

# CLIMBING HIGH

If you want to climb high,  
you've got to climb like Zacchaeus—  
climb high to see the savior.

Victor Paul Wierwille

*Founder and President of The Way International*

Our ministry has been climbing ever higher over the years, moving with the greatness of God's Word. We always keep moving up to see more and more of His Word and His promises. With God's Word we should never stop.

There is a record in Luke 19 of a man who climbed high to see the savior. This is the record of Jesus and Zacchaeus, a story that always stirs the hearts of those hungering for God's Word.

*Luke 19:1:*

*And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.*

The city of Jericho is northeast of Jerusalem on the Jordan River. Jesus was going to Jerusalem and on his way he passed through Jericho.

*Luke 19:2:*

*And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.*

The name "Zacchaeus" was a form of the name "Zechariah." This Zacchaeus was the chief among the publicans, publicans being tax collectors. Zacchaeus was not low man on the tax collector totem pole; he was chief in that area of Judea. For the most part, tax collecting then, as today, was considered by people to be a vulgar occupation. A great deal of dishonesty and extortion occurred in tax collection. The Roman system of tax collecting was quite an abusive system. Another passage in Luke brings to light this fact.

*Luke 3:12 and 13:*

*Then came also publicans to be baptized [by John the Baptist], and said unto him [John], Master, what shall we do?*

*And he said unto them [the publicans], Exact no more than that which is appointed you [or, "Don't take more than you're ordered to collect"].*

Many times the publicans collected more than they were instructed to. For example, if a man were instructed to collect \$100 from you, he might insist that you owed \$120 instead. Then he would collect \$120, put the \$20 in his own pocket, and turn in the \$100 to the Roman government. That's why John the Baptist told the publicans in Luke 3:13

not to exact any more than they were supposed to collect. But, because some of the publicans did take more, tax collecting became known as a vulgar, dishonest occupation. Also, many Judeans associated tax collecting with their own countrymen who collaborated with the Roman rulers by doing their "dirty work" for them. In Matthew, Jesus Christ was confronted by a group of people trying to tempt him with questions on this same sensitive subject of taxation.

The fig tree provides food, but Zacchaeus climbed it wanting genuine spiritual nourishment by seeing the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Matthew 22:17:*

*... Is it lawful to give tribute [head tax] unto Caesar, or not?*

In this situation recorded here, those questioning Jesus weren't sincerely interested in the truth; they were interested in trapping Jesus by catching him in his own statements.

*Matthew 22:18:*

*But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?*

These wicked hypocrites were Herodians, Judeans who supported Roman rule. Among them were probably publicans who were exacting more taxes than they were appointed to. However, the questioners did not anticipate Jesus' wise response.

*Matthew 22:19-21:*

*Shew me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.*

*And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription?*

*They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.*

For any nation there has to be some type of taxation. It is still our responsibility, as citizens and Christians, to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's. Just because tax collecting may be considered a vulgar occupation with a lot of extortion in an abusive system, that doesn't make everybody who collects taxes an extortioner. This is true today as it was in the days of Jesus the Christ.

Luke 19 tells that Zacchaeus was

chief among the publicans. And he was rich. Now people have read into this statement, just as so many have read into other parts of God's Word. The reason Zacchaeus was rich, some conclude, was that he was a publican, who collected more than he was supposed to, that he extorted excessive money from people. God's Word does not say that. It simply says that he was chief among the publicans and he was rich. It doesn't say he cheated to get rich. There may have been others who did, but it doesn't say that Zacchaeus did. We have no right to read into it that Zacchaeus obtained his wealth dishonestly.

The publicans were tax collectors, just as some people are farmers or plumbers or politicians or teachers. That a person is a rich plumber doesn't indicate that he is a corrupt plumber who has gotten rich dishonestly. That's an unjustified assumption. Neither occupation or wealth indicate dishonesty. All I know is that the Word of God says Zacchaeus was a publican and he was rich.

Zacchaeus had a wonderful desire: he sought to see Jesus.

*Luke 19:3:*

*And he sought to see Jesus who he was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature.*

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, as to who he was. Perhaps it was simple curiosity prompting him. Whatever the reason, at least he wanted to see Jesus. I wish today, over our nation, there were more people who wanted to see Jesus. If people ask that question today, we've got the answer. When they want to see Jesus, who he is, we can show them the Word and the greatness of the Word.

Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus, who he was, but he couldn't. The reason he couldn't see him and get to him was for "the press." That doesn't mean the media, such as newspaper or radio or television reporters. "Press" means numbers of people. There were too many people surrounding Jesus, Zacchaeus couldn't get to him.

*Luke 19:3:*

*... and could not for the press [for the crowd], because he was little of stature.*

Zacchaeus was little of stature; he was short. The biggest thing about him was that he wanted to see Jesus, wanted to know who he was.

*Luke 19:4:*

*And he [Zacchaeus] ran before [ahead of the crowd], and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him; for he [Jesus] was to pass that way.*

Zacchaeus climbed up into a sycamore tree to see. He was small of stature and couldn't see for the crowd, so he made it possible for himself to fulfill his desire by action. That's very important. If you want to see God's Word, you need to move, take action. Zacchaeus took the initiative and climbed up into that sycamore tree to see Jesus Christ.

That the record states this tree Zacchaeus climbed was a sycamore tree is interesting information. A tree called a sycamore in the Bible is not the same as those common here in America. The sycamore tree spoken of in the East in Bible times was a tree like a fig tree. A sycamore fig is what it is. And the fig tree was "the people's tree." When it bore its fruit at different times during the year, any person could help himself to the fruit. And it is significant that this man would climb a sycamore fig to see Jesus Christ, who is the greatest food of all time, the bread of life. The fig tree provides food, but Zacchaeus climbed it wanting genuine spiritual nourishment by seeing the Lord Jesus Christ.

*Luke 19:5:*

*And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up. . . .*

Old Zacchaeus was crouched in the sycamore fig tree looking down, "seated in the heavenlies," while Jesus Christ looked up. Jesus Christ cared about this one man enough to stop amidst all the hubbub of the crowd and take a look at one in that sycamore tree.

I want to tell you, whenever there are men and women searching for the Lord Jesus Christ, they will have their desire met. Those people who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall (absolutely) be filled. That's right. What an example of fulfilling this promise from this record in God's Word.

*Luke 19:5:*

*And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for to day I must abide at thy house.*

Did Jesus say, "Zacchaeus, you're a lousy, no-good person"? Did he say, "Hey, Shorty"? No. How did Jesus know his name, seeing that he addressed him directly?

This was Zacchaeus' first occasion to be with Jesus Christ. How electrifying! Since he could not get to Jesus because of the crowd and his size, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see him. Jesus came along, flanked with masses of people, stopped, and said, "Hi, Zacchaeus, that's

wonderful of you to be looking for me. Come down here now. I'm going to your house with you." What do you think Zacchaeus' little heart did? I'll bet it picked up a few beats. I'll bet tears welled up in this wonderful man's eyes. "Me? Me? Me?" Jesus said, "Yeah, you, Zacchaeus. Come on, make haste, come down. Today I'm going to spend time at your house." And you know something? Zacchaeus made haste. It says so in verse 6.

*Luke 19:6:*

*And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.*

Zacchaeus made haste, and he came and received Jesus joyfully into his house. No man that's out in left field, living like the Devil or anything else, would receive Jesus Christ joyfully. He'd be condemned inside. He'd be hurt. Zacchaeus' heart and personal life were right on. He received Jesus Christ joyfully.

Now put yourself in the same place. Let's say I'd lived like the Devil, raised hell, ran around and so on. Then comes a wonderful believer and says to me, "Come on, I want you to spend the day with me." You know how I'd feel? Terrible. That is why I do not believe all the devilish things some people have laid at the feet of Zacchaeus can stand up against the truth of God's Word. I believe Zacchaeus was a wonderful man.

*Luke 19:7:*

*And when they [the people around Jesus, perhaps including apostles, disciples, and the rest of the crowd] saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.*

The people murmured. They didn't say it in normal tones; they whispered, "I want to tell you something about Zacchaeus. Oooh, this wonderful Jesus, this great prophet, this messiah, look—look at him—he has gone to be a guest with a man who's a sinner." How do you like that? The crowd didn't come right out and say to him, "Jesus, do you realize that you're going to the home of a sinner?" No, they murmured behind his back.

*Luke 19:8:*

*And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord. . .*

A lot of things happened between verses seven and eight, which are not written in the Word. Finally, Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord. . .

