



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V27 N3 January 19, 2025

ALWAYS WELCOME

“You’re Welcome”

Luke 19:1-10

THIS WEEK’S CORE COMPETENCY

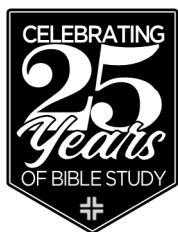
Generosity

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God’s purposes.

“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”
2 Corinthians 9:6-7



Hospitality—
what good is
it?



Often the same text relates to more than one Core Competency, which is true in the case of Luke 19:1-10. In the first place, the story of Zacchaeus clearly relates to the Core Competency Salvation by Grace. Jesus’ reference to “salvation” in verse 9, as well as his statement, “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost” in verse 10, indicate as much. But in the second place, it also pertains to the subordinate Core Competency Generosity reflected in hospitality. Jesus’ invitation to Zacchaeus and Zacchaeus’ response to that invitation indicate as much.

First, in 1 Timothy 1:15 Paul affirmed the essence of the Christian message in an axiomatic statement, “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” The apostle’s “trustworthy saying,” although found elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles, is found nowhere else in the New Testament. However, Jesus’ statement at the end of Luke’s pronouncement story comes close. “The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost” (Lk 19:10) means essentially the same thing. So does “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mk 10:45; cf., Mt 20:28). Here’s the problem: we don’t believe what it says. Here’s what we believe. “The Son of Man came to seek and to save people like me,” and “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for people like me.” It seems we have as much trouble believing that Jesus came to save sinners as the people who muttered, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner,” when they saw Jesus head to Zacchaeus’s home for dinner.

Zacchaeus was a Jew, but he was a tax collector, and tax collectors were despised by their fellow Jews. They stood on the same rung of the social ladder as prostitutes, thieves, adulterers, Samaritans, and the like,

because they were viewed as “in bed” with Rome, and were, therefore, deemed traitors. They didn’t work directly for the government; they were subcontractors, so to speak. They bid for the job of collecting tolls and taxes on Rome’s behalf, and that right, of course, went to the highest bidder. Competition was fierce, and margins were tight. Rome had to be paid, regardless, and the tax collector had to net a living after expenses. In the end, the people got squeezed and, naturally, squealed loudly over it. So when Zacchaeus showed up looking for Jesus, no one was willing to step aside for him to see. As far as they were concerned, the Son of Man had not come to seek and to save tax collectors. Therein lies the whole point of the story. He did!

Second, Jesus was generous with his time — hospitable in the sense of being willing to share himself with others, since he had no worldly possessions to share — suggesting that his disciples should do the same. Jesus apparently dined frequently with other sinners like Zacchaeus, given his reputation for doing so (cf. Lk 5:34). On one such occasion, Jesus and his disciples were having dinner at Matthew’s house along with “many tax collectors and sinners” (Mt 9:9-12; cf. Mk 2:14-17 and Lk 5:27-32 where Matthew is called “Levi”). Matthew himself records, “When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ On hearing this, Jesus said, ‘It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick . . . I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners’” (Mt 9:11-12). What’s more, Zacchaeus was generous in hosting Jesus, as well as in donating half of his possessions to the poor and offering fourfold recompense to anyone he had cheated “out of anything” (Lk 19:8).



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Luke 19:1-10

1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3 He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

5 When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

7 All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

8 But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

9 Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

Read another translation

1 Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. 2 Now a man named Zacchaeus was there; he was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 He was trying to get a look at Jesus, but being a short man he could not see over the crowd. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, because Jesus was going to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to that place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, because I must stay at your house today." 6 So he came down quickly and welcomed Jesus joyfully. 7 And when the people saw it, they all complained, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 But Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, half of my possessions I now give to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone of anything, I am paying back four times as much!" 9 Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this household, because he too is a son of Abraham! 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle "Jericho" indicating *location* in v. 1 (cf. 18:35).
- Underline "chief tax collector" and "wealthy" in v. 2.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* and "because" indicating *reason* in v. 3.
- Box "So" indicating *result* and "since" indicating *reason* in v. 4.
- Circle "must" in v. 5.
- Circle "at once" and "gladly" in v. 6.
- Bracket "the guest of a sinner" in v. 7.
- Box "but" indicating *contrast* in v. 8.
- Circle "give" and "pay back" in v. 8.
- Bracket "son of Abraham" in v. 9.
- Highlight v. 10.

