



### Luke 19:1-10

**1** Jesus entered Jericho and was going through the town **2** when a man whose name was Zacchaeus made his appearance; he was one of the senior tax collectors and a wealthy man. **3** He was anxious to see what kind of man Jesus was, but he was too short and could not see him for the crowd; **4** so he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus who was to pass that way. **5** When Jesus reached the spot he looked up and spoke to him: 'Zacchaeus, come down. Hurry, because I must stay at your house today.' **6** And he hurried down and welcomed him joyfully. **7** They all complained when they saw what was happening. 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house,' they said. **8** But Zacchaeus stood his ground and said to the Lord, 'Look, sir, I am going to give half my property to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will pay him back four times the amount.' **9** And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because this man too is a son of Abraham; **10** for the Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

Other readings: Wisdom 11:22-12:2 Psalm 144 (145) 2 Thessalonians 1:11-2:2

The story of the chief tax-collector Zacchaeus is of considerable importance in the Gospel of Luke, for in it Jesus declares that the purpose of his coming is 'to seek out and save what was lost' (verse 10). Only Luke tells us about Zacchaeus. The harsh criticism by the religious leaders of the welcome Jesus shows to sinners becomes more widespread in this passage. Now everyone is complaining: 'He has gone to stay at a sinner's house' (verse 7).

Zacchaeus is quite determined to meet Jesus, and allows no obstacle to get in his way. His climbing the sycamore tree illustrates that sometimes strenuous efforts are needed to rise above fears and preoccupations and to see the forgiving face of the Lord.

As it was in chapter 7 in the case of the woman who was a sinner, the encounter with Jesus is life-changing for Zacchaeus too. He realises that Jesus brings forgiveness. He decides to give away half his property and to make amends for what he has defrauded. Forgiveness can bring profound changes in a person's life. Zacchaeus now knows that he is no longer an isolated individual caught up in his own greed and selfishness, but truly a member of God's people. Jesus confirms this insight: 'This man too is a son of Abraham' (verse 9).

The story comes just before the arrival of Jesus in Jerusalem. The final words of Jesus summarise both what he has shown in his ministry and what he will do in Jerusalem: 'The Son of Man has come to seek out and save what was lost.'

*Do I recognise my need for forgiveness and the need to make changes in my life?*

*Do I allow the preoccupations of life to obscure my view of Jesus?*

*Let us pray for those who are approaching forgiveness and faith.*

*Let us pray for those who are critical of the free gift of forgiveness.*