*Luke 19:8:*

*. . . Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. . .*

Ladies and gentlemen, Zacchaeus was

a fantastic man. How many people do you know who give fifty percent of their incomes to help others? It says Zacchaeus gave that much. And he wasn't lying to Jesus Christ. He said, "Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. . ."

*Luke 19:8:*

*. . . and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation [or false extortion—if I've taken anything as a tax collector, as a publican—anything from anybody falsely], I restore him [how much?] fourfold.*

I want to tell you, Zacchaeus was a wonderful man! He was saying to the Lord, "If I've taken anything from any man which I shouldn't have taken, Lord, I'd give back to him four times the amount." Quite a tax collector. Sure, he was rich. But I know something else. He shared fifty percent of his own income to give to the poor and he said, "If I've extorted anything from anybody, Lord, I'll pay it back four times over." What a man!

That is why Jesus stopped at his house. He didn't stop there because Zacchaeus was an underhanded thief, a dishonest tax collector. As a publican, Zacchaeus would be despised, considered by many to be an extortioner, having a vulgar occupation who worked for the Gentiles. Yet Jesus stopped with that man that day, because Zacchaeus was none of those things. Although a publican, he was a wonderful, honest man desiring to hear God's Word.

Imagine Jesus Christ's coming to this man's house! A man whom he had never previously met. It must have been exciting. Sure, Zacchaeus was rich. But it isn't *money* that's the problem; it's the *love of money* that's the root of evil.

*Luke 19:9:*

*And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house. . .*

Why is salvation come to this house? Because the savior himself is there. When the savior is there, salvation is there. But why Zacchaeus' house?

*Luke 19:9:*

*. . . forso much as he also is a son of Abraham.*

Do you know what a son of Abraham was? A believer. A person who, when God's Word is opened to him, will hear the Word and believe it. Zacchaeus was not only a descendant of Abraham, he was a believer. Jesus went home with him, shared his life with him, and taught him the Word. Salvation came that day because Zacchaeus, a son of Abraham, a believer, came to know Jesus the Christ.

What a wonderful record in God's Word.

Then comes Jesus' statement in verse 10, which reproves the murmuring spoken of in verse 7.

*Luke 19:10:*

*For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.*

Zacchaeus had never before had the privilege of meeting Jesus. He had never before heard what you and I would call today "the message of salvation." Yet he wanted to see Jesus. So he climbed up in a tree. When Jesus saw him, he said, "Come on, Zacchaeus, come on down, and I'll spend some time at your house." There Jesus taught him the Word, and Zacchaeus believed it. Jesus Christ then said that the son of man, Jesus Christ, is come to save those who are lost.

Ladies and gentlemen, that's what I call climbing high. Whatever you have to do to see Jesus, do it. Wherever you have to go to see him, do it. The one great driving force of your soul should be seeing Jesus Christ. Who is he? Who is he? Who is he? And the only way you'll ever know who Jesus Christ is, is to come to God's Word. The Word makes known Jesus Christ. The Word tells you who he is.

Jesus Christ is a physician of the soul, people. A physician is not needed when one is healthy. Jesus Christ comes to seek and to save. Jesus Christ seeks those that are lost. Men and women need the Lord Jesus Christ. He has no problem tolerating you, because you are the person he came to seek and to save.

Why is salvation come to this house? Because the savior himself is there. When the savior is there, salvation is there.

Hebrews 7:25 says that Jesus Christ is ". . . able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him . . ." Jesus Christ is always ready to meet you. He met Zacchaeus, who had climbed up in a tree to see him. Wherever there are men and women who really want to hear, Jesus Christ is always there. He's always there seeking and saving.

There is no one so low but that the arms of the Almighty are underneath. There is no one so high but that the arms of the Almighty are over the top. And there is no one but His Son that

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## Climbing High

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can save people. For there is no other name given among men whereby we must be saved.\*

I think that if you want to climb high, you've got to climb like Zacchaeus. Just go any place you need to go to hear God's Word, for it is that Word which brings you to a knowledge of salvation.

