

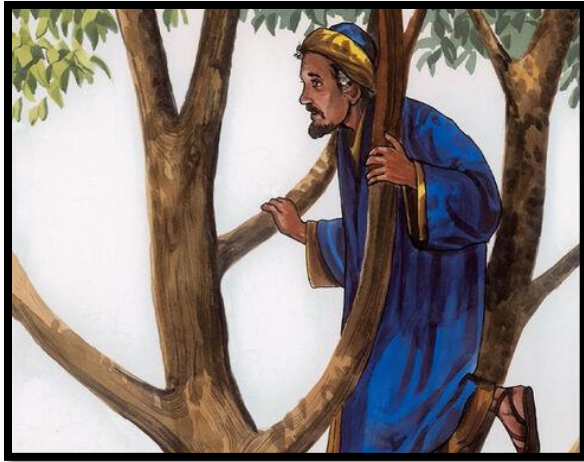
# Seeking the Lost!

## Luke 19:1-10

Online Sermon: [http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page\\_id=3567](http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567)

### Story of Zacchaeus

As Jesus was passing through Jericho on His way to Jerusalem,<sup>1</sup> He met a man named



Zacchaeus. “He was a Jew, a ruler, a tax collector, and extremely rich,”<sup>2</sup> for Jericho was not only wealthy from its important trade route from Jerusalem to the East but was also “their famous balsam groves that abounded.”<sup>3</sup> While being the chief tax collector Zacchaeus “would have enjoyed relative power and privilege in the Greco-Roman eyes,”<sup>4</sup> he was despised and hated by his own nation for having overcharged, swindled<sup>5</sup> and joining the enemy in their oppression of the Jewish nation!<sup>6</sup> Despite it being a huge risk to plunge into a crowd that he and Rome routinely maltreated,<sup>7</sup> in his desire to meet Jesus Zacchaeus not only

showed up amongst them but due to being either too young<sup>8</sup> or more likely too short<sup>9</sup> climbed a

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<sup>1</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 666.

<sup>2</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 668.

<sup>3</sup> Leon Morris, *Luke: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 3, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 288.

<sup>4</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 668–669.

<sup>5</sup> Alan Carr, “[How Zacchaeus Was Saved \(Luke 19:1–10\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1464.

<sup>6</sup> Tony Evans, “[“Seeking the Lost.”](#)” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>7</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 529.

<sup>8</sup> Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 669.

<sup>9</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 530.

sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus. When Jesus got to the tree, though it was not the “norm in Judaism and verged on impropriety,”<sup>10</sup> Jesus asked Zacchaeus to “come down immediately for He must stay at his house today” (verse 5). Despite the “religious” crowd becoming angered by Jesus’ grace and mercy towards the heinous, tax collecting traitor;<sup>11</sup> Zacchaeus shows he was repentant<sup>12</sup> by promising to give half of his possessions to the poor, and instead of full restitution to those he wronged plus one-fifth that the Law required (Leviticus 5:16; Numbers 5:7)<sup>13</sup> he promised to give four times the amount he wrongly took from his people (verse 8)! Because of his repentant heart and belief that Jesus could save him, Zacchaeus got to hear Christ confirm his heart’s desire, “today salvation has come to this house” for you Zacchaeus are a true descendent and son of Abraham (Romans 9:6-8)!<sup>14</sup> The story of Zacchaeus’ conversion finishes with Jesus boldly declaring to the unmerciful and dare I say pious crowd of Pharisaic pretenders of the faith<sup>15</sup> that the “Son of Man came to seek and save the lost” (verse 10)!

### Story of Seeking a Lost Child

Before we get to some of the lessons of Zacchaeus’ story let me tell you of another one. Supposed there was a small boy in a family of eight that in one dreadful moment got lost in the mall. At first you as the parent thought he was merely lingering so you calmly looked around but after checking out his favorite areas of the store and not finding him your heart began to race, your palms sweat, and terror begins to fill your soul! You cry out his name in hope that he might hear your voice, but you do not even hear a faint whisper of your son! You sit in front of the store manager and the police for what seems like days describing best you could what happened but remain numb less the truth of the situation might crush what little hope you have left! On the way home you shake uncontrollably as every horrible nightmare you ever watched on television is replayed in your mind. What if he is alone, scared, hurt, or worst yet being molested by a psychopathic pervert? Once you enter your home the grim reality hits hard for within your once happy abode you find your entire family and pastor waiting for you to arrive and they have the same terror in their eyes that you feel in your heart! You pray for God’s ever lasting protection

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<sup>10</sup> James R. Edwards, [\*The Gospel according to Luke\*](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 530.

<sup>11</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>12</sup> James R. Edwards, [\*The Gospel according to Luke\*](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 532.

