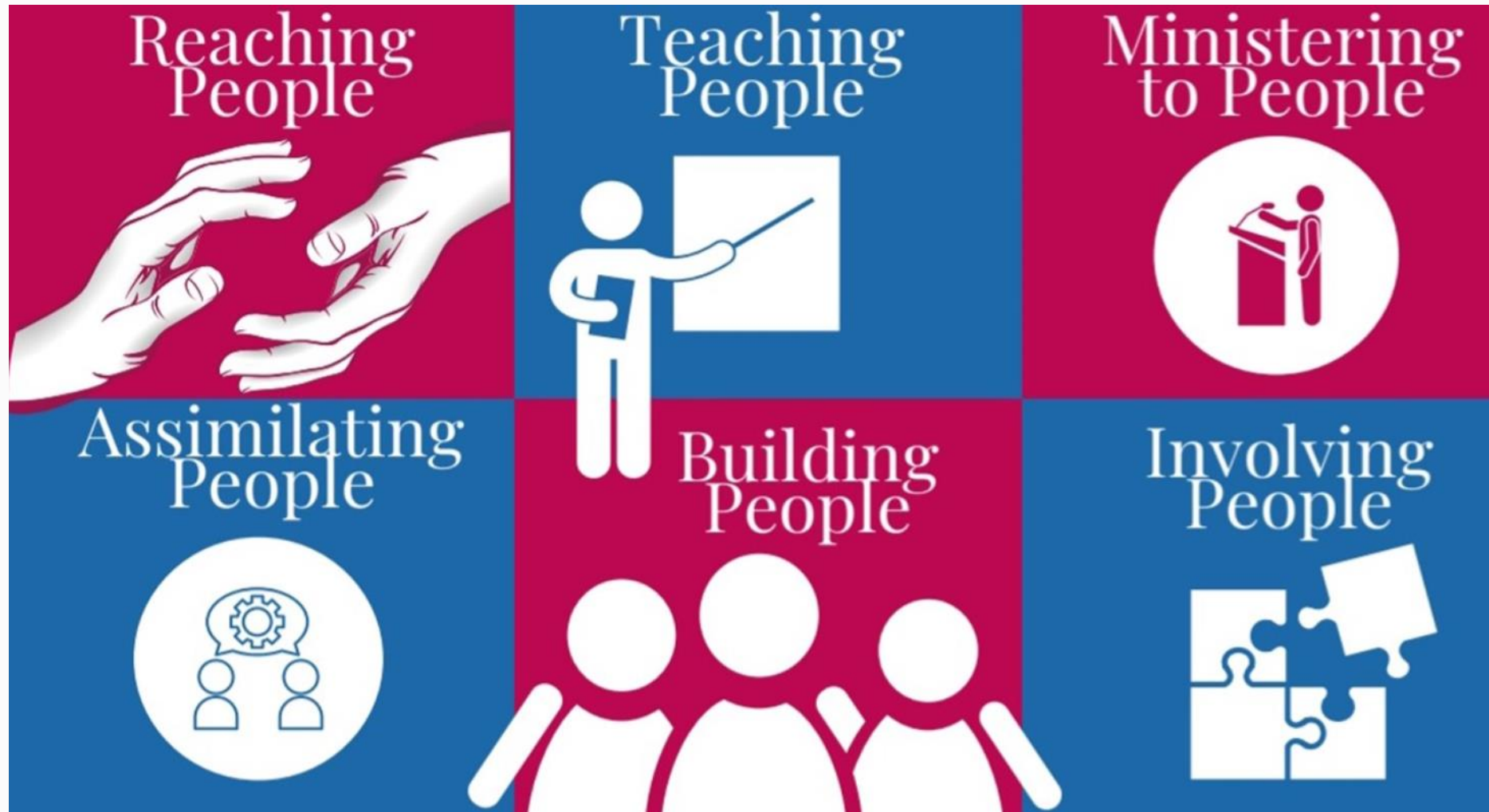
Church of God in Christ

**Faith and Love C.O.G.I.C  
Sunday School**

Lesson 14 May 31, 2026

**JOYOUS FAITH**

# SUNDAY SCHOOL CORE VALUES



**Lesson 14 May 31, 2026**  
**JOYOUS FAITH**



## **SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. **Psalm 133:1**

**School/Class:** But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. **Hebrews 13:16**

**Superintendent/Teacher:** All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. **2 Timothy 3:16**

**School/Class:** Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. **Psalm 119:105**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. **Philippians 2:4**

School/Class: He who has a generous eye will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor. **Proverbs 22:9**

Superintendent/Teacher: Therefore he says: “When He ascended on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.” **Ephesians 4:8**

School/Class: As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. **1 Peter 4:10**

## SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING

Superintendent/Teacher: For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. **1 Corinthians 12:12**

School/Class: For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function. **Romans 12:4**

Superintendent/Teacher: By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. **John 13:35**

School/Class: For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. **Gal. 5:13**

**SUNDAY SCHOOL RESPONSIVE READING**

**ALL:**

But grow in the grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

**2 Peter 3:18**

## Lesson 14 May 31, 2026

### JOYOUS FAITH



- Bible Basis: Luke 19:1-10
- Bible Truth: Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus with great faith and repentance.
- Memory Verse: “For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10)
- Lesson Aim: By the end of the lesson, we will: REMEMBER the details of the encounter of Zacchaeus with Jesus; BELIEVE that we can make necessary dramatic changes in our lives with God’s help; and REPENT of our shortcomings and then to commit to living godly lives.
- Background Scriptures: [Isaiah 44:23-26](#); [Luke 19:1-10](#) – Read and incorporate the insights gained from the Background Scriptures into your study of the lesson.

**Luke 19:1-10 KJV**

- 1** And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.
- 2** And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.
- 3** And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.
- 4** And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.
