



PREVIEW

Today we will delve into the story of Zacchaeus as found in Luke 19:1–10, a tale of unexpected transformation and divine grace. We will explore how Zacchaeus, despised by society, encountered Jesus and was forever changed.

PRAISE

Let's start by praising God for His unconditional love and His ability to bring about transformation in the most unlikely circumstances. Think about some times when you didn't deserve His love, but He still loved you anyway.

PARABLE

Zacchaeus was a "chief publican"; he was a Jew who had purchased a tax franchise from the Roman government. According to the Encyclopedia of the Bible, Zacchaeus, as chief publican, farmed out the actual tax-collecting to subordinate tax agents all over the metropolis of Jericho, and they all got rich off of inflated commissions. It is ironic that the name Zaccheus means "innocent."

Imagine the bustling streets of Jericho, much like the bustling hallways during class changes. Just as students navigate the hallways, Zacchaeus was navigating the crowded streets of Jericho, wondering what was drawing such a large crowd. He apparently didn't know about Jesus, because Luke 19:3 (ESV) says "he was seeking to see who Jesus was."

The Transformative *ENCOUNTER*

PARABLE *(continued)*

Zacchaeus not only had the disadvantage of being hated by the public, but he also was short of stature and no one parted the way so he could see what was going on. He ran ahead and climbed a tree to gain a better vantage point. He must have been surprised and embarrassed when Jesus stopped under his tree and called out to him above the noise of the crowd. The crowd must have been just as surprised to see the despised chief tax collector in such an undignified position.

PRESENT

Read Luke 19:1–10. This passage unveils a remarkable encounter between Zacchaeus and Jesus. Zacchaeus was shunned by society due to his association with the oppressive Roman regime and his reputation for exploiting his fellow citizens. Despite his wealth and position, he felt a void—a longing to see the man named Jesus who was causing such a stir. Little did he anticipate that his curiosity and determination would draw the attention of the Messiah Himself.

Jesus looked up into the tree and locked eyes with Zacchaeus. His piercing gaze cut deep into Zacchaeus's heart in an instant of recognition and invitation. With a simple phrase, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today," Jesus shattered the barriers between them.

Zacchaeus, a man isolated by his actions and reputation, now stood face to face with the source of true acceptance and love. Jesus' words carried a weight beyond their surface meaning—they were an invitation to experience a depth of transformation that Zacchaeus had never thought possible. The disapproval of the crowd could not overshadow the profound significance of this offer.

And so, with joy Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus into his home. This act of hospitality was more than a gesture of politeness; it was an opening of his heart to the divine presence that saw beyond the surface and into the core of his being. The encounter led to a radical transformation—an outpouring of repentance and a desire to make amends for his wrongdoings.

The Transformative *ENCOUNTER*

PRACTICE

In the spirit of Zacchaeus's transformation is the challenge to examine our own lives. Just as he faced obstacles, we too encounter challenges that may seem insurmountable. However, Jesus' transformative power knows no bounds. Let's consider areas in our lives where we can make amends and grow.

Consider these four ways to take this story we read in Scripture and apply it to our P7 Club:

1. Who is outcast in our school, pushed to the side, and how can we help them?
2. How can we break down barriers with those different than us to show the love of Jesus?
3. How can we help others that aren't in relationship with Jesus to find Him?

PRAY

Take a moment to connect with God through prayer. Thank Him for His boundless love and the transformative encounters He offers. Ask for guidance and strength to extend love and grace to those society may overlook.

PLUS

As we conclude, remember that the story of Zacchaeus is not isolated to the pages of history. There are "Zacchaeuses" all around us—people in need of love, acceptance, and transformation. This week, intentionally look for opportunities to reflect Jesus' example by reaching out to those who might be hurting or feeling marginalized.