

August 22, 2021
La Jolla Christian Fellowship
The Jesus Challenge // Episode 3 : God's Great Ambition
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Luke 19:1-10 ESV

19 He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." 6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Vs. 1-2 The Setting:

- **Context:** The Roman government ruled over the Jews of Jesus's day. Jewish people longed for the day where the Messiah would free them from Roman oppression and establish them again as a nation. Therefore, Jews who became tax collectors were considered traitors and sinners; they were shunned from Jewish community and Synagogue. To associate with them in any way would be to defile yourself.
- **Character:** Zacchaeus was a "chief" tax collector, thus he had rank and authority in the taxation system and would have been seen as the face of taxation in the region. Tax collectors gathered a specific amount for the Roman government. However, taxation rules were often arbitrary, thus after their quota was met, tax collectors could continue to tax citizens however they pleased and keep the revenue. Zacchaeus was "rich," therefore we know he was not shy about extorting people for personal gain. Zacchaeus was also a Jew, which means he was collecting taxes for Rome on his own people in the region of Jericho. The name Zacchaeus means "Pure," "Clean," "Innocent."

Vs. 3-6 Call and Response

- What is impeding your view of Christ, and are you willing to do the work to get a better view?
- The Gospel of Luke is thematic in its depiction of mutual joy between God our savior, and those that He saves.

Vs. 7-10 Saving Ambition

- God does not search the earth for great godly men and women to accomplish His will; No, out of broken vessels, He makes them.

Ezekiel 33:11 *“Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?”*

- Salvation is God’s great ambition. Nothing in your past can disqualify you from God’s great desire to rescue you.
- A prosocial gospel is not the primary need of the human being. The primary need is transformation from death to life through Christ, and the evidence of that new life will be prosocial.

Discussion Questions

1. What obstacles do you have that impede your relationship with Christ?
2. How much time do you spend in scripture? What keeps you from spending more time in it?
3. Is there any area in your life, like Zaccheus, where you need to repent and turn to Christ? (This could look like stopping a habit/addiction and/or making amends with someone.)
4. What fruit have you seen your faith produce?