- 5** And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.

**Luke 19:1-10 KJV**

**6** And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

**7** And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

**8** And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord: Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

**9** And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

**10** For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

## **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

**Sycamore tree.** A type of fig tree, this variety of tree was known for its distinctive branches, leaves, and fruit. Plentiful in both Old Testament and New Testament times, it boasted branches strong enough for a person to climb and broad leaves that provided ample shade along the many roads where it was planted. Yielding fruit a few times a year, the tree provided a reliable source of food for the poor and offered a cheaper source of wood than other tree varieties, such as cedar.

## **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

**Zacchaeus.** Zacchaeus was a rich Jew who worked as a high-level tax collector, or publican. Because of his position, he could extort excessive taxes from other Jews. The source of his wealth may have been money collected from the poor. He proved meeting Jesus was a life-changing event by volunteering to give half of his goods to the poor and restore the fortunes of people he may have falsely accused. "Jesus responded, 'Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham'" ([Luke 19:9, NLT](#)).

## **LIFE NEED FOR TODAY'S LESSON:**

**AIM: We will accept that all people have experienced a loss of direction in their lives and an inability to make necessary changes and new plans.**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Jesus Invites Himself to Dinner**

The Israelites and Jews were expected to love their neighbors and strangers as they loved themselves ([Leviticus 19:18, Matthew 5:43; Luke 10:25-37](#)). Thus, in both Old and New Testament times, hospitality was a way of life, practiced and extended to friends and family. However, in the broadest interpretation of the term, it also conveyed showing hospitality to strangers, treating them as guests of honor, and meeting their basic needs for a meal, foot bath, place to rest or sleep, or protection from hostile residents ([Genesis 19:1-11](#)). Entertainment could also be provided, but varied based on the host's financial resources. Under normal circumstances, the homeowner extended invitations.

