

## Good News for Zacchaeus

Zacchaeus was lonely, but then he never expected to be anything else. After all, he was a chief tax collector and nobody liked tax collectors. His job was to collect the people's money for the Romans. Everyone hated him for it, and he paid them back whenever he could by taking too much money and then keeping it for himself. No wonder he was rich! But then that didn't make him any less lonely. One day, there was a crowd gathered in the streets of Jericho because Jesus was passing through. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, but he couldn't because he was a small man. He ran ahead of the crowd and climbed up a sycamore tree. He could see Jesus quite clearly now. Jesus came near the tree, looked up at Zacchaeus and said, "Hurry down, Zacchaeus. I want to stay at your house today."

Zacchaeus couldn't get down fast enough! His heart was beating fast, he was so full of joy. He could hear some of them muttering and complaining. "He has gone to stay at a sinner's house," they said. Zacchaeus looked at Jesus. "Look, sir," he said, "I'm going to give half my belongings to the poor and if I have cheated anybody, I will pay him back four times the amount."

Jesus smiled at him and said, "I am glad, Zacchaeus. This is indeed a happy day for you because I have come to your house today specially to help you change, so that you will please my Father."

(based on Luke 19:1-10)

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