



Introduction

This is a simple retelling of the story of Zacchaeus from Luke 19 for younger children, with an emphasis on the way Jesus wanted his people to include everybody in his kingdom, especially those who didn't seem 'nice' enough for it. Once 'in', of course, Jesus had a way of changing them to be the people God meant them to be- which is what immediately happened with Zacchaeus.

Development

Jericho was a happy city. Everyone got on with everyone else. Everyone was nice to everyone else. Except, of course, to people who didn't deserve it. And one person who definitely didn't deserve anyone being nice to him was Zack the taxman. Why? Well' Zack was a thief! He stole money off everyone!

He stole money off nice old ladies.

And he stole money off nice old men.

And he stole off nice young men.

And he stole off nice Mums. And nice Dads. And off nice kids who had just started getting pocket money. And off nice carpenters, and nice potters and nice shepherds and nice weavers and nice builders' and he even stole off nice old Mr Benjamin who only owned two goats and half a bucket.

'I'll have that half a bucket,' said Zack. And he did.

So you see, he was a horrible little man, and the more horrible he was, the more everyone was nasty to him, and the more everyone was nasty to him, the more horrible he was and the more horrible he was, the more everyone was nasty to him ' you get the idea!

Until one day when Jesus came to Jericho. And everyone rushed out to see him, because he was so nice and they were so nice, so all the nice people could be together'

But nobody wanted nasty little Zack to be able to see Jesus, and they elbowed him to the back of the crowd. 'Jesus is nice!' they hissed. 'He won't want anything to do with nasty people like you!' Zack thought they were probably right. But he still wanted to see Jesus, so he climbed a tree, to get high enough to see over the top of all the nice people's heads. And Jesus looked up! And saw the nasty little man in the tree! And said, 'Hello Zack! Come on down from there. I'm coming to your house right now.'

The crowd of nice people were horrified. 'He's a nasty little man!' they told Jesus. 'You don't want to go to his nasty house! You're a nice person! Like us!'

But Jesus took no notice of them and just smiled at Zack and they went off to Zack's house together.



It was the first time anyone had been nice to Zack for years. But all the nice people were a bit shocked. 'Jesus is supposed to be nice,' they whispered. 'And there he goes with the nastiest man in Jericho!

Let's hope Jesus tells Zack what a nasty person he is!

But Jesus and Zack just sat down for tea together.

'Jesus should tell him off!' whispered the nice people.

But Jesus and Zack just sat and chatted.

All of a sudden, Zack stood up. 'Jesus!' he said. 'I've been a very nasty man. I've stolen from all these people. But now I'm going to give half my stuff to the poor, and I'll pay back four times as much money as I stole from everyone. And I'll give Mr Benjamin his half a bucket back.'

And all the nice people said, 'Oh! That's nice!'

And Jesus said, 'Oh good! You've been saved! I came to find lost people like you and bring them back to where they should be.'

And we don't know what happened next. But I bet there was a party, and I bet all the nice old ladies and nice old men and nice young men and nice mums and nice dads and nice children and nice old Mr Benjamin and his two goats and half a bucket - oh, and nice little Zack - were thrilled to bits to all be there together with Jesus!