What do you need to hear? God's Word. Jesus Christ was that Word, that Living Word, who met Zacchaeus that day in Jericho. And he brought Zacchaeus to the great reality of being a great believer, a wonderful son of Abraham. If you want to experience the truth of God's Word, climb high to see the savior, become acquainted with Jesus Christ. ☑

*\*Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."*

## Superstar! (That's you)

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The Greek noun *martus*, usually translated "witness," means, "one who remembers." The verb *martureō* means, "to state with a certain degree of authority, usually for something, and hence, to confirm or prove." In I John 5:6-11, *martus* or a form of it appears eleven times. (This is the rather obscure figure of speech *Getitthroughyourthickheadio*.)

Is God trying to tell us something? Amen and amen. Drop the comma after "record" in verse 11 and we can see it. The witness of the spirit in yourself is God's "record" (*martus*) to you that He has given you *eternal life*. (Sounds like we're back where we started—Romans 8:15.) What does He want you to do about it? Verse 13 tells you, and perhaps my personal literal translation according to usage, context and slang will help clarify the answer to this question.

*Hi, here's your mail. You got born again, remember? That makes you a believer. Better read your mail. I'm telling you I've preserved you forever. So with all the power and authority that is yours in the name of J.C., act like a believer.*

One last point—*teamwork* on the God squad. We have seen that you as an individual athlete are able, in this administration, to run the race *HUPER-nikaō*—*beyond* victory. You are a SUPERSTAR with a no-cut contract. When you perform up to your potential, you see the power of God manifest in your life. This helps you believe that *I* am a superconqueror and can do likewise. It helps give you a positive image of me, and motivates you to pray for me. (By the way, *prayer* is a fundamental skill for every athlete on the team.) You feel there's hope for *me* to trust God because *you* did.

*II Thessalonians 3:1-5:*

*Finally, my brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:*

*And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*

*But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

*And we have confidence [pepoitha] in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.*

*And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting [patience] for [of] Christ.*

Well, we have turned back onto *Peithō* Parkway and are jogging toward home. (You can stop off and see *peithō* in Romans 15:14, Galatians 5:10 and Philip- pians 1:6 to supplement the above paragraph.) What a great run we've had. Let's pick up the pace and sprint to the finish! You're doing great! Isn't it exciting to be an athlete of the spirit? We're on the right road—look at that sign! "BEMA, STRAIGHT AHEAD." ☑

## The Believer's Wardrobe

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Christ instructed the apostles present to be clothed with the promise of the Father, power from on high. God would send this power. It was *His* promise. That to which Jesus Christ referred was the gift of holy spirit which came on Pentecost. When this gift came, and man received it, man once again obtained spirit, this time unconditionally. He was given the aspect of life which he had lost when he transgressed in the Garden of Eden. With the giving of this spirit, God also re-established man's spiritual righteousness. Man once again had a communication line with God. He was once again free to reign as a son of God, only this time in the garden of God's grace.

The first use of *enduō* after Pentecost concerns King Herod's wardrobe:

*Acts 12:21-23:*

*And upon a set day Herod, arrayed [enduō] in royal apparel, sat upon his throne, and made an oration unto them.*

*And the people gave a shout, saying, It is the voice of a god, and not of a man.*

*And immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost.*

In this record Herod "arrayed himself."\* This use of *enduō* has to do with a man clothing *himself*. Notice that in addition to this, he received cheers and recognition as a god and not a man.

What was it that killed Herod? Let's get into this question a little deeper. From other scriptures such as I John 1:5 and Hebrews 2:14b, we know that God does not kill people. The Devil can kill people when they step outside of God's will and are no longer under God's hand of protection. Notice what Herod did. He clothed himself, then he received praise as if he were a god. He removed himself from God's protection and died as a consequence. This bears a resemblance to the behavior of Adam and Eve. They endeavored to clothe themselves; they accepted the Devil's temptation, "ye shall be as gods" (Genesis 3:5b); and they also died, spiritually.

In Luke 24:49, God promised spiritual clothing for man. Now in the Church Epistles, the uses of *enduō* have to do with the clothing of the mind. Remember that the first nine uses of *enduō* in the Gospels pertain to the putting on of physical garments. The uses in the Epistles have to do with the putting on of spiritual thoughts and finally with the putting on of our new spiritual bodies at the gathering together. So now, beginning in Romans, God begins to lay out the mental wardrobe for men. Man is spiritually righteous before God when he is born again, but the real intimacy in his relationship with God comes through the renewed mind. It is up to man to put on in his mind what God has already given him spiritually. Even though they are spiritually righteous, some born-again believers do not overcome the *sense* of fear and condemnation to which