

LEADER NOTES

Jesus and the Unpopular Man

Luke 19:1-10

To Begin...

1. **If you were casting a movie about this story, which actor would you choose to portray Zacchaeus in a movie?**

Let group members have fun with this question... be prepared to throw out a name if no one else is doing so (e.g., Danny DeVito).

2. **In the video lesson, Calvin taught: “If you’ve ever looked for Jesus, take heart in knowing that Jesus is looking for you too.” Reflect on your testimony... when did you first realize that Jesus was looking for you?**

Give time for one or two people to briefly share their testimony if they so desire.

However, don’t allow this time to go on too long, because you’ll miss out on the rest of the study. Perhaps it might be good to verbally set a time limit or ask someone to give us “the 3-minute version” or “elevator pitch” of their story. This might sound rushed, but it isn’t about being rushed at all... honestly, there are situations when we only have a very limited amount of time to share our testimony with others, so we need to get develop the skill to share our testimony both with many words and with few words.

Discussion Prompts

1. **After reading Luke 19:1-4, how would you describe Zacchaeus? What traits or qualities does he seem to possess?**

Ask people to share his characteristics, what they assume he might be like as a tax collector, how others may have viewed him, how eager he is, how he’s driven (willing to climb a tree to see Jesus), etc.

2. **Why are his height and occupation significant details for the reader to know?**

Lead people to share how both details contribute to him being an outcast in the eyes of his peers. Ask people how these details make him an outcast.

3. **Ask someone to read Matthew 9:9-13. How does this passage compare to Luke 19:5-7? What similarities do you notice?**

The similarities are pretty obvious—both deal with tax collectors, Jesus hangs out with tax collectors, Jesus is at tax collectors’ houses, Jesus is criticized, etc. Jesus’ response to the Pharisees in Matthew 9:13 is unique and probably similar to what he might have said to others who criticized Him about hanging out with Zacchaeus. Try sharing Matthew 9:13 from *The Message* paraphrase, it’s SO good—

Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders."

4. **While we don't have a record of the conversation, what do you imagine Jesus said to Zacchaeus during their meal?**

This question is another opportunity to have fun with your group. Give some time for people to share... Here are some examples of how you could get people thinking: perhaps Jesus said something to Zacchaeus that He said elsewhere in the Gospels? How did Jesus describe grace? What did Jesus say to Zacchaeus about money? Might Jesus have said something similar to Zacchaeus that he said to the rich young ruler?

5. **In Luke 19:8, why does Zacchaeus promise to pay back those he cheated 4 times the amount? (HINT: read Exodus 22:1; Numbers 5:7; and 2 Samuel 12:6)**

Have people read these verses. The 3 Old Testament verses have to do with repaying someone 4 times. Notice that by promising to do this, Zacchaeus demonstrates that he understands what the Old Testament requires... even though he had been making sinful decisions, he still had God's words living inside of him.

6. **Read Romans 4:16-17 and Luke 19:9. What does Jesus mean when he calls Zacchaeus a "son of Abraham"?**

This is an opportunity to talk about faith and how it is available to everyone. Romans 4 reminds us that all who follow Jesus are children of Abraham. Even though Zacchaeus was Jewish, he was a tax collector—aka, a sellout to the Romans. Besides being a sellout, apparently, he was also stealing from other Jewish people. As a despised tax collector, many Jewish individuals probably assumed that he was not a believer. Yet, Jesus reminded everyone that grace was for Zacchaeus as well because he was a son of Abraham.

7. **During the video lesson, Calvin said, "I think I'm a bit like Zacchaeus." What did he mean? How might you be a bit like Zacchaeus?**

Self-explanatory—how do we see both the negative and positive qualities of Zacchaeus in ourselves?