# INTRODUCTION

## Jesus Invites Himself to Dinner

During Jesus' earthly ministry, He accepted hospitality from His disciples (e.g., Matthew 8:14), Pharisees (Luke 7:36), and known "sinners" (i.e., Matthew 9:9-11). In today's lesson, however, Jesus invited Himself to Zacchaeus' home. Given hospitality mores then, refusal was not an option. Furthermore, as a rich man, Zacchaeus would have had the resources to host Jesus at a moment's notice.

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **Jesus Invites Himself to Dinner**

On the other hand, as a wealthy person and sinner, Zacchaeus may have had wiggle room for refusing to host Jesus. None of these factors appear to have influenced him. Rather, from his joyous response, Zacchaeus was clearly delighted to be called and chosen to host Jesus. That acceptance paved the way for Zacchaeus to accept a greater invitation – salvation – and sparked his public declaration to make restitution for past sins.

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**JOYOUS FAITH**



# BIBLE LEARNING

AIM: We will understand that Jesus declared that His own work was to seek and save the lost.

## **I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

Anyone can change, and getting back on track after a loss of direction is possible – with God's help. Those encouraging facts undergird the story of Zacchaeus' conversion. Zacchaeus was rich yet despised because of his occupation and the way he conducted business affairs. Nonetheless, something within him prompted a desire to "see Jesus who he was" (v. 3, KJV).

## **I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

Zacchaeus' spiritual interest would have to overcome three major obstacles: (1) a reputation as a sinner; (2) the crowd; and (3) his height. Against these odds, he found a way to satisfy his curiosity and was rewarded with a personal meeting with Jesus.

## **I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

Opposition abounds for everyone seeking a change of spiritual direction. Multiple obstacles stand in the path of righteousness. Zacchaeus was determined to overcome every obstacle that thwarts converting to Christianity and growing in Christ.

Zacchaeus was not satisfied with a mere glimpse of Jesus, and no one seeking to make necessary life changes should be either.

## **I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

This story of the rich, short Zacchaeus is unique to Luke; it does not occur in any of the other Gospels. It serves Luke's purposes well to have it in his Gospel, which often takes sides with the poor against the rich. In the previous chapter, Jesus had an encounter with a rich young ruler who, when told to sell everything he had to follow Jesus, walked away sad ([18:18-27](#)). Jesus concluded that brief dialogue saying, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the Kingdom of God!" ([18:24, NLT](#)). As if to qualify that episode, Luke now talks about a rich man who actually received salvation. Luke thus shows that despite his critique of wealth, rich people who help people are among the outcasts whom Jesus came to save. Tradition has it that Zacchaeus-saved on this day – went on to become the first bishop of Caesarea in Palestine.

## **I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

The story takes place toward the end of Jesus' life on earth – at the end of Luke's travel narratives. Jesus was on His final trip to Jerusalem, reaching the city by the end of this chapter, where He would be crucified in the following few days. At the close of the preceding chapter, as He drew near Jericho, Jesus had healed the blind Bartimaeus ([18:35-43](#); [cf. Matthew 20:29-34](#), [Mark 10:46-52](#)). He passed through Jericho, even though there were many other ways – probably just to meet Zacchaeus, as this is the only incident recorded in the city. Jericho itself was a rich city located about seventeen miles from Jerusalem and six miles from the Jordan River. It was known for its palms and balsam, but it was also located on a significant trade route from Peraea to Judaea and Egypt.

## **I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

The balm that came from Gile-ad on the other side of the Jordan was transported through Jericho into all parts of the world. Thus, Jericho was an important center of trade. It had an important toll-house and Zacchaeus was at the head of Jericho's customs department. We come to this story understanding two important facts: (1) Jesus is a friend of tax collectors and sinners ([Luke 5:30, 7:34](#)), even having a former publican among His disciples ([Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:27-32](#)) and (2) it is very hard for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God ([Luke 18:24-25](#)).

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**I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through it. 2 A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way.

