

Weekly Gospel Readings
The 4th Sunday of Meshir
The Redemption of Zacchaeus

On this Sunday (3/03/2024), the Fourth Sunday of the blessed month of Meshir, the Church reads [Luke 19:1-10](#). In these verses, Zacchaeus, a tax collector, short in stature, climbs a sycamore-fig tree to see Jesus passing through the town. Jesus, aware of Zacchaeus and his desire to see him, invites Himself to Zacchaeus' house. The crowd disapproves because Zacchaeus is considered a sinner. However, during the encounter, Zacchaeus repents and pledges to give half of his possessions to the poor and repay anyone he has cheated fourfold. Jesus acknowledges Zacchaeus's transformation, stating that salvation has come to his house, emphasizing the mission of Jesus to seek and save the lost. This passage highlights themes of repentance, reconciliation, and the transformative power of Jesus being in our lives.

Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector empowered by the government to collect state taxes which made him wealthy, and a worldly man, chasing after the lust of the flesh. These material goods could not satisfy his soul and remained feeling empty with a void in his heart. [1 John 2:15](#) states, “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Zacchaeus did not have the love of the Father in him, because he loved the world. As St. Augustine said, “But the lust of the world hath its beginning from choice of the will, its progress from enjoyableness of pleasure, its confirmation from the chain of custom, whereas “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts” ([Church Fathers Scripture Search Engine](#)). If we pursue worldly pleasures, our souls may feel satisfied temporarily, but a void will form in our souls. A void that can only be filled with the love of the Father as Jesus said, “Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”([Matthew 11:28-29](#))

When Jesus saw Zacchaeus in the tree, He said to him “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today” ([Luke 19:5](#)). St. Ephrem The Syrian explains: “Zacchaeus seeing He knew his thoughts, he said, “Just as He knows this, He knows also all that I have done.” So, when Jesus entered his house Zacchaeus said to the Lord: “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” ([Luke 19:8](#)). Zacchaeus’s actions and response to Jesus imply a recognition of his own shortcomings and a desire for repentance and his intention to make amends.

May the Lord allow us to benefit from today’s gospel by remembering Zacchaeus path to fulfillment and remembering that Christ came seeking the lost and the sinner. Let us invite Him to our hearts and lives and reject worldly desires and possessions, admit to our sins, repent, and pursue a relationship with our Heavenly Father. Amen.

Sources:

- Bible, English Standard Version (ESV)
- [St. Takla.org](#)
- ([Church Fathers Scripture Search Engine](#))
- [Catena Bible](#)