What one word would you use to describe the **TONE** of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the **THEME** of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. The mention of Jericho in verse 1 connects the story of Zacchaeus to the story of the blind beggar in 18:35-43. What do the two men have in common?
 2. What do the details Luke gives regarding Zacchaeus contribute to the story—what effect do they have on you, the reader?
 3. We read that Zacchaeus “wanted to see who Jesus was,” that he wanted “to see him.” What do these words suggest to you about his *purpose*—do you think he just wanted to catch a glimpse of Jesus?
 4. The Bible does not tell us about the circumstances leading up to his quest. It does not explain what prompted him to seek Jesus. What do you think might have been some of his reasons? (Cf. Lk 5:29; 7:34; 15:1)
 5. How would you describe his spiritual condition—would you call him a seeker?
 6. What made staying with Zacchaeus a *must*? (Cf., v. 10)
 7. What do the adverbs in verse 6 that describe how Zacchaeus responded tell us about him?
 8. What do you infer from the reaction of the crowd?
 9. Explain the *significance* of Zacchaeus’ announcement.
 10. **Discussion:** Talk about what made Zacchaeus a true “son of Abraham” (see “for,” v. 10; cf. Ro 4:12).
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Commentary On The Text

The Gospels contain stories that some scholars call *pronouncement stories*. These are brief narratives that report how Jesus responded in words (and sometimes also in action) to something said or observed on a particular occasion. According to one scholar, *quest stories* are a particular type of pronouncement story. “In a quest story someone approaches Jesus in quest of something very important to human well-being. This quest is a dominant concern of the story; its importance is shown by the fact that the episode does not end until we are told whether the quest is successful or not. While many pronouncement stories simply end with Jesus’ pronouncement, with no indication of how the other person responded to this, the quest story indicates how the encounter comes out for the person who approaches Jesus. We are shown that the person was either successful or unsuccessful” (Robert C. Tannehill, *The Narrative Unity of Luke-Acts*, 1:111).

The label, *quest story*, is not particularly important. What’s important is the fact that certain stories in the Gospels can be classified based on the features they have in common. In the quest story, the major character, apart from Jesus, is in quest of something. The story opens by introducing the questing person and closes by telling us whether that person was successful in his or her quest. Furthermore, the story usually includes some difficulty or conflict that hinders the questing person. Dialogue in the story usually highlights this difficulty or conflict. For example, Jesus may pose a difficult condition or raise an objection, or another party may express an objection. In some cases, contrasting characters represent conflicting ways of acting or judging. Through these devices the Gospel writer focuses his readers’ attention on a particular issue that is crucial to the success or failure of the quest and presents Jesus’ words at the end to persuade his readers to accept Jesus’ teaching on the matter (Tannehill, 112).

The story of Zacchaeus is one of seven quest stories found in Luke’s Gospel. In each of the stories a needy person has some characteristic that led some in Jesus’ day and might lead some in our day to believe that he or she was beyond salvation. The story in Luke 5:17-26 is about a sinful paralytic, in 7:1-10 a Gentile, in 7:36-50 a sinful woman, in 17:11-19 a Samaritan leper, in 19:1-10 a chief tax collector, and in 23:39-43 a crucified criminal. The only “quester” to seemingly fail in his quest is the rich young ruler, a

person of high social status in contrast to his ostracized counterpart, wealthy Zacchaeus, who succeeded (18:18-30). These stories dramatically portray Jesus as the one through whom God reaches out to save sinners – to accept those that society had rejected.

