

WONDERING ABOUT ZACCHAEUS

October 2, 2021

Kids know what it's like to be short. When as a kid I heard Zacchaeus had to climb a tree in order to see over people's heads to catch a glimpse of Jesus passing by, I thought, "He's one of us!" Let's go deeper and explore the story of Zacchaeus.



- Wonder with your children about Zacchaeus' life before he met Jesus. What did his house look like? Did he have many servants? Was he married? Did he have kids?
- As a tax collector, Zacchaeus was hated by other Jews in Jericho. Tax collectors reminded them of foreign rule. Tax collectors paid a fee to the Romans for the right to collect taxes, and anything above that fee was profit for them. Many abuses took place and people had no recourse for justice. What do our kids understand about the taxes we pay? Do they hear us grumble or wax poetic about paying taxes? Would our kids say we respect the government in our homes?
- Ever wonder if Zacchaeus was lonely? He didn't have any friends to help him when he went to see Jesus. People might have actually blocked him. A little later, the famous teacher Jesus insisted that he would go to Zacchaeus' house. What an honor! What would you do if Jesus came to your house? Ask your children what it takes to be a good host and who they would like to invite over.
- Feeling loved and accepted by Jesus changed Zacchaeus' heart to the point that he shared *half his wealth* with the poor. How did Zacchaeus change people's lives with his generosity? Talk with your kids about giving! Some people have a hard time donating ten percent of their resources to a charity, let alone 50 percent. If your children tithe, ask them how they would feel about giving fifty percent of their earnings to church or a charity. This may help hit home how much Zacchaeus gave.
- We do not know what else Zacchaeus may have done after Jesus left. Ask your kids to speculate what other influence Zacchaeus may have had on Jericho. Do you think the other Jews accepted him after that? Did he just give out money or did he support local charities? Did he mentor others in how to follow Jesus?

What does the Zacchaeus story help our kids understand? Primarily that Jesus loves them no matter what, and he forgives them of their sins when they trust him as their Savior. They may also understand that when they let Jesus work in their lives, they can bless their families and their communities by showing his love. What a great message to spread; that no one is beyond the love and influence of Christ.

Want to do a deep dive? Check out Family Fire's article <https://familyfire.com/articles/nurturing-faith-knowing-his-word-or-knowing-him>