<sup>13</sup> James R. Edwards, [\*The Gospel according to Luke\*](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 532.

<sup>14</sup> James R. Edwards, [\*The Gospel according to Luke\*](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 533.

<sup>15</sup> Joel B. Green, [\*The Gospel of Luke\*](#), The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 671.

for your son and wisdom for all who are going out to search for him! As the days pass and still no sign of your son the search party begins to thin until nearly all have given up home. In



disgust you wonder how they could ever give up! Then one night while you and your husband are praying with tears running down your faces you hear a knock at the door! When the door opens you can hardly believe your eyes but who is standing there but your son with your next-door neighbor! O praise be to God for the joy that broke out in that room was truly heavenly! As you hold your son ever so tightly, he says he is so deeply sorry. He explains that he ran away from home because he did not feel loved. He wandered for days but eventually made his way back home and stood outside the house

wondering if he should enter. He had been gone for so long and had done so many despicable things that he feared he might have been forgotten or worst yet not wanted! It was then that the neighbor who never stopped seeking found and convinced him beyond the doors were parents who absolutely loved him! At that very moment you knew what the Father must have felt when he saw the prodigal son in his field and you rejoiced for your son who was lost had been found!

### **Reason why Jesus came to Earth**

From manger to cross to empty tomb, Christ<sup>16</sup> came not to condemn the world (John 3:16-17) but to seek those who are lost and entangled in their sin! There has not been a day since the Fall of Creation that the Good Shepherd has not sought to take under His wings (13:34)<sup>17</sup> the vilest and the most depraved whom the “religious” pharisees have long written off as unredeemable! Though the “nations be sunk up to their eyelids in infamous transgressions, lost to every sense of shame and decency,”<sup>18</sup> Christ’s mission on this earth was one of pure mercy, indescribable love<sup>19</sup> to lay down His life for the many (Mark 10:45) so that those who knock on the door (Revelation 3:20) and seek the way, truth and life (John 14:6) might believe in Him and in doing so become a redeemed masterpiece of His grace, forever adopted into His family (John 1:12)! Jesus came to save the Zacchaeus’ of this world whom while freely choosing the broad path and even reveling in its pleasures are restless, aching in their souls to know and lie in the bosom of their Creator!<sup>20</sup> Christ did not come to “propound a philosophy, explode ancient

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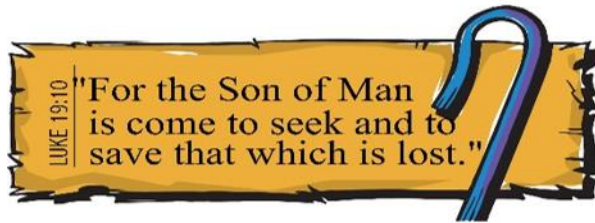
<sup>16</sup> Robert Murray McCheyne et al., [A Treasury of Great Preaching: 5 Vol. Set](#) (WORDsearch, 2020).

<sup>17</sup> Robert Murray McCheyne et al., [A Treasury of Great Preaching: 5 Vol. Set](#) (WORDsearch, 2020).

<sup>18</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Saving the Lost,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 47 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1901), 578.

<sup>19</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Saving the Lost,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 47 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1901), 578.

<sup>20</sup> This idea came from Augustine.



errors, or to become popular so that He might gain the esteem of the nations”<sup>21</sup> but to atone for and show the way to be saved to those “sunken in sin, and so satisfied with self-righteousness”<sup>22</sup> that their hearts of stone and spiritual blindness have imprisoned them in an eternal, spiritual death in the furnace of hell! Like the neighbour seeking the lost boy in the above story, we as His ambassadors and royal priests are invited to join Jesus in His mission to never write off the ungodly but forever plant and water seeds of righteousness in their lives (1 Corinthians 3:6-9).

This is to be done not out of partiality, as if one were more deserving than another, but in faith that He who loved and saved a wretch like me loves all and saves anyone who believes in the atoning sacrifice of our Lord, Savior and King!

### Are we Getting in the Way of the Lost Seeing Jesus?

The problem with today’s church is that our Light unto this world is not being seen because of all the roadblocks we have put in their way!<sup>23</sup> It was not just his short stature but



their disdain for Zacchaeus that made him go up that sycamore-fig tree! Do you have friends, family, or colleagues that you have with your sin-planked eyes (Matthew 7:3-5) written off as unredeemable when in fact your “NON” sacrificial living (Romans 12:1-2) is one of their greatest stumbling blocks? I am not saying that you must be sinless (1 John 1:10) to effectively evangelize but to reach those wandering in sin you must do so by showing the lost the Gospels’ transforming power<sup>24</sup> in your life was only possible by drawing nearer to God and turning away from your sins! Maybe your problem is

not with how to evangelize but your lack of love compels you to be indifferent to their eternal destination? Many of today’s Christians are like the crowds of Zacchaeus’ day, looking for Jesus

<sup>21</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Saving the Lost,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 47 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1901), 580.

