

# Why can't Zacchaeus see Jesus?



Luke 19:1-10  
05 October 2025

Stills from the "Jesus" film: <http://www.jesusfilm.org/film-and-media/watch-the-film>



Luke 19:1-10

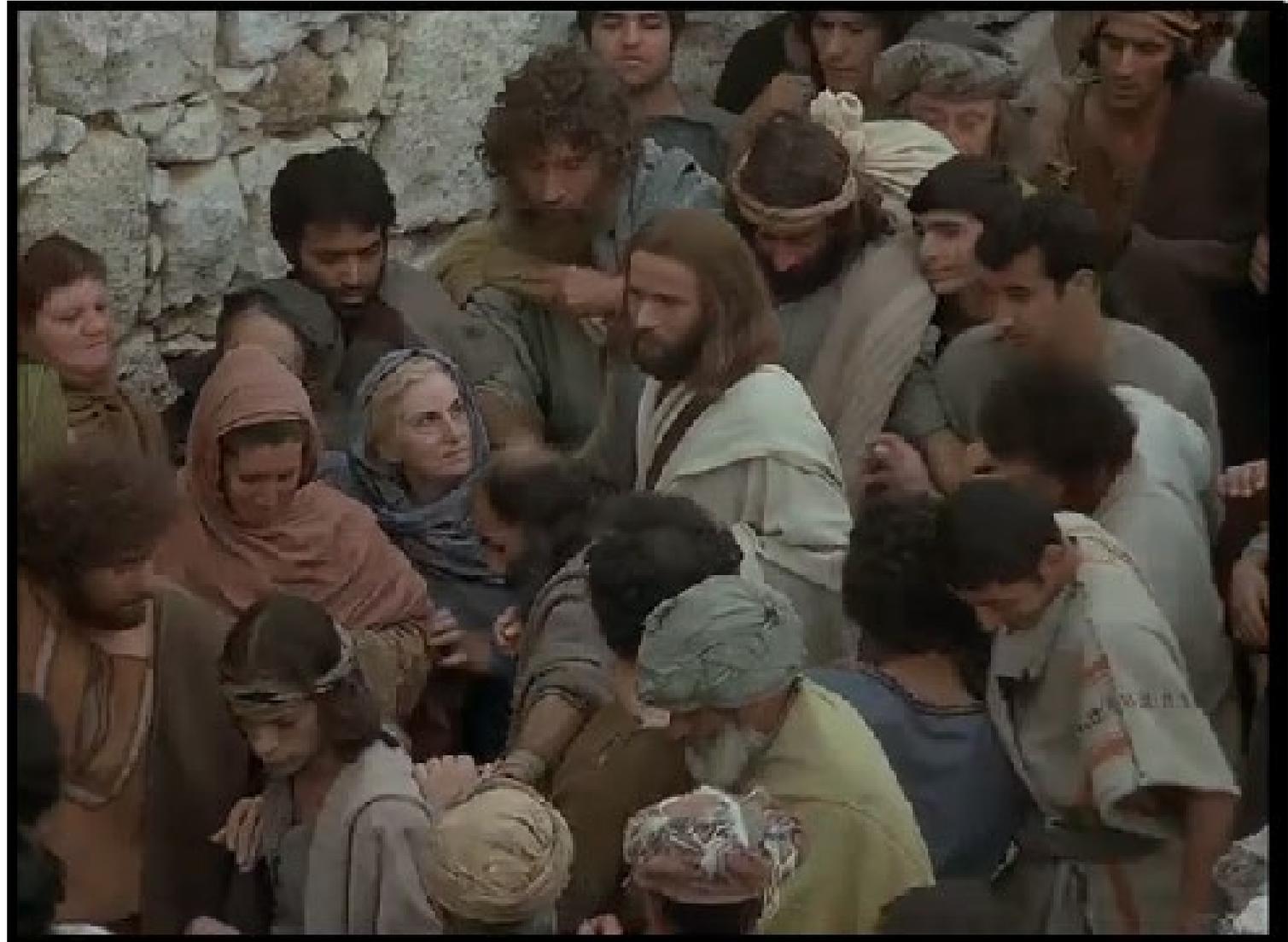
## What do we know about Zacchaeus?

- ✓ Known by name
  - ✓ Chief tax collector (in Jericho)
  - ✓ Very Rich
  - ✓ Wanted to see Jesus
  - ✓ He was short in stature
- = exclusive, all access, VIP pass
- ✓ The crowd considered him a “sinner”
  - ✓ Jesus called him “lost”



Luke 19:1-10

Jesus is  
surrounded  
by a crowd



Luke 19:1-10

The crowd kept Zac from Jesus AND the crowd wanted to keep Jesus from Zac

Zac couldn't see Jesus "ON ACCOUNT OF THE CROWD ... All who saw Jesus invite himself to Zacchaeus' house began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.'"



- ? Too focused on our own access to Jesus
- ? Hostile to those we consider to be "sinners"
- ? Desire to protect Jesus' reputation



In Luke's Gospel the crowd, the disciples, and the religious leaders wanted to keep "sinners" from Jesus

- **Non-Israelites** taking Nazarite's blessing (4:29)
- The **paralytic** lowered through the roof (5:19)
- The **chronically ill** woman (8:42)
- **Samaritans** who rejected Jewish Messiah (9:54)
- **Mary** who neglected her social role (10:40)
- "**Sinners**" who ate with Jesus (15:1-2)
- **Children** brought by their mothers (18:15)
- **Blind Begger** on the road to Jericho (18:39)



In religious shorthand,  
Zacchaeus was a “sinner”



*Who do we think is “rightly” outside of God’s love?*



Luke 19:1-10

Jesus erases  
all barriers,  
NO ONE is  
outside his  
circle of  
welcome



David Hayward



Luke 19:1-10

Zac changes  
**after** he  
meets  
Jesus...

Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, half of my possessions, **Lord, I will give to the poor**; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much." Then Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he **too** is a son of Abraham."

Pharisees and the crowd welcome repentance and change. But for them repentance and change must come before the welcome. Jesus flips this on its head.



Luke 19:10

For the Son  
of Man came  
to seek and to  
save the lost.



*Jesus came not to judge people but to bring the lost home; to give the excluded a seat at the table.*



Are we helping  
the Zacchaeus  
in our lives to  
encounter  
Jesus?



Hospitality before judgement

Belonging before change

Is Zacchaeus a “sinner” to be kept from God, or a “lost”  
child of God to be welcomed home?