Zacchaeus was on a quest to see Jesus, but two things stood in his way. He was too short to see above the crowd in front of him, and the crowd was not about to give a despised tax collector like him a better vantage point. So he climbed a convenient tree to see what he could see, and he saw Jesus coming. When Jesus saw him, he ordered him down from his perch and invited himself over. Put differently, Jesus invited Zacchaeus to be his host for the evening. It was something he had to do given his plans for Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus’ quest had started out badly, but it had taken a hard right turn, and the little man wasn’t about to miss his unexpected opportunity. He jumped down at the chance to show Jesus hospitality. The Son of David had restored the sight of blind Bartimaeus earlier (Lk 18:35, 38; cf., Mk 10:46, 47), and now he was coming over for dinner!

Seeing what had transpired sparked a chorus of muttering amongst the crowd. “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner,” they murmured. How disgusting! “Jesus is no better than his crooked host,” is close to what they thought.

But Zacchaeus would not be deterred in his quest. Perhaps as they walked away (instead of “stood up and said” the NET Bible translates “stopped and said”), or more likely later at dinner – given Jesus reply in verse 9 – Zacchaeus declared his intent to be a different man in the future. As a result of his encounter with Jesus, he would do two things: half his possessions would go to the poor and he would restore fourfold anyone he had cheated – an act of generosity. Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus into his home – an act of generosity reflected in hospitality – believed Jesus was who he claimed to be, and with that everything changed. Jesus said so. “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.” Zacchaeus had succeeded in his quest. “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Zacchaeus was saved because he believed in Jesus and his faith was made evident in his acts of generosity.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 *Jericho* A stopping place for travelers—approx. 800 feet below sea level—on their way to Jerusalem—approx. 2500 feet above sea level—about 20 miles west.

v. 2 *Zacchaeus* A Jew who ironically didn't live up to his name, which meant "just one" or "righteous one," although "nothing is made of the meaning of the name, and it is quite unlikely that its root meaning would have been known to Luke's readers" (Robert H. Stein, *Luke*, NAC, 467).

v. 2 *chief tax collector* One Greek word, which occurs only here in the NT. Zacchaeus was at the top of the food chain as the head of the tax and customs department, which employed numerous tax collectors to collect the customs tax on goods passing through Jericho on their way to and fro between the Roman province and the dominions of Herod Antipas. "Since the [chief tax collector] usually had to pay the expected revenue to the Romans in advance and then seek to recoup the amount, plus expenses and profits, by assessing and collecting the tolls [or taxes], the system of toll-collecting was obviously open to abuse and dishonesty" (Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke*, AB, cited by Craig A. Evans, *Luke*, NIBC, 282). "Especially because of their relation to Gentile authorities, these tax collectors were despised by their fellow Jews. This is seen in their frequent association with all types of undesirable people: 'tax collectors and sinners' (Matt. 9:10; 11:19; Luke 7:34); 'pagan or a tax collector' (Matt. 18:17); 'tax collectors and the prostitutes' (Matt. 21:31, 32); 'robbers, evildoers, adulterers—even like this tax collector' (Luke 18:11)" (Evans, 282).

v. 2 *wealthy* After meeting Jesus, he readily admitted that, like others in his profession, he was none too scrupulous in making sure that he made a good living off of all his collections (see v. 8; cf., 18:23).

v. 5 *must* Lit., "it is necessary" implies a divine rather than circumstantial necessity (cf. Jn 4:4 Jesus "had to go through Samaria). Jesus could have requested hospitality from someone else in the crowd. "Jesus' stay with the tax collector is a necessity because it pictures what his ministry is all about—to lead to God those whom others have given up on, to call those who, like the tax collector Levi, need to repent (5:31-32)" (Darrell L. Bock, *The NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, 478).

v. 5 *stay* The Greek verb can mean, "to rest," "to find lodging," or "to spend the night."

v. 7 *has gone* The tense of the verb suggests a scene change. Zacchaeus came down from the tree, and the two of them headed off for the tax collector's home.

v. 7 *sinner* As far as the Jews were concerned, staying in a sinner's home was tantamount to sharing in the sinner's sin.

v. 8 *stood up* Either outside as they headed off or later at the meal in his house, Zacchaeus stood up in the presence of others to make a significant announcement; he had repented of his sins. "We are not told if this took place after Zacchaeus came down from the tree, in Zacchaeus's home, or after dinner. For Luke such a question was unimportant" (Stein, 468).

