

Zacchaeus

How many of you have ever climbed a tree before? Talk and ask questions

Well listen closely and I will tell you about a man named Zacchaeus who climbed a tree too. But he didn't climb a tree just for fun, he climbed the tree for one special reason.

Now listen closely and I will tell you all about the man named Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He worked for the king in a land far, far away.

Now people didn't care for tax collectors back when Zacchaeus lived. In fact, they hated tax collectors. Because when the tax collector asked for money, the people had to give up their hard earned money. Now paying taxes isn't a bad thing, in fact the money that we pay for taxes goes for many good things including running our schools

and keeping our roads repaired and many other good things. But Zacchaeus wasn't a good tax collector. In fact, he liked to cheat the people. For example, when Zacchaeus was supposed to collect one dollar, he would cheat the people and charge them two dollars instead. And when he collected the extra money, he gave the king the one dollar that he was supposed to collect but what do you think he did with the second dollar? He kept it and spent it on whatever he wanted. Now I don't think that I would care much for Zacchaeus either. I don't think that it is right to steal from people. In fact, that is one of the 10 commandments. Thou shall not steal.

Now Zacchaeus knew that what he did was the wrong thing to do, but he just kept on doing it. In fact, Zacchaeus had cheated the people for so long that he didn't have a single friend. Not even one! And, he didn't have a single place that he belonged. He was kind of a sad person. Even though he had

lots of money, he didn't have anyone to help
him enjoy his wealth.

One morning at the marketplace Zacchaeus
heard some people say, "Jesus and His
friends are coming to our town today!"

Zacchaeus hurried to the street where Jesus
soon would be. But poor Zacchaeus was too
short. Zacchaeus could not see!

He knew he had no time to lose. He had to
think quickly. So Zacchaeus grabbed onto a
branch or two and climbed up in a tree.

Zacchaeus could see Jesus now. He looked
so strong and so kind!

Then just as Jesus got to the tree, He stopped
and looked up at Zacchaeus. He seemed to
read Zach's mind.

"Zacchaeus, come down from that tree! I
want to talk to you!

I want to visit at your house and have some
dinner, too"

When Zacchaeus scrambled down that tree,
people grumbled loud.

“Why would Jesus like this man who is so mean and proud?”

Zacchaeus was ashamed about how greedy he had been.

Could Jesus really like him? Would He want to be his friend?

Zacchaeus knew that what he did was very wrong, you know.

BUT Jesus forgave Zacchaeus. He loved him even though he had been bad.

Zacchaeus promised to give half his riches to the poor.

And what about all the money he had stolen? He would pay it back---and even more!

Jesus known that there are times when you do wrong things, too.

But, like Zacchaeus, you can know that Jesus forgives you!

Jesus loved and forgave Zacchaeus didn't He? When we do wrong things, we can ask

God to forgive us. We know that God will love and forgive us, too. God's love is forgiving!

Why didn't the people in the town like Zacchaeus?

Who did Zacchaeus want to see?

Why did Zacchaeus climb the tree?

What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus when He saw him in the tree?

Jesus went to Zacchaeus's house to show Zacchaeus that He loved him, even though Zacchaeus had done wrong things. Jesus forgave Zacchaeus for his wrong actions.

Prayer

Dear God, thank You for loving us. Help us not to say or do things to hurt someone when we feel angry. Help us to forgive others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Zacchaeus Learned About God's Plan (I wrote)

How many of you have ever climbed a tree before? (Ask some questions about tree climbing)

Well today, I am going to tell you a story about a man named Zacchaeus who climbed a tree.

He didn't climb the tree for fun...he didn't climb the tree to see how far he could climb...he didn't even climb the tree to check out a bird's nest...nope...He climbed the tree for one reason...and one reason only.

And if you listen very closely, I will tell you all about a man named Zacchaeus...and WHY he climbed the tree.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector. He worked for the king in a land far, far away.

Now people didn't care for tax collectors back in the times when Zacchaeus lived.

They didn't like to have to give up their hard earned money to pay the collectors.

Now paying taxes isn't a bad thing, in fact the money that we pay for taxes goes for many good things including running our schools and keeping our roads repaired and many other good things.

But there was just one problem with tax collectors of Zacchaeus's day.

Most of them were dishonest. Including Zacchaeus himself.

You see...when Zacchaeus was supposed to collect one dollar from the people, he would collect two instead.

And when he collected the extra dollar.., he stuck it straight into his own pocket.

He kept it and spent it on whatever he wanted.

I don't think that I would care much for Zacchaeus either.

What Zacchaeus was doing was called stealing.

