

Galatians 3:6-7 NLT - 6 In the same way, "Abraham believed God, and God counted him as righteous because of his faith." 7 The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God.

If we have received Jesus as our savior, we are children of Abraham. What does that mean for us (Galatians 3:29)?

Galatians 3:14, 29 NLT - 14 Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith. ... 29 And now that you belong to Christ, you are the true children of Abraham. You are his heirs, and God's promise to Abraham belongs to you.

We have an opportunity to share in Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost. Through our hospitality, the gospel can be spread one household at a time.

This week let God open your eyes to new opportunities to offer a place at the table, or just to serve others, so that you can create a space for them to encounter God's love and grace.

WRAP-UP

Zacchaeus was undeterred in seeking Jesus. He didn't let his abundant wealth, or his social rejection stand in the way. And Jesus reached out to Zacchaeus, calling him by name and joining him at the table. We can share in Jesus' mission to seek and save the lost when we embrace hospitality that reaches out to the stranger and outcast with God's love and grace. It's time to make room at our table.

Memory Verse

*For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.
- Luke 19:10 NLT*

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: (see back for more space)

Challenge- Invite someone to the table this week- Good Friday service is April 19th at 6 pm, Easter Services are April 20@ 6 pm & April 21 @8. 9:30 & 11 am.

"Hospitality of Zacchaeus"

Farm to Table #6

INTRODUCTION

On his final journey to Jerusalem, Jesus visited Jericho. As was often the case, large crowds surrounded him. On this particular occasion Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector of Jericho, was intent on seeing Jesus. We know that tax collectors were considered by the Jews as traitors who were aligned with their Roman oppressors. In Jewish culture they were among the lowest of society, along with drunkards and prostitutes. Unfortunately, as a short man in a large crowd Zacchaeus didn't stand much of a chance at even catching a glimpse. But he did not want this opportunity to slip away, and so he ran to a tree and climbed into the branches so that he was able to see Jesus. What he couldn't have anticipated was that Jesus would invite himself to dinner that day.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Have you ever hosted someone famous or important for dinner?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Overcoming the Problem of Riches

Luke 19:1-4 NLT - 1 Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. 2 There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. 3 He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. 4 So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.

In this encounter at the table, Jesus dines at the home of the chief tax collector of Jericho. Taking the job of a tax collector meant you were rejected by the Jews, but it promised great wealth, especially if you are chief tax collector.

What occupations would you say are similar today, in that you can gain wealth but lose respect? (maybe that still includes tax collectors) Why would someone be willing to trade off respect for wealth?

Zacchaeus displayed an eagerness to seek Jesus. By running and climbing a tree he essentially humiliated himself for the chance just to get to look at him. Zacchaeus was seeking something he sensed he needed. The pursuit of riches has the potential to consume us. But great wealth cannot remove our guilt

and in fact in chapter 18 of Luke, Jesus uses a tax collector as an example of humility to the arrogant Pharisees.

Luke 18:9-14 NLT - 9 Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: 10 "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer: 'I thank you, God, that I am not a sinner like everyone else. For I don't cheat, I don't sin, and I don't commit adultery. I'm certainly not like that tax collector!' 12 I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.' 13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' 14 I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

In what ways was Zacchaeus like the justified sinner in this parable?

2. Jesus Reaches Out to Zacchaeus

Luke 19:5-7 NLT - 5 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." 6 Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. 7 But the people were displeased. "He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner," they grumbled.

Not only did Zacchaeus get to look at Jesus, he was recognized, called by name and Jesus was going to join him at his home! Jesus broke down social barriers in ways that others hadn't.

How do you think Zacchaeus felt about being personally recognized by Jesus in public? Why do you think the crowds grumbled about Jesus going to the home of a "sinner"? What segments of society today might be overlooked when we invite others to the table? Who do you find hardest to approach with the Good News because of their social status?

Jesus models true hospitality for us. He does this by making space for a stranger to encounter God's love and grace through an invitation and an action. But even Jesus' invitations were not always accepted. The rich young ruler (Luke 18:18) also had an invitation to follow Jesus.

In what ways was the rich young ruler's attitude and response different from Zacchaeus'?

Luke 18:18-24 ESV - 18 And a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 19 And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. 20 You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not murder, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" 21 And he said, "All these I have kept from my youth." 22 When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." 23 But when he heard these things, he became very sad, for he was extremely rich. 24 Jesus, seeing that he had become sad, said, "How difficult it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!"

What experiences have you had either with acceptance or rejection of invitations you've made to others to encounter God's love and grace? (perhaps when you offered to pray for them, or invited them to come to church)

3. Encountering Jesus Brings Change

Luke 19:8-10 NLT - 8 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!" 9 Jesus responded, "Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost."

We aren't actually told the details of Jesus' meal with Zacchaeus. But in verse 10 Jesus declares to the murmuring crowd his mission accomplished here; he came to seek and save the lost. The salvation of Zacchaeus was evidenced by his repentance when he declared that he was changing his ways. After encountering Jesus, Zacchaeus was a changed man, and the wealth which had the potential to encumber him was being thrown off gladly.

What do you remember as some of the changes in you when you were first saved? Which were immediately evident, and which changed more slowly?

Zacchaeus was born a Jew, but Jesus declared him to be a "true son of Abraham" on the day salvation came to him.

How does Paul define a true son of Abraham in Galatians 3?