

Time Audit Chronicles: Zacchaeus the Tax Collector

(Luke 19:1-10)

Prologue: Jesus Seeks the Lost

The Presswood family was gathered in their cozy living room, the soft glow of the lamp reflecting the quiet warmth of the evening. Ariel had just finished reading **Luke 19:1-10**, the story of **Zacchaeus the tax collector**, where Jesus shows His love and **compassion** for those whom society often rejects. Ariel sat with her thoughts, reflecting on the deep meaning of the story. Alice, still holding Mr. Fluffernutter, was pretending to climb a tree with her stuffed bunny, excited to “see Jesus” just as Zacchaeus had done.

“Daddy,” Ariel asked, her voice thoughtful, “Why did Jesus choose to stay at Zacchaeus’ house? He was a tax collector, and people didn’t like him. What does this story teach us about Jesus and His mission?”

Ryan smiled, knowing this was a moment for deeper reflection. “That’s a great question, Ariel. Zacchaeus was a tax collector, which meant he was seen as a **sinner** by many people—he worked for the Romans and often overcharged people, getting rich at their expense. But Jesus saw something in him that others didn’t—He saw Zacchaeus’ **heart** and his **desire to change**. Jesus didn’t care about Zacchaeus’ past mistakes; He came to seek and save the lost. This story shows us that **Jesus seeks out** those who are lost, regardless of their past, and offers them a chance to be **transformed**.”

Ariel nodded. “So, it’s not about what we’ve done or how others see us—it’s about how we respond to Jesus when He calls us.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Let’s use the **Time Audit Machine** to go back and see how Jesus interacted with Zacchaeus, showing us how He seeks out the lost and offers them grace.”

The Journey Begins: Zacchaeus in Jericho (Luke 19:1-4)

The Time Audit Machine hummed to life, and with a flash of light, the family found themselves standing in the busy streets of **Jericho**, a city filled with people, bustling with activity. The crowds were gathered, eager to see **Jesus** as He passed through. Zacchaeus, a short man by nature, couldn’t see over the heads of the crowd. So, he climbed up into a **sycamore tree** to get a better view of Jesus.

Ryan pointed to the tree. “This is the moment where Zacchaeus, desperate to see Jesus, climbs the tree. He had heard about Jesus, and something inside him wanted to **see Him**. Zacchaeus wasn’t just curious—he was seeking something, maybe even **wanting to change**, but he couldn’t see past the crowd.”

Ariel looked up at the tree, imagining Zacchaeus climbing it. “I bet Zacchaeus was used to being ignored or looked down on. People probably didn’t want him around because he was a tax collector, but he still had the **desire** to see Jesus.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Despite his status and the way people saw him, Zacchaeus was determined to meet Jesus. And Jesus saw that determination.”

Jesus Calls Zacchaeus by Name (*Luke 19:5*)

As Jesus walked by, He stopped beneath the tree, looked up, and called Zacchaeus by name:

“Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.” (Luke 19:5). Jesus didn’t just pass by Zacchaeus—He **sought him out**.

Ariel’s eyes widened. “Jesus knew his name? He knew exactly who Zacchaeus was, even though the crowd didn’t like him.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Jesus wasn’t interested in Zacchaeus’ reputation or what others thought of him. Jesus knew Zacchaeus’ heart and saw his **desire for change**. Jesus was willing to go to his house, to break the social rules and offer Zacchaeus a new life. This was a radical act of **grace**.”

Ariel was quiet for a moment. “So, even though Zacchaeus was hated by many, Jesus still **wanted** to be with him. He didn’t look at Zacchaeus’ past mistakes—He looked at his **heart**.”

“That’s exactly it,” Ryan said. “Jesus offers grace to **everyone**, regardless of their past, because He sees beyond the surface and knows the potential for transformation in every heart.”

The Reaction of the Crowd: The Judgment of Others (*Luke 19:6-7*)

Zacchaeus quickly came down from the tree and joyfully welcomed Jesus into his home. But the crowd murmured in disapproval, saying, **“That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.”** (Luke 19:7). They couldn’t understand why Jesus would associate with someone like Zacchaeus, a man who had made his wealth by taking advantage of others.