Now Zacchaeus knew that what he was doing was wrong. BUT... he just kept right on doing it.

In fact, Zacchaeus had cheated the people for so long that he didn't have a single friend...Not even one!

And, he didn't have a single place that he belonged.

He was kind of a sad person.

Even though he had lots of money, he didn't have anyone to help him enjoy his wealth.

One morning at the marketplace, Zacchaeus heard some people talking.

They were saying that Jesus and His friends were coming to town that day.

Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus. He knew that Jesus could heal people, he knew that Jesus could forgive people if only they asked.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus...he wanted to meet Him and see what all the excitement was all about.

So Zacchaeus hurried to the street where Jesus would soon be passing by.

BUT when Zacchaeus arrived...the streets were crowded with people.

Zacchaeus could not see anything...nothing at all.

You see Zacchaeus was a VERY short man. And with all the people crowded around, Zacchaeus couldn't over them.

He knew that he had no time to lose. He had to think quickly.

So Zacchaeus grabbed onto a branch and climbed up into a tree.

He climbed and climbed...and as he climbed higher and higher, he was able to see Jesus and his followers walking down the street.

There He was...it was Jesus...the man
that everyone was talking about.

Zacchaeus could see him. He looked so
strong and so kind!

Jesus walked closer and closer, and
soon...Jesus was standing right there
under the tree where Zacchaeus was
hiding.

“What’s he doing”...Zacchaeus
wondered.

“Why did He stop right here...He can’t
see me...I hidden up here with the
branches and the leaves...I know He
doesn’t see me.”

But Jesus sees everything doesn’t He?

He knows everything!

We can’t hide from Jesus can we?

Nope...and neither could Zacchaeus.

Jesus stopped and looked straight up at Zacchaeus.

“Zacchaeus, come down from that tree! I want to talk to you!” Jesus said.

“I want to visit at your house and have some dinner, too.”

Zacchaeus came down out of the tree as quickly as he could.

People in the crowd were surprised.

They knew that Zacchaeus was rich, AND they knew HOW he got all of his money...by taking it from many people...by cheating them.

The people began to grumble loudly.

“Why would Jesus want to go to this man house? He was so mean and proud?” they said

Surely Jesus would rather be with people who were kind and nice, not a tax collector.

But Jesus loved Zacchaeus.

Jesus told Zacchaeus that God loved him and had a plan for him.

Jesus wanted Zacchaeus to do what was right.

Zacchaeus began to feel sorry for all the bad things that he had done.

He knew that he had been wrong.

He told Jesus that he was sorry.

And do you know what Jesus did?

He forgave Zacchaeus right then and there.

Zacchaeus couldn't believe it.

Could Jesus really forgive him?

Could Jesus really want to be HIS friend?

Yes...He could forgive Zacchaeus.

And YES...He did want to be Zacchaeus's friend.

Jesus forgave Zacchaeus right then and there.

He loved Zacchaeus even though he had done some bad things.

Zacchaeus was so happy that he promised to give back ALL the money that he had taken.

He would pay it back...every single penny...and even more!

You know...we are a lot like Zacchaeus...sometimes we do things that are not right...but do you know what?

If we ask Jesus to forgive us...He will.

Jesus loves each of us very much. He knows that we make mistakes sometimes...just like Zacchaeus did.

But if we ask Jesus to forgive us...guess what?.....He will!

The bad things that Zacchaeus did were called sins.

The bad things that we do...are also called sins.

Zacchaeus did something that was a
BIG sin...he stole from the people.

That is a sin.

But sin isn't always something as big or
as obvious as stealing.

Sin can be something as little as telling a
fib, or disobeying our parents, or even
just thinking something bad about
someone.

What Zacchaeus did seems like
something REALLY bad compared to
something small like telling a fib doesn't
it?

But...did you know that ALL sin is the
same to God?

It doesn't matter how big or how
small...it is still sin.

The Bible tells us that we have ALL
sinned.

Every single one of us has sinned!

And in order for us to get to heaven
when we die...the first thing that we
must do is to ADMIT that we are sinners.
And to ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins.

Before we go any further, we are going
to play a little game.

(List some sins and have people stand
up if they have ever done that
particular sin. Have the teachers play as
well and make sure that they are some
of the first ones to stand. Keep going
until everyone is standing...some will not
stand...and that's ok.)

Then go into the plan of salvation...

Today...I am going to use these 5 colors
to teach you how to get to heaven
when you die.

Black- Sin

Red- Jesus Blood

White- Clean Hearts- Cleansing

Blue- Baptism

Yellow- Streets of Heaven