The first verse serves as a connector, providing the context of Zacchaeus' story and linking it with what happened in the preceding chapter where Jesus healed the blind man, Bartimaeus, just outside Jericho. Now He has gone into the city and is passing through. He is still surrounded by the entourage of His disciples and the large crowds who have been following Him, as well as those who had sought to prevent Bartimaeus from seeing Jesus ([18:39](#)). In the city lived a wealthy tax collector named Zacchaeus, the Greek form of a Hebrew name Zakkay (or Zaccai-an abbreviation of Zacharia), which means in the abbreviated form "pure" or "innocent." The full form means "The Lord has remembered." At the beginning of the story, Zacchaeus is anything but pure and innocent.

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**I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

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As a Jewish tax collector, he was a betrayer of his own people. Tax collectors were hated and marginalized by their people, not only because taxes are generally uncomfortable, but also because the tax collectors served the Roman government that colonized them. In addition, tax collectors made their profit through extortion, as they were permitted to collect more than the Romans exacted and keep the surplus. That may explain John the Baptist's admonition to the tax collectors who asked how they could get right with God. He told them to collect no more than what is appointed for them ([Luke 3:13](#)). Thus, generally, if you were a rich tax collector, you were a thief. Zacchaeus is a chief tax collector, and he is unscrupulous just like other tax collectors. But Zacchaeus sought to see Jesus – who He was. We do not know how Zacchaeus came to know about Jesus.

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**I. AGAINST ALL ODDS**

Luke 19:1-4

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Maybe he had heard the news about the miracles, or just wondered who this crowd-pulling Rabbi was. Had he heard that a publican like himself was among the chosen disciples of the Teacher whom the people were receiving as the Son of David? Had someone told him of the parable of the Pharisee and the publican? Had the fame of the miracle at the entrance into Jericho made him eager to see the Miracle Worker? Further, we are not told why Zacchaeus made the effort to see who Jesus was. Possibly he was really looking to change his life. Maybe he was tired of being marginalized and was trying to make things right by giving away half of his possessions to the poor and restoring fourfold to anyone he had cheated. Or was he trying to get his life in right order, and found it hard to imagine how he could maintain his style of living if he did that? Whatever his condition, because he was a thieving tax collector, Jesus had come to seek the lost like him.

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Zacchaeus was unable to see Jesus over the crowd because he was too short. Despite his wealth and political power, he could not penetrate the crowd. Just like in the preceding chapter, the crowd became a barrier to someone who wanted to see Jesus. Part of the problem was that as a tax collector, he was a social outcast. He would not freely mingle with the multitudes, especially where he was known. In the eyes of his community, Zacchaeus' smallness was not just physical, but moral as well. He sought to gain some elevation to help him see Jesus. Thus, he ran before the crowd, and in spite of the dignity that went with his prestigious position in society, he dismissed the shame and, in a childlike manner, climbed a sycamore fig. Only mentioned here in the Scriptures, it was a large oak-like evergreen tree that was easy to climb. It is not mentioned whether this was Zacchaeus' way of hiding as well. Was he hoping not to be noticed by Jesus or the crowd? Of course, a man of his status would not have wanted to be seen in a tree.

## **II. CALL AND RESPONSE**

Luke 19:5-6

Does God know where we are any given moment? Can He reach us, even when others can't due to sin, irreconcilable differences, or distance? Will God notice our effort to change, as Jesus noticed Zacchaeus (and as the father did his son's in the parable of the prodigal son, [Luke 15:11-32](#))? Today's passage answers each of these questions with a resounding yes.

## **II. CALL AND RESPONSE**

Luke 19:5-6

Rather than simply walk under the tree and continue His journey, Jesus looked up (v. 5). His was a divine call to a sinner, inviting Zacchaeus on a faith journey. In response, "Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy" ([v. 6, NLT](#)).

