

WOULD YOU HAVE DONE THAT?

Luke 19:1-10 Text vs. 8 *But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."* Let's pretend you're walking down a street when you notice a crowd gathered around a tree. You look up and in that tree is a small man you recognize. He's the tax man who's been stealing from the poor through their taxes. You recognize him. You know his name. You've never met him. But you call out his name and he comes down from that sycamore tree. The crowd's upset you would even speak to such a person. Then to their surprise, you ask him to take you to his house. He does! And what does that crowd think about that? You're respected. Why would you stoop so low as to ask this bad person to invite you into his home? Well, it happened! And that's our lesson today. It happened between Jesus and Zacchaeus the local Tax collector. Now, Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector in Jericho. He was a short man. He had to climb up into a sycamore tree just to get a good look as Jesus passed through Jericho. Zacchaeus was a hated man. The Jews saw him as a thief who took advantage of his Roman Position as tax collector and over-charged them on their taxes. But something far greater than any fear he may have had from those Jews was drawing Zacchaeus to Jesus. Somehow, Zacchaeus felt he had a *divine appointment* with Jesus, because when Jesus looked up and saw Zacchaeus sitting in that sycamore tree, Jesus already knew his name. Jesus had never met Zacchaeus in person. But Jesus called out, *"Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today."* He didn't say *I would like to stay your house*. He said, *I must stay at your house*, which meant something special was going happen. The attraction of the Lord was so strong that when Zacchaeus came down from that sycamore tree, he opened his heart up to Jesus and said, *"Look, Lord! Here and now, I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I cheated anybody out of anything I will pay back four times the amount."* He said that without any request from Jesus. Zacchaeus said it of his own free will, hoping to put himself right in the eyes of the Lord. Now, some may say "no big deal." He didn't offer all his wealth to the poor. He only gave up half. But listen, the way to the Lord isn't measured by the amount you give. It's measured by the amount of love in your heart. You don't reach heaven by buying your way in. There's no work you must do to get in. There's no big job required for you to receive God's grace. Yet, Zacchaeus was compelled to repay the Jews for his misdeeds. He was doing something the Lord must have smiled on, because Jesus said, *"Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."* Zacchaeus came to the Lord. And the crowd witnessed it. If Zacchaeus could receive redemption, then any sinner could. So, the Lord came, stood among those Jews and called Zacchaeus by his name. But does Jesus know your name? He does if you have received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. You can rest assured; He does know your name and your name is already written in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. Listen to what John said about that in the Book of Revelation. *"I saw a great white throne, and Him who was seated on it. From His presence, earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it. Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.* Now listen, there are terrible consequences if your name is *not* written in the Lamb's Book of Life. Listen! *¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the Book of Life, they were thrown into the lake of fire."* That's what's going to happen at the end of days! It's in the Book! Read it! There's going to be a final judgment. And it will be at the *Great White Throne of Judgment*. The one who will sit upon that throne is the King of Kings, The Lord of Lords. And His name is Jesus. As Judge, He is the Supreme Authority. His judgment is final. There's no one above Him. There's no way to appeal His judgment to a higher court. His court is the final court! And it's the highest court there is. The color of His throne is white to show His judgments are pure and holy. He is impartial. He cannot be bought. He cannot be corrupted. He cannot be negotiated with. Your money, your position, your influence on earth will not give you a free pass. The poor and the rich alike, are going to stand before that Great White Throne, where Jesus is the ultimate authority, and hear His judgment upon them. But if you're not certain He knows your name, you better take care of that today. The only way to do it is by receiving Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior. John 1:12 says, *"to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."* It can't be made any plainer than that! Yes, you can have the full assurance of knowing He knows your name and that your name is in the *Lamb's Book of Life*. All it takes is a sincere prayer from you confessing your sin and inviting Jesus into your heart and accepting Him into your life. Accept His authority over your life now, before it's too late! Submit yourself to Him. Be humble under His mighty hand. But people today don't want to admit they're lost! It's like the pilot who told his passengers, "Folks we've lost everything on our instrument panels. We don't know which way we're going. We don't know exactly where we are. We're running short on fuel. But we're making great progress!" A lot of people are like that, today! Have you ever been on a trip and gotten lost, and your wife says, "Honey, I believe you took the wrong turn back there." And you say, "I'm

doing the driving. I know what I'm doing!" Later, she says "Are you sure this is the right way?" . . . "I know what I am a doing." . . . Then, after about one hundred miles you finally pull over and ask how to get to where you're going. You're told, "Mister, you missed your road about a hundred miles back." See, we don't like to admit it when we're lost! Dwight L Moody was an American evangelist and publisher who founded the Moody Bible Institute and Moody Publishers in Chicago. He told about visiting in a prison where the men would tell him, "I was framed. I didn't do it." "It is a case of mistaken identity." "I'm innocent!" Finally, an old man with his elbows on his knees, his head between his hands, with two streams of tears falling off his face said, "Preacher, I'm a low-down sinner. I deserve to be here. I'm lost and no doubt headed for hell. Can you help me?" Moody won that man to Jesus! And do you know you can't be saved, until you admit it, like that man, that you are lost? The answer to being found is, admitting you're lost. *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved!"* (Acts 16:31) Pedro lived in a town called Frias, in Argentina. It was known as a center for satanic activity. Pedro had surrendered to the Devil in exchange for power to destroy the people he hated. What Pedro didn't know was, when he made his pact with the Devil, the hatred within him would grow so strong it would eventually consume and destroy his own soul. Pedro said: "Hatred grew so strong inside me I did not want to live. I wanted to tell someone what was going on inside me. But when I thought that a strange power shouted within me, 'Don't do it!' This went on a long time until a Christian man came and told me what God could do for me." The message from that Christian man gripped Pedro's heart so powerfully that Pedro gave himself to the Lord Jesus Christ and Pedro became a Christian. After he became a Christian, he said: "I shed many tears in the presence of God. I asked Him to forgive me and make me free. Now, I am a new man. And free from my sin!" If you feel like Pedro, or if you are a lost child of God, do what Zacchaeus did. Come down out of your tree. Face Jesus. Repent of your sin. And you will be saved! But if you've already done that, Mary Ann Kidder's song says,

Lord, I care not for riches, neither silver nor gold.
I would make sure of Heaven; I would enter the fold.
In the book of your Kingdom, with its pages so fair,
tell me, Jesus, is my name written there?

If you're like Zacchaeus who faced the Lord with his sin, and you have faced your sins like that man in prison, and you feel like Pedro, then you can certainly answer, "YES! My name is written there!" But have you done that? If not, do it now, and your name will go into *The Lamb's Book of Life* immediately! AMEN