

## CRIBB<S>NOTE

When is enough not enough? We work everyday doing the best we can to support our families. We don't fuss over very much. We just make our way and try to lend a helping hand whenever we can. Sometimes it feels like we are not appreciated and more is always asked of us. We are not sure what else we can do. We may feel puny and unworthy. No doubt, Zacchaeus, the little man in the Gospel of Luke who scampered to see Jesus, felt something like that.

An outcast in his own community, Zacchaeus had a great need to redeem himself and pay restitution for his conduct as a chief tax collector. There are not many occupations listed in the New Testament that fall below tax collectors. They were notorious for cheating their neighbors as they went about the business of collecting money to support the Roman Empire's occupying forces in Palestine.

In addition to his undesirable job, Zacchaeus was short in stature. He stood beneath the crowds, unable to see what was happening around him. Imagine his frustration and deep pain as he made his way through the bustling streets of Jericho. He carried guilt and shame in his entire body and pounded the ground with every laden step. What could he do to overcome his miserable circumstance? He was forced to put aside his dignity as he scrambled up a tree to get a glimpse at Jesus walking through town.

There was something very special in store for Zacchaeus. Although he was not aware of it, a depth of love was readily available for him.

Zacchaeus was a busy, little man who diligently took in as many tax dollars as he could assess. He always made sure he got his personal cut and he paid the Romans in a timely and orderly way. On the streets of his neighborhood, he was seen as 'scum,' a lackey for the hated Romans. He knew what people said about him, but he did his job anyway. How could anyone love him? How could he love himself?

Sometimes we feel nobody loves us. Nobody cares about what we are going through. Have you ever been there? No matter how hard you try it's not enough. What else can you do? Unlike Zacchaeus, you have not cheated your neighbors, but that is not enough.

Zacchaeus ran and climbed a tree to see Jesus. At the same time, Jesus combed through the crowds searching for Zaachaeus. Jesus came into the world for people like Zaachaeus; tax collectors, cheats, and the outcast. Jesus was there to call him down from the tree so he could be invited into Zaachaeus' home. Jesus is calling us and waiting for us to welcome him into our hearts.

Jesus loved Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, who became rich by extracting hard earned money from his neighbors. Zacchaeus was overcome with joy and happiness when he discovered Jesus knew his name and wanted to be with him. Ain't that good news?

Isn't it good news for us? We are who we are, doing what we do, and Jesus loves us. In fact, we are the very reason Jesus was born; so we can experience the value of life and God's love for us. There is nothing we can do to take away God's love. So, work hard, be honest, and never give up even when it seems much more is asked of you. There is still more to the brief story of Zacchaeus. Read it in Luke 19.