



Everyone Matters to God

August 3-9, 2025

MAIN POINT

When you seek God, you will find Him. Even if I am rejected by people, I am accepted by God.

INTRODUCTION

Where do you go when you absolutely need to find the truth about something?

Where do you go when you want to spend time in God's presence?

Unfortunately, rejection is a universal part of the human experience. Because we are relational beings, we've all felt the need to reach out toward others for acceptance and companionship. And we've all felt the sting of rejection when our efforts to connect are turned aside. Sure, it happens to everyone—but it still hurts. Thankfully, there is Someone who will always accept us when we turn to Him.

UNDERSTANDING

READ [LUKE 19:1-5](#).

What's your first impression of Zacchaeus from these verses?

The people of Jesus' day typically despised the tax collectors within their community. Tax collectors were representatives of the Roman Empire, who had conquered the people of Israel. Worse, many tax collectors used their political authority to extort more taxes than Rome required, and they kept this money as profit for themselves.

What are some groups or organizations that are often vilified in today's culture?

What obstacles regularly prevent people from encountering Jesus in our community?

What obstacles regularly prevent people from encountering Jesus in our world?

READ [LUKE 19:6-8](#).

What do these verses teach us about Zacchaeus?

What do these verses teach us about Jesus?

Those who witnessed this encounter were shocked that Jesus would accept hospitality from someone as despised as a chief tax collector. But [verses 7-8](#) show that Zacchaeus was already in the process of being transformed. He didn't want to make amends for his wrongs so that Jesus would approve of him; instead, he wanted to do what was right because Jesus approved of him.

What are some ways you've been changed as a result of your encounters with Jesus?

READ [LUKE 19:9-10](#).

How would you explain the concept of “salvation” to someone who has never heard of it before?

Where do you see evidence in today’s world that people are still lost?

APPLICATION

[Verse 6](#) tells us that Zacchaeus was joyful after finally meeting Jesus.

How has your connection with Jesus produced joy in your life?

What does Zacchaeus’s story as a whole teach us about moving from “rejected” to “accepted” in the kingdom of God?

What steps can you take this week to join Jesus’ work of seeking and saving the lost?

What obstacles will you need to overcome in order to take those steps?

PRAYER

Conclude by praising God for His willingness to accept humanity despite our many faults. Praise Him for accepting you, specifically, when you turned to Him. Ask that you and your group members would have the wisdom and courage to join Jesus this week in His continuing mission to seek and save the lost.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 19:1-10

19:1-2 Jericho was one of the most ancient cities in the world. It was located about five miles west of the Jordan River, 10 miles northwest of the Dead Sea, and about 17 miles by winding road from Jerusalem. Chief tax collector refers to a supervisor of other tax collectors in a certain tax district. Zacchaeus was rich because he had taken advantage of his position by extorting money.

19:3-4 A sycamore tree might grow to be 30 to 40 feet tall. However, it had low, spreading branches that even a short man could climb and that would support his weight.

19:5-9 Must (Gk dei; “it is necessary”) implies divine necessity in Jesus’ statement about staying at Zacchaeus’s house. The Jews greatly resented tax collectors because they worked for the Roman government that had invaded Israel, turning her into a subject nation. Thus Jesus’ decision to stay overnight with such a sinful man as Zacchaeus, who had sold out and mistreated his own people, seemed outrageous. But Zacchaeus’s words and actions were those of a transformed man. It was considered extremely generous to give one-fifth of your possessions to the poor, but Zacchaeus stated he would give half. Also, while repayment for extortion was 20 percent over what had been extorted, Zacchaeus promised to repay four times as much. Zacchaeus had become a son of Abraham and gained salvation through faith in Jesus Christ (see Gal 3:7).

19:10 Son of Man was both a messianic title for Jesus and a reflection of His full humanity. His mission was to seek and to save those who were lost.