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**II. CALL AND RESPONSE**  
**The Grumblers and the Naysayers**

Luke 19:5-6

5 When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today." 6 So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. 7 All who saw it began to grumble and said, "He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner."

The good thing is that Jesus knew he was in the tree, knew his name. We are not told how He knew; it may have been supernatural knowledge (as in the case of Nathanael, [John 1:47](#)), but He may also have heard it from the people around. There is no reason to assume that the other people did not see Zacchaeus in the tree. Jesus called him to "hurry and come down." There was no need to waste time. He had been seeking to see Jesus, but here, it was Jesus looking at him and calling him down. Jesus takes the greater initiative to befriend another tax collector here when He invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house, "for today, I must stay at your house." Here, the story changes. The one who was seeking becomes the one sought, even though he is also shunned by society. As seen in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jericho was among the cities devoted to the priests in Jesus' time (it wasn't one originally given to the Levites in Moses' time but later during the Greco-Roman period, [Luke 10:30-31](#)).

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Therefore, there may have been many priests' houses in the city where Jesus could have stayed, but instead, He chose to stay with a tax collector loathed by the Jews. Zacchaeus did as he was told, and he welcomed Jesus to his house joyfully. Having Jesus in his house was significant as it symbolized forgiveness. The whole incident turns out to be an honor that Zacchaeus could not have expected. John Nolland adds that "The language of welcome evokes that of the mission charges ([10:8-9](#)) and its import is underlined in the language of joy for the kingdom of God has come to this man, and he has embraced it. [Thus] he is no longer the outsider he was in vv. 3-4."

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**II. CALL AND RESPONSE**  
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At this point, the crowd begins to grumble that Jesus is again making Himself the guest of "sinners." In Luke's words, "all the people who saw this began to murmur." "All" here might suggest that not only the Pharisees murmured, but even some of the other Jews and Gentiles who were present. In addition, this was a priestly city, which may have made it religiously segmented. Whatever the case, this murmuring may be expected, because in their minds, the tax collector was a sinner (and Zacchaeus chief among them) who should be shunned by the moral majority; to stay in such a sinner's house was tantamount to sharing in his sin. In general, it was believed that to accept hospitality from someone whose wealth was acquired in dubious ways is to become a partner in their crimes. In being the Good Shepherd, Jesus put Himself in questionable circumstances.

### **III. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS**

Luke 19:7-10

Zacchaeus repented of his sin and volunteered to make amends. His character and attitude contrast with those of the Pharisee and the tax collector in the parable Jesus told in [Luke 18:9-14](#). The Pharisee's self-righteousness prevented him from seeing his need to get back on track spiritually. The tax collector humbled himself before God, admitting his faults, and was justified. Conversely, Zacchaeus' public declaration revealed his gratitude for Jesus' intervention in his life and also his joy of salvation. These, in turn, provided a forum for Jesus to declare His own mission – to seek and save the lost (v. 10). As Christians, we showcase Jesus' mission by our joyous faith.

### **III. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS**

Luke 19:7-10

Sin separates us from God. Knowing this, many people delay making a faith decision because they want to "clean up" their lives first, but this misunderstands the Scriptures. According to [1 John 4:19](#), "We love him, because he first loved us." Because He loves us, we can pray, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me" ([Psalm 51:10, KJV](#)). We then can get back on track, publicly declaring our joyous faith ([Romans 10:10](#)).

### **III. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS**

#### **Jesus Declares His Ministry**

Luke 19:7-10

8 Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much."  
9 Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Zacchaeus is here speaking to Jesus, but he seems to be responding to the grumbling crowd. (Jesus, then, in turn addresses the crowd in the following verse.) He goes on to state, "Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." His statement suggests that he was publicly repenting of his bad past. This was his grateful response to the initiative that Jesus took to see him. However, it is also Zacchaeus' declaration to assure the crowd that he is now a changed person. He was not a sinner anymore; therefore, the accusations against Jesus lodging with a sinner were not valid.

