



HOPE FOR THE LOST

Saved by grace, transformed by love.

We were lost until salvation found us.

No one is born saved; each person must personally choose to follow Christ. Or I can say that being raised in a Christian family does not replace a personal relationship with Christ.

At some point in life, God places someone in our path to lead us closer to Jesus Christ and His salvation. **Romans 3:23 For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 - For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Who Was Zacchaeus?

Key Verse: Luke 19:1-10 In Luke 19:2, Zacchaeus is described as “a chief tax collector” and a wealthy man.

A chief tax collector was a wealthy tax leader who collected taxes for the Roman government and often employed other tax collectors. Because many tax collectors cheated people for personal gain and worked for Rome, they were hated and considered sinful by the Jews.

V3. Zacchaeus had a strong desire to see Jesus despite the crowd and his personal limitations.

How many people today are like Zacchaeus – longing to see Jesus despite their struggles, addictions, corruption, pain, or rejection? **Many are trapped and silently crying out for help.** As Christians, we sometimes forget that we too were once lost and needed someone to help lead us out of strongholds. Jesus always shows compassion to the lost because seeking and saving them is at the heart of His mission.

As followers of Christ, we are called to love others with the same compassion demonstrated by our Lord Jesus.

Unfortunately, many times we become stumbling blocks to those who are searching for Jesus Christ and seeking salvation. **Through poor testimony and wrong character, we hinder people from seeing and following Christ.** Yet Zacchaeus was so determined to encounter Jesus that he climbed a sycamore tree just to catch a glimpse of Him.

He was a chief tax collector, yet he chose to put aside his ego, pride, and dignity in order to seek Jesus Christ. The story of Zacchaeus climbing the sycamore tree is a powerful picture of

people today who are searching for Jesus Christ. Someone may come to church, a prayer meeting, or a crusade, appearing fine on the outside, yet deep inside they may be desperate for an encounter with Jesus – just like Zacchaeus.

Some come carrying shame, guilt, rejection, addiction, or the pain of a broken past. Yet despite everything, they still make the effort to climb the sycamore tree by coming into the house of God in search of Jesus.

“The question for believers is: How do we respond when we see them? Do we judge them, ignore them, or do we respond with the love and compassion of Jesus Christ?”

- Do we judge them by their appearance, reputation, or past mistakes?
- Or do we recognize a soul that is searching for God?
- Do we define them by their stigma, or do we see them through the eyes of grace and call them by their name?

Jesus called Zacchaeus by his name because he saw his desire to see him.

Luke 19:7 tells us that when people saw Jesus going to Zacchaeus' house for fellowship, they began to mutter among themselves. They complained, criticized, and disapproved because Jesus chose to associate with someone they considered sinful. Instead of rejoicing **that a lost man was seeking God, they focused on Zacchaeus' past and reputation.**

The people complained, saying, 'He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.' Instead of celebrating Zacchaeus' desire to encounter Jesus, they focused on his past, his reputation, and his failures. Their reaction revealed judgment and self-righteousness rather than compassion and grace.

Main lessons from the story

1. Jesus reaches out to everyone without discrimination – regardless of colour, gender, denomination, culture, language, or background.

John 3:16 - For God so loved and dearly prized the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes and trusts in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

2. No one is too sinful to come to God: Isaiah 1:18 Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow. Though they are red like crimson, they shall be like wool.

This verse means that even though sin leaves a deep stain, God offers forgiveness and cleansing to those who come to him in repentance. **Scarlet and crimson were colours known for leaving deep**

and permanent stains, symbolizing the seriousness of sin. Yet God's mercy is greater, for He can cleanse, forgive, and make a person new.

3. A genuine encounter with Jesus produces repentance and transformation. V8 Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, " **See, Lord, I'm giving half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will give back four times as much.**" 2 Corinthians 5:17 - Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

4. Christians are called to extend grace, not condemnation: V9-10 Jesus said to him,: "**Today salvation has come to this household, because he, too, is a son of Abraham; For the son of Man has come to seek and save that which was lost.**" Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

We serve a merciful God who reaches out to the broken, rejected, and lost.

- **John 4 - The Samaritan Woman:** Jesus showed compassion and offered living water to a woman rejected by society despite her past.
- **John 8:1-11 - The Woman Caught in Adultery:** Jesus chose mercy over condemnation and called her to a transformed life.
- **Luke 23:39-43 - The Thief on the Cross:** Even in His final moments on the cross, Jesus forgave the repentant thief and promised him paradise.

Prayer point

- Heart of grace and compassion - Ephesians 4:32 Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.
- Deliverance from judgmental spirit in the body of Christ. Matthew 7:1-5

Song

I'm forever grateful to you
I'm forever grateful for the cross
That you came to seek and save the lost