

# Daily Reading & Meditation

Sunday (November 3): "Zacchaeus received Jesus joyfully"

**Scripture:** *Luke 19:1-10*

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And there was a man named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector, and rich. 3 And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." 6 So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

**Meditation:** What would you do if Jesus knocked on your door and said, "I must stay at your home today"? Would you be excited or embarrassed? Jesus often "dropped-in" at unexpected times and he often visited the "uninvited" - the poor, the lame, and even public sinners like Zacchaeus, the tax collector! Tax collectors were despised and treated as outcasts, no doubt because they over-charged people and accumulated great wealth at the expense of others.

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector and was much hated by all the people. Why would Jesus single him out for the honour of staying at his home? Zacchaeus needed God's merciful love and forgiveness. In his encounter with Jesus he found more than he imagined possible. He shows the depth of his repentance by deciding to give half of his goods to the poor and to use the other half for making restitution for fraud. Zacchaeus' testimony included more than words. His change of heart resulted in a change of life, a change that the whole community could experience as genuine.

## ***Faith welcomes Christ in our heart and home***

Saint Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) urges us to climb the sycamore tree like Zacchaeus that we might see Jesus and embrace his cross for our lives:

Zacchaeus climbed away from the crowd and saw Jesus without the crowd getting in his way. The crowd laughs at the lowly, to people walking the way of humility, who leave the wrongs they suffer in God's hands and do not insist on getting back at their enemies. The crowd laughs at the lowly and says, 'You helpless, miserable clod, you cannot even stick up for yourself and get back what is your own.' The crowd gets in the way and prevents Jesus from being seen. The crowd boasts and crows when it is able to get back what it owns. It blocks the sight of the one who said as he hung on the cross, 'Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing... He ignored the crowd that was getting in his way. He instead climbed a sycamore tree, a tree of 'silly fruit.' As the apostle says, 'We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block indeed to the Jews, [now notice the sycamore] but folly to the Gentiles.' Finally, the wise people of this world laugh at us about the cross of Christ and say, 'What sort of minds do you

people have, who worship a crucified God?' What sort of minds do we have? They are certainly not your kind of mind. 'The wisdom of this world is folly with God.' No, we do not have your kind of mind. You call our minds foolish. Say what you like, but for our part, let us climb the sycamore tree and see Jesus. The reason you cannot see Jesus is that you are ashamed to climb the sycamore tree.

Let Zacchaeus grasp the sycamore tree, and let the humble person climb the cross. That is little enough, merely to climb it. We must not be ashamed of the cross of Christ, but we must fix it on our foreheads, where the seat of shame is. Above where all our blushes show is the place, we must firmly fix that for which we should never blush. As for you, I rather think you make fun of the sycamore, and yet that is what has enabled me to see Jesus. You make fun of the sycamore, because you are just a person, but 'the foolishness of God is wiser than men. The Lord Jesus is always ready to make his home with each one of us. Do you make room for him in your heart and in every area of your life?

**Daily Quote from the early church fathers:** *To see Christ*, by Cyril of Alexandria (376-444 AD)

"Come and let us see what was the method of Zacchaeus's conversion. He desired to see Jesus and therefore climbed into a sycamore tree, and so a seed of salvation sprouted within him. Christ saw this with the eyes of deity. Looking up, he also saw Zacchaeus with the eyes of humanity, and since it was his purpose for all to be saved, he extends his gentleness to him. To encourage him, he says, 'Come down quickly.' Zacchaeus searched to see Christ, but the multitude prevented him, not so much that of the people but of his sins. He was short of stature, not merely in a bodily point of view but also spiritually. He could not see him unless he were raised up from the earth and climbed into the sycamore, by which Christ was about to pass. The story contains a puzzle. In no other way can a person see Christ and believe in him except by climbing up into the sycamore, by making foolish his earthly members of fornication, uncleanness, etc." (excerpt from *COMMENTARY ON LUKE, HOMILY 127*)

**OPENING PRAYER** "Lord Jesus, come and stay with me. Fill my life with your peace, my home with your presence, and my heart with your praise. Help me to show kindness, mercy, and goodness to all, even to those who cause me ill-will or harm." **Amen.**

**CLOSING PRAYER:-** World Peace, .

Almighty God, in whose hands lies the destiny of men and nations, Let not the hopes of men perish, nor the sacrifices of men be in vain. Grant us therefore grace and courage to give and to receive the forgiveness which alone can heal today's wounds. Draw us, O Lord, towards loving kindness and guide us into the way of peace. **Amen.**