



Ask, Father James:

Jesus offers Zacchaeus a way out – Jesus can do same for you

Luke 19:1-10 is always an interesting read. In this text, Zacchaeus encounters Jesus when Jesus asked him to come down from on top of a tree. He heard that Jesus was coming through town (Jericho) and is determined to see him, so he ran ahead and climbed on a tree. Zacchaeus was hated by the people because as a chief tax collector, they see him as a crook and a traitor, who works as a spy for the Roman oppressors. And Zacchaeus was all those negative attributes. His name is Zacchaeus, an abbreviation of Zechariah, meaning "the righteous one" - - a big name to live up to. He knew he had wealth, but not spiritual health. Thus, he wanted to see Jesus desperately. The text tells us that he climbed a tree because he was of short in stature; metaphorically, in other words, Zacchaeus did not have much character. He was held in low esteem. But grace will always work it out—albeit harsh grace. By God's grace, Zacchaeus tumbles down from the tree; he repents, confronts his small stature and Jesus happily welcomes him into God's grace - "Today salvation (soteria) has come to this house," Jesus said to him.

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