



# Near and Now

*When My Calling Is A Second Chance – Zacchaeus*

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## **Warm-up Question**

*What kinds of debts harm our relationships with others?*

*When has someone owed you something and it hurt your relationship?*

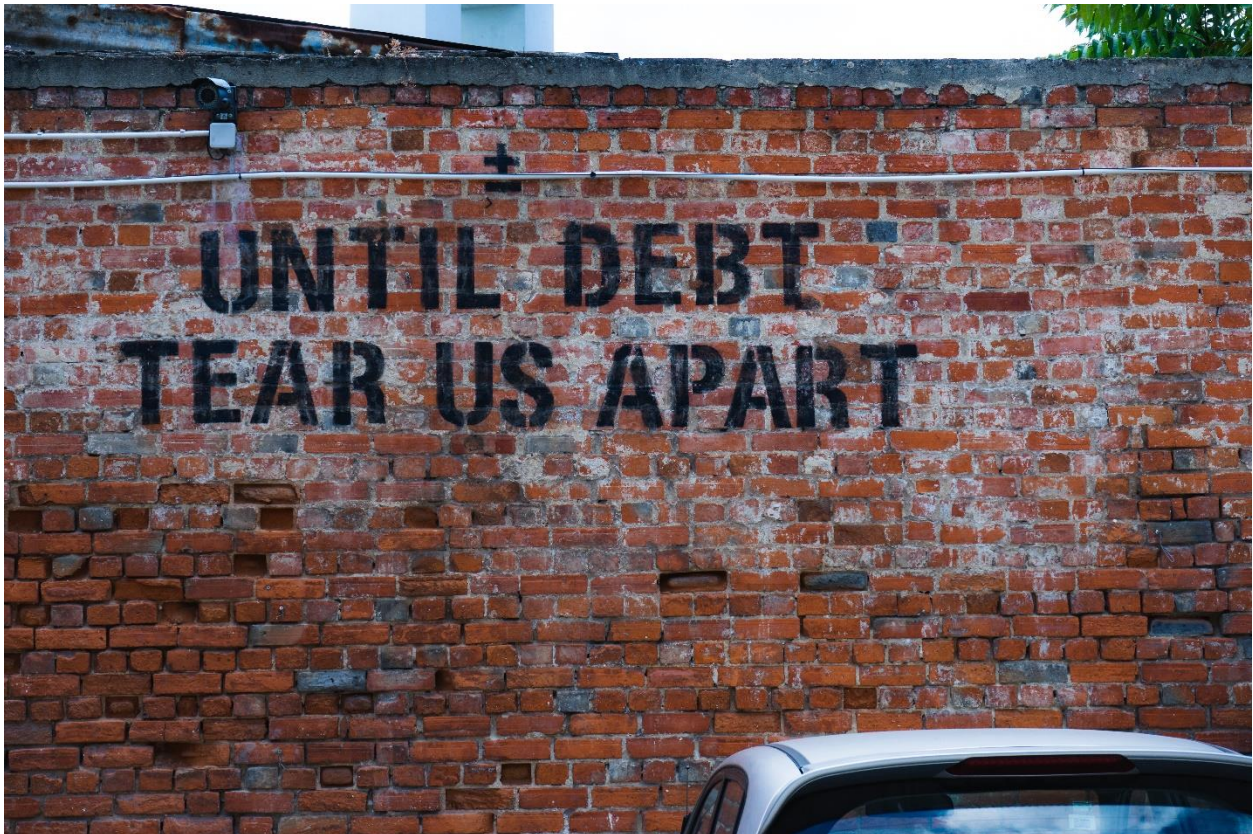


Photo by Ehud Neuhaus on [Unsplash](#)

## **Discussion Questions**

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

## The Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost

Read [Luke 19: 1-10](#)

### Bible Story Reflection

To reflect on the story of Zacchaeus, it's helpful to reflect in light of the previous chapter in the gospel of Matthew. In that chapter, Jesus teaches with parables and addresses some related topics to what we hear in the story of Zacchaeus. He speaks of a woman who asks an unjust judge for justice every single day until he eventually relents because her insistence has worn him down. He then speaks of a tax collector who asked God for mercy because he was a sinner, and Jesus promises that this man will be reconciled to God.

Zacchaeus is rich. It was a different time and context, but it's not hard to imagine him thinking that his money can buy him most things. Yet, when Jesus came to town Zacchaeus's money was useless. It couldn't buy him a meeting with Jesus, nor did it aid him in even being able to see Jesus as he passed by. For this man who could afford most things, it must have been really strange for him to feel so compelled to see Jesus that he would leave the power of his money behind to instead rely on his own body to climb a tree so that he could see Jesus. In return, Jesus greets Zacchaeus and stays in his house. After meeting with Jesus, Zacchaeus is transformed. He no longer relies on the power of his wealth for himself, but he realizes that he needs to give it to those who are living in poverty. He even recognizes and promises that if he owes anyone any debts because of his greed or fraud, he will repay them four times what he owes them.

Maybe the most powerful part of Zacchaeus's story is his promise to make restitutions for his greed or fraud without any evidence that Jesus has instructed him to do so. Simply by being in Christ's presence, Zacchaeus realized that his wealth means nothing compared to the call of Jesus. And so, he promises to pay everyone back out of his wealth. This doesn't appear to simply be a financial decision, but it is a shift of Zacchaeus's whole lifestyle. After encountering Jesus, his whole perspective on life has changed. He recognizes that any fraud he may have committed will hurt those he defrauded far more than it benefited him. It damaged his relationship with his community, and while paying it back fourfold won't fix the damage, it gives him a starting place to begin making reparations in his community. How can we begin making reparations to mend broken relationships in our communities as part of the vocation that God calls us to? What does that look like in our lives?

### Discussion Questions

1. What is most relatable for you in the story of Zacchaeus?
2. Tell about a time when you had to make amends with someone because of a decision you made.
3. How does your faith compel you to repair broken relationships instead of letting them remain broken?
4. How do you think Zacchaeus would tell his version of this story?
5. If you were writing a biography about Zacchaeus, what do you think would happen in the next chapter of his life after this story?
6. When was a time that you were wronged and someone else put in a lot of work to start repairing your relationship?
7. How do you see God's activity in the world differently because of this story?
8. How are you called to make reparations in the world because of your faith?

### Activity Suggestions

Make a list of the things in your life that are most important to you (money, activities, sports, etc.). Write a separate list of how God is present in each of those things, or how God calls you to help others through those things.

Draw a picture of the transformation of Zacchaeus, from greedy tax collector to benevolent reconciler. If you can't think of how to draw this, you can also try to describe this transformation using words.

Take a coin or dollar bill. Pray for those who previously held it, for those who will hold it, and for those who desperately need it.

### Prayer Concerns

Those who have been defrauded, those struggling with broken relationships, and those who seek to repair their community from structural harm.

### Closing Prayer

Change my heart, O God, each day that I might show forth your mercy in my life. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

