

The Dot - 2/9/21

Bible Stories and Characters: Zacchaeus

Bible Passage: Luke 19:1-10

Interviewee: Sebastian Tarin



Overview/Summary

Zacchaeus was a dishonest man whose curiosity led him to Jesus Christ and salvation. Zacchaeus had to climb a tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus passing by because he was a short guy. Much to his surprise, the Lord called Zacchaeus by name, and told him to come down from the tree. That very day, Jesus went home with Zacchaeus. Jesus knew this man's name, and called him by name, and then invited Himself to his house for a meal. Zacchaeus was delighted, of course, but the crowds were not very pleased about this because they considered Zacchaeus to be a great sinner—which he was. Moved by Jesus' message, the well-known sinner turned his life over to Christ and was never the same again.

What We Learn:

Here are some important things to consider as you read this story...

- Zacchaeus was a Jewish tax collector for the Roman government. Such men were hated by their fellow-Jews, not only because they were working with Rome, but because of their dishonest practices. Tax collectors were the scum of the earth.
- Zacchaeus was probably a lonely man.
- Zacchaeus was a reject—nobody wanted him.

Zacchaeus must have been super surprised when Jesus called him by name and then invited Himself over. Jesus is so good at noticing people...even when they are up in the trees. Sometimes we feel like we need to 'have it all together' before we can come to Jesus. This story is so cool because God doesn't focus on the past...He loves Zacchaeus right where he is at. Jesus came for everyone, including the people you think are impossible, the ones who are so messed up that you think they're hopeless. Jesus is for everyone, and I love it when Jesus surprises us and calls the Zacchaeus'!

Reflection Questions:

- What would you do if you heard Jesus was coming into your neighborhood? What did Zacchaeus do?
- In what ways can past sins and guilt keep you from wanting to be in the presence of Jesus? (Read 1 John 1:9)
- The religious leaders in this story didn't believe Zacchaeus deserved to talk to Jesus. How do you struggle with the idea that some people are more deserving of grace while others have fallen too far away? (Read Romans 3:22-23)
- What does Zacchaeus do after he interacts with Jesus? Why was it important for Zacchaeus to take actions that supported his change of heart?
- Zacchaeus needed to refocus his heart and mind from money to Jesus. What does it look like for us to not only repent, but to surrender every area of our lives?
- Why do people think they have to be 'perfect' before they can come to church or God?
- Read Romans 5:8- *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* What does this verse mean?
- Who is someone that you can share this story of amazing grace and forgiveness with?