

Encounter Jesus: Zacchaeus

Read: Luke 19:1-10

Summary:

In this incident Luke records another powerful encounter between someone and Jesus with immediate and dramatic life changing results.

Setting the Scene

Jericho was a very prosperous place: Herod the Great had spent loads of time and money building palaces and aqueducts there. It was on a major trade route and so the tax industry was booming. Zacchaeus was a Jew who had sided with the occupying forces and so despite being resourceful and wealthy was very unpopular. Throughout the account of Luke, he has repeatedly underlined that God gives us possessions to share and that our value is not linked to what we have.

Let's get together

Zacchaeus was hoping to anonymously observe Jesus from a distance, but Jesus has other ideas. Jesus approached the tree where the tax collector is hiding and instructs him to come down and invited himself round to stay at Zacchaeus house. The crowd who praised God when Jesus encountered the blind man were now appalled that he would choose to mix with this sinner. Jesus does not just want to talk with Zacchaeus beside the road but spend time with him at home.

No Loose change

Zacchaeus having spent time with Jesus makes a stand and declares that he will give away ½ of his possessions! He goes on to declare that he will also repay people he has robbed – way more than the law would say he needed to. It would be fair to describe this as a total change of heart. When Jesus sees the way that Zacchaeus behaves he then declares that salvation has come to the home... not because of the generosity but the faith (son of Abraham) that inspired the giving.

Application:

Please select from the following questions. Encourage all to take part and to be honest. It is good to pray for each other during the meeting.

1. What did God say to you on Sunday and what are you going to do as a result?
2. What kind of person do you 'stop' from meeting with Jesus? Who do you think would not be interested in Jesus or Jesus should not be interested in them?
3. In what ways do you choose to observe Jesus from a distance rather than spend quality time in His presence?
4. Who have you 'connected' with this week outside the church and how is it going?
5. Faith changes Zacchaeus whole world view. How have you changed since knowing Jesus?
6. 'His pocket book spoke volumes'. How do you find giving to God? Do you just do what the 'law' says is your heart keen to be extravagant?
7. What questions do you have about being a Christian and money? Ask them and try to find answers together as a group.