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HUNGRY FOR JESUS

Luke 19:1-10 tells us about Zacchaeus, a very rich publican, a Jew, who was despised as a sinner and traitor to his people.

What was a publican? They were emissaries of the Roman government charged with collecting taxes from the people for Caesar. They often overcharged the people and pocketed the difference for their own personal gain. There were two classes of publicans. The lower class did the actual collecting of the money. Above them were the chiefs of publicans who oversaw the operation and received their “slice of the pie.” Matthew [Jesus’ disciple] was of the lower level, but Zacchaeus was a chief publican and was very rich due to his position.

Zacchaeus had heard of Jesus and his teachings. He sensed a great void in his life of wealth and luxury. He felt that Jesus could somehow fill that void. He heard that Jesus was coming through his hometown to Jericho, and wanted to see him, even if it was just to catch a glimpse.

As Jesus entered Jericho, nearly the whole city turned out at the roadside to see him, much like a big parade. Zacchaeus was a very short man. He could not see over the heads of the others and could not push his way through the dense throng to get a front view. He was, however, very determined to catch a glimpse of Jesus, so he found a sycamore tree and climbed up into its branches. From there he could have an unobstructed view.

As Jesus came near, He looked up and saw Zacchaeus and spoke to him. He said [vs. 5] **“Zacchaeus, make haste [hurry up] and come down, for today I must abide at thy house.”** Zacchaeus responded joyfully with repentance. He said he would give half of his wealth to the poor and give back four times over to anybody who he had cheated.

Jesus was quickly criticized for going to stay with this sinful publican. However, Jesus responded by declaring that salvation had come to Zacchaeus’ household [vs. 9.] Zacchaeus’ great hunger for Jesus and his message of repentance and righteousness came to him and he was rewarded for his response.

How hungry are you for Jesus and His righteousness? Are you hungry enough to go to extreme measures like this publican did? We have a much greater access to Jesus, but do we really pursue hard after a relationship with him? Do we take it too much for granted? There is no pursuit in life greater than that of pursuing Jesus.

He must be the central focus of your life. He will fulfill all your hunger.