### **III. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS**

#### **Jesus Declares His Ministry**

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Roman law required fourfold restitution only under certain circumstances, like in a wrongful accusation in court. However, Zacchaeus was so touched by the events of the day that he promised a degree of restitution far beyond normal. While some may read the promises in a futuristic sense, that he will give away his property, others read it in the present tense – suggesting that Zacchaeus is already giving away his property to the poor. Such a reading, however, downplays the central theme of the story, that salvation is available even to the outcast who responds to God's call (v. 9). Instead of being a salvation story, it becomes a vindication story, which does not sit well with the rest of the story.

### **III. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS**

#### **Jesus Declares His Ministry**

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Jesus responds to Zacchaeus, "Today, salvation has come to this house." However, the following statement sounds like Jesus was addressing the crowd about Zacchaeus: "For he too is a son of Abraham." The mention of Zacchaeus' house – or household – is in line with Luke's motif of the salvation of house-holds in Acts ([10:2](#), [11:14](#), [16:15](#), [31](#), [18:8](#)). With that motif, Luke implies that the members of the household were saved too. The wider significance of this saying is that this house which was shunned as a sinner's house has now been transformed. Further, this transformation will not happen in the future – it has already happened, because Zacchaeus was a Jew and a son of Abraham, even though he was a tax collector. More than that, Jesus' words seem to say that since Zacchaeus has embraced the Kingdom of God, he has become a spiritual son of Abraham who belongs among His followers.

### **III. PUBLIC DECLARATIONS**

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The final statement in this story is uttered by Jesus. By "Son of Man," Jesus is talking about Himself (v. 10). He uses similar language to what He said at 5:32: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (KJV). However, the image is similar to the language of Ezekiel 34, where God and David gather the scattered sheep back to the fold. In a nutshell, Jesus is explaining why He was friends with sinners and tax collectors like Zacchaeus – to seek and save the lost. The church today ought to follow in Jesus' footsteps to extend the Kingdom to those rejected in society. This applies even to those Christians who backslide and lose direction. Jesus came to seek them too, and the church must join Him in this search.

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**JOYOUS FAITH**



# **LIGHT ON THE WORD**

## **The Big Payback**

Zacchaeus' promise to give away half his riches and pay back fourfold to all he defrauded is amazing. The Law did not require the repentant sinner to give half his property to the poor, nor restore fourfold, except in the case of theft. Where a person voluntarily confessed, the law required restitution of only a fifth above the principal.

# **BIBLE APPLICATION**

**AIM: We will learn that repentance and making changes to follow the Lord, creates new opportunities and possibilities.**

## **BIBLE APPLICATION**

Ascertaining whether someone is interested in the Gospel is not always easy. However, actions may speak louder than words. If someone is taking a risk to speak with us regarding our faith, then it indicates he or she is curious about our Savior – even if he or she won't come to church with us. Zacchaeus was in a tree – not in the Temple. That fact provides ample support for openly sharing our faith wherever we find spiritual seekers.

# **STUDENT RESPONSES**

**AIM: We will affirm that believers trust Jesus for direction and guidance in their lives.**

## **STUDENT RESPONSES**

The inability to make necessary changes and new plans plagues sinners and Christians alike. Ask God for the courage and help to make a dramatic change in a specific area. Then take a specific step – apologize to a loved one, make arrangements to repay a debt, enroll in an addiction recovery program, return to Bible study, etc.

# Prayer

Dear Creative Lord.

We are blessed by Your spirit that humbles us, and rejoices with us. We are excited to welcome You into our homes and hearts. Allow us to declare like Zacchaeus that we are changed to follow what is right before the Lord. Thank You Jesus.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

**Lesson 14 May 31, 2026**  
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**Next Sunday**  
**June 7, 2026**

**Lesson 1**

**“The Day of the Lord”**

**Zephaniah 1:4-6; 14-16; 2:3**