Ariel shook her head. “The crowd didn’t understand why Jesus would spend time with Zacchaeus. They saw him as a **sinner**, but Jesus saw something different.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “The crowd judged Zacchaeus by his actions and past, but Jesus didn’t look at him that way. Jesus looked at Zacchaeus’ heart, and He saw someone who was lost and in need of redemption. This moment is a powerful reminder that **Jesus sees** the potential for change in all of us, no matter what our past looks like.”

Ariel’s brow furrowed. “So, the crowd was more focused on Zacchaeus’ **past** than on his **future** with Jesus.”

“That’s right,” Ryan said. “But Jesus is more concerned with the **future**—with what **can be** than with what has already happened. Jesus seeks out the **lost** because He knows that everyone has the potential to be transformed.”

Zacchaeus' Response: A Heart Changed by Jesus (Luke 19:8)

After Jesus spent time with Zacchaeus, something remarkable happened. Zacchaeus stood up and said to Jesus, “**Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.**” (Luke 19:8). Zacchaeus' heart had been completely changed by his encounter with Jesus. He was ready to make things right and live with **integrity** and **generosity**.

Ariel smiled. “Zacchaeus wasn't just thankful for the healing—he wanted to make up for the wrongs he had done. He was ready to change his life.”

“Yes,” Ryan said, nodding. “When we truly experience Jesus' **grace**, it leads to a **change of heart**. Zacchaeus didn't just ask for forgiveness—he took **action**. He was willing to right the wrongs he had done and make amends, showing that his **repentance** was genuine.”

Ariel thought for a moment. “So, when we truly experience God's love, it doesn't just change how we feel—it changes how we **act**.”

“That's right,” Ryan said. “True repentance is more than just saying sorry—it's about **transformation** in the way we live. Zacchaeus' life was changed because he encountered Jesus' love and grace.”

Jesus' Declaration: The Mission of the Son of Man (Luke 19:9-10)

Jesus then turned to the crowd and declared, “**This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.**” (Luke 19:9-10). Jesus declared that **salvation** had come to Zacchaeus' house, not because of his wealth or status, but because he had experienced true **repentance** and **grace**.

Ariel's eyes brightened. “Jesus says that Zacchaeus is a **son of Abraham**—He sees him as part of God's family, even though he had been a sinner before.”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Jesus was showing that Zacchaeus' **faith** and his willingness to change made him part of God's family. This is a beautiful picture of how Jesus welcomes **everyone**, no matter their past. Jesus came to **seek and save the lost**, and Zacchaeus was a perfect example of that.”

Ariel smiled, understanding the depth of the lesson. “Jesus didn't care about Zacchaeus' past. He cared about what **Zacchaeus could become** when he encountered His grace.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “Jesus didn't come to save the righteous—He came to save the **lost**. He offers **grace** to everyone who is willing to repent and trust in Him, no matter what their past looks like.”

Reflection: A Heart Changed by Grace

Back in the garage, the Time Audit Machine powered down, and the family sat together in quiet reflection. Ariel turned to her father, her heart full of the story's meaning. Alice, still holding Mr.

Fluffernutter, was hugging her toys and pretending to welcome them home, just as Zacchaeus had welcomed Jesus.

“Zacchaeus really shows us what **true repentance** looks like,” Ariel said softly. “It’s not just about saying sorry—it’s about **changing** how we live and making things right.”

“Yes,” Ryan said, his voice filled with warmth. “When we encounter **Jesus’ grace**, it changes us. It transforms our hearts and lives, leading us to live differently, with compassion and integrity. Jesus came to seek the **lost** and offer them a chance to be part of God’s family. Zacchaeus is a reminder that no one is beyond **God’s reach**.”

Ariel smiled. “Jesus really does seek out those who are lost. And when we come to Him, He **welcomes** us and gives us the chance to start fresh.”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “We all have the chance to be transformed by His **grace**, no matter where we’ve been or what we’ve done.”

Takeaway: Jesus Seeks and Saves the Lost

In **Luke 19:1-10**, the story of Zacchaeus teaches us that Jesus **seeks** and **saves** the lost. No matter our past or how society views us, Jesus offers **grace** and **transformation** to all who are willing to repent and trust in Him. Zacchaeus’ life was changed because he encountered Jesus’ love, and he responded with a heart of repentance and a desire to make things right. Jesus’ mission is to seek those who are lost, and He invites us all to experience the **joy** of **salvation** and the **transformation** that comes through His grace.