

WEEKLY REFLECTION

Do we know why Jesus came? As we step into the month of December and prepare our hearts for His first coming—do we know why He came, the fullness of God in helpless babe? Luke 19:10 tells us that He came to seek and save the lost, and Zacchaeus' story reflects this so beautifully.

As a rich chief tax collector, Zacchaeus no doubt helped himself to some of the funds that he overcharged and collected for the Roman Empire. He was not a man of morals, and would have been scorned and despised by his fellow countrymen. Yet we see Jesus' enthusiasm towards Zacchaeus' curiosity: as Zacchaeus tried to get a better view of Him, Jesus declares that He *must* stay at Zacchaeus' house today!

We see the effects of this received grace on Zacchaeus: immediately he chooses to give half of his goods to the poor, and to restore fourfold of what he has defrauded. (v.8) This goes far beyond the additional one-fifth that is demanded of him in the Law. (Lev. 6:5) Curiosity comes first, then grace, and finally repentance that leads to life transformation.

While it can be easy for us to dismiss Zacchaeus' story, the truth is that all of us, in some form or another, are Zacchaeus. All of us have turned aside; not one of us seeks God. (Rom. 3:10-17) We are lost, and we need Jesus who came to seek and to save. That is why He needed to come down to earth, to find and to pursue us. If He hadn't, no one would have.

Now, then—what will you do, church? Knowing that if left to our own devices, not one of us would seek God? Will you answer God's call on your life, or will you remain silent and indifferent? Will you remain where you are, comfortable and complacent, or will you partner with God to share His good news with all who so desperately need it?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

Which one of your friends is most different from you? Why did you become friends in the first place? How is your relationship with them now, and what do you most admire about them?

QUESTION TWO:

We see a range of behaviors in the passage: from the crowd who gathered around Jesus to Zacchaeus who ran and climbed up a tree, just to catch a glimpse of Him. (v.3-4) We also see Zacchaeus who joyfully received Jesus as a guest, those in the crowd who derided Jesus for being in the company of a sinner, and Zacchaeus who was willing to give away his possessions to the poor, to return fourfold what he had defrauded. (v.8)

Where do you see yourself in the story? Are you Zacchaeus, or are you part of the crowd instead? Where do you want to be in the story? What is preventing you from doing so, and how can you get there?

QUESTION THREE:

As you put yourself in Zacchaeus' shoes, can you think of a time you felt isolated and rejected by those around you? How would Jesus' invitation change that, and why would His actions inspire you to live a transformed life for Him? Like Zacchaeus, who around you needs to be reconciled with God and their community?