

### Courage to Change

**Luke 19:1-10 (NLT) Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. <sup>2</sup> There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. <sup>3</sup> He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come down! I must be a guest in your home today.” <sup>6</sup> Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. <sup>7</sup> But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled. <sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!” <sup>9</sup> Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man<sup>[a]</sup> came to seek and save those who are lost.”**

*Giving Honor to God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. To All of God’s Sons, Daughters, and Children. Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow Big Bethel Nation. Turn to Luke 19:1-10 as we lift up the Name of the Lord. The sermon topic is ‘Courage to Change.’*

*In an effort to do the great work God has in store for you, you must have **Courage to Change**. This week I read John Ehrlichman’s most infamous quote, reported by Dan Baum in 2016, asserts the Nixon war on drugs targeted antiwar activists and Black people by criminalizing marijuana and heroin to disrupt their communities. “We knew we couldn’t make it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin and then criminalizing them both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. **We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night in the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did,**” Ehrlichman said. It’s upsetting to know that the enemy doesn’t simply use people to work against you; systems can also be used against you. Today, I’d like to remind you that weapons may be formed... but **No Weapon formed against us shall prosper!!! Courage to Change.***

The Bible story of Zacchaeus, found in Luke 19:1–10 is a story about a wealthy, dishonest, chief tax collector in Jericho. If we utilize our theological imagination, who do you know in your community who may have money, a large house, cars, an extravagant life style, etc. In this particular case, right in your neighborhood, everybody knows that they have a side or a primary hustle that “ain’t quite right”. It does not line up with the normal ethics of gainful employment, and the proof is that they haven’t filled out an I-9 or a W-2 form. They don’t file the income on their taxes because the income can’t legally be reported. It is a hustle and they are keeping it on the down low. Not only is the hustle bringing the individual down spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally, but it brings destruction to the community spiritually, physically, mentally, and emotionally. What are some of the hustler roles that you have seen in your community? The reality is that it is a system that leads to destruction of the individual and the community. Prisons are big business and many are being designed

with the intent of individuals occupying that space. I'd like to remind you today that the devil is a liar. The Romans are using Zacchaeus to be a part of an egregious systemic process. He is oppressing his own people and is very much like a modern-day hustler, who is making and taking money at the expense of others. They see him as an oppressor and notice that his deeds and his actions are not for the benefit of the people but on this day, Zacchaeus has a desire to see Jesus. All that call upon the name of the lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13) **Courage to change.**

### **A desire to change**

Zacchaeus, is short and hated by the people for being a corrupt tax collector for the Romans. Desperate to see Jesus, he climbed a sycamore-fig tree because he could not see over the crowd. My brothers and sisters there are times in your life when you must have the courage to rise above the crowd. Take a moment to notice who is around you. Yes, you must have the courage to stand, climb, and rise above everything to connect with Jesus Christ. Sometimes the crowd and every now and then your so-called friends will try to remind you of who you used to be and what you used to do. The scripture says, "Remember not the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (Isa.43:18-19) God is doing a new thing in your life. The text says, Jesus saw him, called him by name, and invited Himself to stay at Zacchaeus's house that day. You have to have the **Courage to Change.**

### **The Transformation**

The crowd was displeased and murmured that Jesus was visiting a "sinner". Moved by Jesus's acceptance, Zacchaeus vowed to give half his possessions to the poor and pay back anyone he defrauded four times over. God is so powerful that He does not need to consult your past to determine your future. You simply embrace the **Courage to Change.** Jesus invites Himself to Zacchaeus's house and leads him to repentance. Be steadfast and unmovable; always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. (1 Cor. 15:58) The condition of Zacchaeus heart changed, and he gave half his wealth to the poor and repaid those he cheated. When we think about the goodness of the Lord and all that He has done for us, our soul cries out Hallelujah. **Courage to Change.**

### **Salvation**

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) Christ came to save us. Jesus said "Salvation had come to that house, stating, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost". The story shares that no one is beyond redemption, and a true encounter with Jesus results in repentance, a change of heart, and restitution. It highlights Jesus's mission to reach the marginalized and despised, rather than just the righteous. This changes us. This changes our community. Christ is a liberator and sets the captives free. Have you received Salvation? The Lord is available to you today. Won't you receive Him. Today, You...have the **Courage to Change in Jesus Name.** Amen.