<sup>22</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Saving the Lost,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 47 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1901), 580.

<sup>23</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>24</sup> Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 483.

to do miracles of deliverance, blessings, healings, or possibly even money<sup>25</sup> but not one that requires them to let their light shine by being holy and telling the world the reasons they have hope in Christ Jesus our Lord (1 Peter 1:15, 3:15)! Would not the church be packed to “standing room only” if a member of the church started healing people like Jesus did from within the congregation?<sup>26</sup> Don’t be so enthralled with miracles and “religious” practices that you forget why Jesus came to this earth!<sup>27</sup> “Publicly renounce your old life of sin, lying, cheating and extortion”<sup>28</sup> and embrace holy living so that when you find a Zacchaeus up in a tree who is seeking to be freed from a prison of sin that so easily entangles (Hebrews 12:1) he/she might clearly see the path to righteousness from your life as living proof of His saving grace and mercy. You may be doing a thousand other things well in His kingdom<sup>29</sup> but never forget that above all we are to join in Jesus’ mission to seek and proclaim the Good News to the lost of this world!

## Relational Evangelism

One of the best ways to reach the lost souls for Christ is to first have a relationship with them! This is extremely difficult to do for a variety of reasons, two of which I would like to briefly mention. First, while we agree that “Jesus calls all to repentance, religious and irreligious alike, healthy and sick, rich and poor;”<sup>30</sup> offering unmerited grace to the tax collectors, swindlers, prostitutes, corrupt politicians, murderers, and bullies that we meet<sup>31</sup> seems like an exercise in futility, for are we not casting our pearls before the swine (Matthew 7:6)? While we are to use spiritual discernment on whom God wants us to plant seeds of righteousness,<sup>32</sup> we must at the same time not be like the crowd and write off the Zacchaeus’ God sends our way just because it seems too scandalous to offer unmerited grace to those whom show no love for God

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<sup>25</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>26</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>27</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>28</sup> Alan Carr, [“How Zacchaeus Was Saved \(Luke 19:1–10\),”](#) in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1468.

<sup>29</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, [“Saving the Lost,”](#) in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 47 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1901), 580.

<sup>30</sup> Craig A. Evans, [The Bible Knowledge Background Commentary: Matthew–Luke](#), ed. Craig A. Evans and Craig A. Bubeck, First Edition. (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2003), 379.

<sup>31</sup> James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Luke](#), ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 529.

<sup>32</sup> Robert H. Mounce, [Matthew](#), Understanding the Bible Commentary Series (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 65.

whatsoever!<sup>33</sup> The second thing that keeps many from evangelizing is our own weak and feeble relationship with our Lord. While it is true it is extremely difficult to be a good witness when we



ourselves are not holy, living sacrifices (Romans 12:1), we must never forget we know the One leading the search-party is none other than He who has “pierced hands, and feet and brow with a spear gash in His side!”<sup>34</sup> Christ wants us as a church to grow in our love, depth of knowledge and sacrificial living<sup>35</sup> not to hide our light in the walls of this building but to follow His example by becoming friends with sinners, not to emulate their wicked ways but to show them where we received what their sins, possessions, and evil lifestyles were not able to satisfy<sup>36</sup> ... the Treasure and Pearl in the

field! If you are “too Christian”<sup>37</sup> to make friendships with sinners, then think about where you were when Jesus found you!<sup>38</sup> When you pray and God says become friends with a non-Christian rejoice and join the Great Shepherd who never stops “watching, waiting, seeking and going round the earth seeking the lost”<sup>39</sup> and if you patiently wait you might get to see one of the most stunning, breath-taking, indescribable and unmerited miracles ever ... the rebirth of a sinner saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9)!

## Being a Good Witness

Hear me when I say that we the redeemed masterpieces of God’s grace are not only capable but anointed to join Jesus’ mission to reach the lost! While most of us like seeing ourselves as Zacchaeus’ in the story to be honest we have more in common with the crowds than

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<sup>33</sup> James R. Edwards, *The Gospel according to Luke*, ed. D. A. Carson, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company; Apollos, 2015), 533.

<sup>34</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saving the Lost](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 47 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1901), 585.

<sup>35</sup> Tony Evans, “[Seeking the Lost](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>36</sup> Alan Carr, “[How Zacchaeus Was Saved \(Luke 19:1–10\)](#),” in *The Sermon Notebook: New Testament* (Lenoir, NC: Alan Carr, 2015), 1465.