v. 8 *give, pay back* "How should the present tense (in Greek) of the verbs 'give' and 'pay back' be interpreted? Are they 'customary presents' that reveal what Zacchaeus had been doing for some time? Was Zacchaeus claiming, 'I have been in the habit of giving half my goods to the poor and paying back fourfold'? If so, Jesus' words in 19:9 serve more as a vindication of Zacchaeus's faith than as a statement of his conversion. On the other hand, the verbs can be translated as 'futuristic presents,' which reveal what Zacchaeus was about to do, because of his encounter with Jesus, i.e., due to his conversion. Then we should translate these verbs '[As a result of my coming to faith] I shall give half of all I own . . . and restore fourfold.' The grammar permits either interpretation" (466; cf., Evans, 280). The context, however, suits the latter interpretation better—for a number of reasons (see Stein, 466). For one thing, v. 9 taken at face value implies that something had just happened that brought him to salvation.

v. 8 *if* The grammar indicates that the subject views the condition as real. Zacchaeus knew that he had cheated others. The sentence might be translated "and whomever I have cheated out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

v. 8 *cheated* The same word is translated "extort money" in 3:14 where it refers to a common sin of soldiers who may have worked in cahoots with tax collectors.

v. 8 *four times* He apparently considered what he had done theft (cf. Ex 22:1; 2Sa 12:6). "If later Judaism is any guide, it was considered generous to give away twenty percent of one's possessions. And the restitution Zacchaeus notes is better than the highest standard set by the law (Lev. 5:16; Num. 5:7). He actually penalizes himself with the standard required of rustlers (Ex 22:1; 2 Sam. 12:6). As Ellis notes, this is the 'thank offering of a changed heart'" (Bock, 479).

v. 9 *son of Abraham* Not just a physical descendant of Abraham—he was that before he met Jesus—but also a spiritual descendant of Abraham, a man of faith like him.

4

APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

Recognizing that the Son of Man came to seek and to save lost people, accept Jesus' invitation to receive salvation through faith in him, which will change your life.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The "Living Questions" are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



PARENT CONNECTION

When my son was in kindergarten, he befriended a boy that was his whole entire opposite. Not only did they look completely different, but nearly every aspect of their home lives and religion were entirely opposite. For several years they were assigned the same homeroom in school and often went to each other's homes to play after the final bell rang. They were the most unlikely friends and had no clue. They were both so genuinely welcoming, and all biases were completely put aside as their friendship grew. I'm thankful as a parent that both families were also very welcoming. Sadly, this little boy moved away one summer, and we've not seen or heard from him since. My child taught me a lot about hospitality during this season of friendship. As adults, we tend to gravitate to people just like us. We naturally lean into those who live in the same neighborhood, are of the same socio-economic status, have kids that participate in the same extracurricular activities and experience similar worship experiences. We stay in our homogeneous little bubble, mainly because it's simpler for us to navigate and when you have kids, simple is good. My son's friendship was outside this circle in every way and forced me to consider how and with whom I was connecting. It forced me to cross cultural boundaries and encouraged me to be invitational. Take a moment this week to evaluate how well your family connects with others outside your circle. How often do you step out of your comfort zone and extend friendly invitations to your home, life, or church? What a good week to extend a welcome!

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Luke 19:1-10.

1. What do you learn about Zacchaeus from verses 2 and 3?
2. What did Jesus do when He saw Zacchaeus?
3. Compare the response of the people to Zacchaeus' response in meeting Jesus.

What Do You Think?

How do you see hospitality modeled in this story?

What Do You Do?

Each day at recess this week, make an effort to play with someone you don't normally play with.

CORE COMPETENCY: Generosity

I give away my faith, life, money and time to help with God's work.

MEMORY VERSE: Micah 6:8

"He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

KidPIXCOUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRALKids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- I completed my Bible Study
- I memorized this week's verse
- I brought my Bible to church
- I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)

I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)

I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)

I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Fort Worth, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have five children: Elijah, Levi, Bo, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

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**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org

OUR MISSION
Making God known by making disciples who are changed by God to change their world.