

Called by Name

ISAIAH 43:1

A man named Zacchaeus lived there. He was a chief tax collector and was very rich. Zacchaeus wanted to see who Jesus was. But he was a short man. He could not see Jesus because of the crowd...Jesus reached the spot where Zacchaeus was. He looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay at your house today."

—Luke 19:2-3, 5 NIRV

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New Testament Devotion

Zacchaeus: Called to be Forgiven

Tax collectors were not liked in Jesus' day. People knew they collected more money than the government asked for, and kept it for themselves. Some tax collectors, like Zacchaeus, became very rich by taking the people's money.

Zacchaeus was a very short man. When he heard Jesus was coming to his town, he had a bright idea. He would run ahead of the crowd and climb a tree to get a good view of all the excitement. Imagine his surprise when Jesus stopped, called him by name and invited himself over for dinner. That certainly was not part of Zacchaeus' plan! But, Zacchaeus immediately came down from the tree and welcomed Jesus into his home.

- **Have you ever been excited to see or hear someone?**
- **Was it a musician or a public speaker? Who was it?**
- **How would you feel if they asked if they could come to your home for dinner?**

During Jesus' time, eating a meal with someone meant you accepted them. Those who saw Jesus going into Zacchaeus' house didn't like it because they thought Jesus shouldn't eat with sinners. They thought Jesus must be a cheater or a liar like the tax collectors because he was willing to eat with them. They did not know Jesus was there to love and forgive them. They did not understand he was there to teach them that he is God's Son.

The Bible does not tell us what was said at dinner. It just tells us what happened after the dinner was over. Zacchaeus began giving away a huge amount of his money. Half of what he had, he gave to the poor. He also promised to repay anyone he stole extra tax money from - four times as much! We know something changed in Zacchaeus by what he did after meeting Jesus. Because of Jesus' love and forgiveness, Zacchaeus was able to start a fresh, new life.

We can start a fresh, new life every day with Jesus. We can be forgiven each time we ask God for forgiveness. This is because Jesus died on the cross to save us from our sins. He died for Zacchaeus and he died for us.

- **Do you know anyone who needs to feel the love of Jesus?**
- **What can you do for them to show Jesus' love in you?**

Prayer: Dear God, thank you for forgiveness. Thank you for Jesus, who died to save us from our sins. Thank you that he showed us your love and forgiveness in the Bible. In his name we pray. Amen.