<sup>37</sup> Tony Evans, “[Seeking the Lost](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>38</sup> Tony Evans, “[Seeking the Lost](#),” in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>39</sup> C. H. Spurgeon, “[Saving the Lost](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 47 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1901), 582.

we like to admit! Too often we fall in love with the “religious” rites and ceremonies<sup>40</sup> rather than the object of our faith, Christ! We step out into the world that is hostile towards but one God and instead of boldly proclaiming our faith and expecting the mighty mountains of their stone hearts



to be molded by the Potter we shirk away<sup>41</sup> and in doing so give them the impression we are ashamed of the Gospel message that we claim so dear to our hearts! Just moments after Zacchaeus was saved his public repentance showed the crowd he was not ashamed but overwhelmed with joy that Jesus was now his Lord!<sup>42</sup> Like Zacchaeus we who are born again<sup>43</sup> and partakers of the Divine nature (2 Peter 1:4) ought to boldly declare the source of the unspeakable joy of our salvation of living waters (John 4:10) to those who are dying to meet their Savior! When you look into the eyes of the God-haters, insolent, arrogant, without

mercy or love (Romans 1:30) do not write them off as unredeemable or be afraid of their hatred towards you (1 John 4:4) but instead with gratitude for His saving works love them as the marred image of God (James 3:9) they are and tell them the Good News that God sent His Son Jesus to atone for their sins so that through belief in Him they might receive eternal life (John 3:16)! Since earthly treasures cannot enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 6:19-21) let the crowns of our treasures be the souls of those present in heaven that we got the privilege to plant His seeds!

### **Obligation to Testify**

Let us conclude by going back to the boy who was lost in the mall. If you were the parent of the boy in the story, would you not out of love and fear that something bad might happen to him spend whatever time or money it took to find him? Would you not be willing to shout out his name to the rooftops of the mall in hopes he might hear and answer? So, when the Lord asks you to proclaim the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20) so that a lost soul might hear the heavenly Father speak his/her name does not the love of Christ compel you to do so (2 Corinthians 5:14-25)? Surely you have not become like the crowd in Zacchaeus’s time whose religious ceremonies had drowned the Gospel Message for them in a river of complacency and as a result you have forgotten the “big price tag” we have been purchased by (1 Corinthians 6:19-

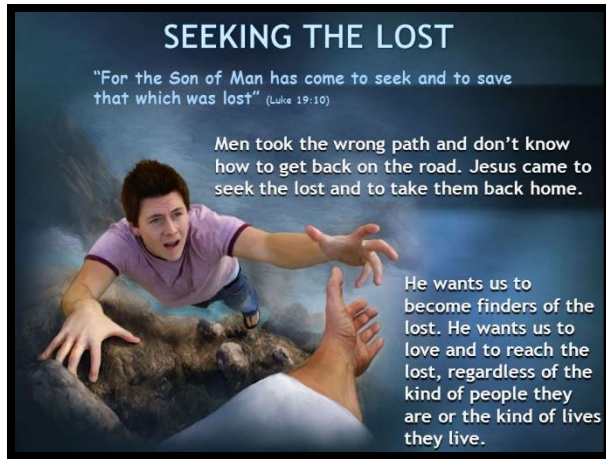
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<sup>40</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>41</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>42</sup> Tony Evans, [“Seeking the Lost,”](#) in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>43</sup> Darrell L. Bock, [Luke](#), *The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 479.



20)!<sup>44</sup> May we not or revel in our own dirt,<sup>45</sup> as if saints could ever be on automatic pilot in His kingdom,<sup>46</sup> but instead through Spirit-led mercy and grace offer the Treasure and Pearl we have found to the world, not just because we are commanded to do so but out of love and desire that none be lost (2 Peter 3:9)! May we not foolishly try to disqualify our obligation to spread the Good News because of our lack of spiritual maturity but instead both strive to draw nearer to God to be a better witness and at the same time accept the truth that God often uses the weak whom seek Him to shame the strong (1 Corinthians

1:27)! May we imitate Jesus and pursue relationships with sinners not to become like them but to show them the Father who stands at the doors of their hearts tenderly and mercifully waiting for them to invite Him in to be their Lord! May our life's goal be to gaze up into the Sycamore-fig trees of the sinful and through prayers and Spirit-led discernment always be ready to say, "let me tell you of the Name you seek!"

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<sup>44</sup> Tony Evans, "[Seeking the Lost](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>45</sup> Tony Evans, "[Seeking the Lost](#)," in *Tony Evans Sermon Archive* (Tony Evans, 2015), Lk 19:1–10.

<sup>46</sup> Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996), 483.