

# The Whole Armor of God *Ephesians 6:10-20*

## Strong Belt of Truth

Zacchaeus

*Luke 19:1-10*

**Jesus spent the early part of His ministry around the Sea of Galilee. He ministered to the people in places such as Capernaum and Bethsaida. Our story begins as Jesus made His way toward Jerusalem, ministering in Judea and Perea. On His journey, He made a stop in Jericho where He met a tax collector named Zacchaeus.**

### Introduction

This is a story about a man named Zacchaeus (*zak-KEY-us*) who climbed a tree to get a glimpse of Jesus. Zacchaeus was a wealthy tax collector in Jericho who was despised by his fellow Jews. Tax collectors were usually Romans, but in this case Zacchaeus represented the Jews in Jericho. Tax collectors were known for cheating both the people and the government. They were considered traitors because they worked for the government and were allowed to collect more than the required amount of tax and keep the rest for themselves. Taxes during Jesus' day were levied on everything the Romans could think of. It was common for the people to be reduced to poverty due to the enormous taxes. For a wealthy man such as this to climb a sycamore tree to have a mere sight of Jesus was an amazing action. Zacchaeus must have been tired of living a life of corruption, temptation and greed. He must have been looking for a better life.

## Progression of Events

Have you ever been to a parade? Have you ever been to an event that an important or famous person was going to speak at? In a crowd it is sometimes hard to see what is going on especially if you are small. If you have experienced this, you will understand how Zacchaeus felt.

- A tax collector named Zacchaeus was excited about seeing the Miracle Worker called Jesus. Jesus was coming through Jericho and Zacchaeus was determined to see Him.
- As the people hurried to find a place to get a glimpse of Jesus, Zacchaeus, who was short, ran ahead of the crowd and hurried up a sycamore tree. You may wonder why those in the crowd would not show kindness by allowing a short man a place to see. They did not help him because the people of Jericho felt betrayed by Zacchaeus. He agreed to collect the tax for the Romans who had taken over their city. The Jews saw Zacchaeus as a sinner. Zacchaeus was not the only sinner we are all sinners. In Romans 3:23 it says, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Sin separates us from God and it hurts our relationships with others. Due to sin, Zacchaeus was separated from God and the people. He did not have friends.
- As Jesus passed by, He stopped and spoke kindly to Zacchaeus. Who is Jesus? Yes, He is the Son of God. As

such, He knows everything! Jesus not only knew Zacchaeus' name, He knew he was a sinner and He knew his heart. God knows all about each of us. Read Psalm 139:1-3. Jesus loved Zacchaeus the sinner. He wanted him to know Him and a better way of life. This is why Jesus stopped and took the time to speak to him. Jesus not only took the time to talk to Zacchaeus, but He invited himself to Zacchaeus' home. When Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately, I must stay at your house today" Zacchaeus jumped from the tree and immediately welcomed Jesus.

- The people were surprised that Jesus spoke to Zacchaeus and they murmured that He would be a guest in Zacchaeus' home. The citizens of Jericho saw Zacchaeus as a sinner, Jesus saw him as a man of value and as one who had a desire to change. Jesus is there for anyone who invites Him into his life.

### **Climax**

Zacchaeus believed and had faith in Jesus. He knew he was a sinner and that others despised him. This did not stop him from desiring a better way of life. He was sorry for his sin and he now had a desire to please God.

### **Conclusion**

Zacchaeus promised to give half of his possessions to the poor. He promised to return what he had stolen and he said he would pay back four times the amount of what he had taken. He was sorry for his sins and he proved his desire to change by taking action.

### **Strong Belt of Truth**

Zacchaeus learned the importance of putting on the strong belt of truth. How can you put on the strong belt of truth? You should attend church on the Sabbath, keep the Holy Days, read your Bible, pray and memorize scripture. Another important way to put on the belt of truth is to always be honest. Jesus is the way, the truth and the life

(John 14:6). When you pray, ask Him to help you to always tell the truth. Do you know who your biggest enemy is? Satan, that is right. Jesus called Satan the "father of lies" (John 8:44). Satan does not want you to be truthful. Jesus will help you face the enemy without fear, to always tell the truth and have a clear conscience. Your conscience will be clear because you wear the strong belt of truth.

### **Memory Verse**

"...I will be sorry for my sin" (Psalm 38:18).

### **Questions**

For class discussion ask your students any of the following:

1. Do you think it was easy for Zacchaeus to go to those he had cheated and return to them what he had taken?
2. Why do you think it is hard to do what is right?
3. How did Jesus show love and kindness to Zacchaeus?
4. Are we all sinners? Can you give a scripture that backs up your answer?
5. Explain the meaning of the belt of truth.
6. What did Zacchaeus do for a living?
7. Why did the people dislike the tax collector?
8. How did Zacchaeus show that he had faith?
9. How do you put on the belt of truth?
10. What kind of a tree did Zacchaeus climb to get a glimpse of Jesus?

## Lesson 1

### Activity

Zacchaeus came to hear Jesus preach. When he climbed up in a tree he could see. He told Jesus He was sorry for the wrong things he had done, and Jesus forgave him. Draw a crowd of people.



**“You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive” (Psalm 86:5).**

# Lesson 1

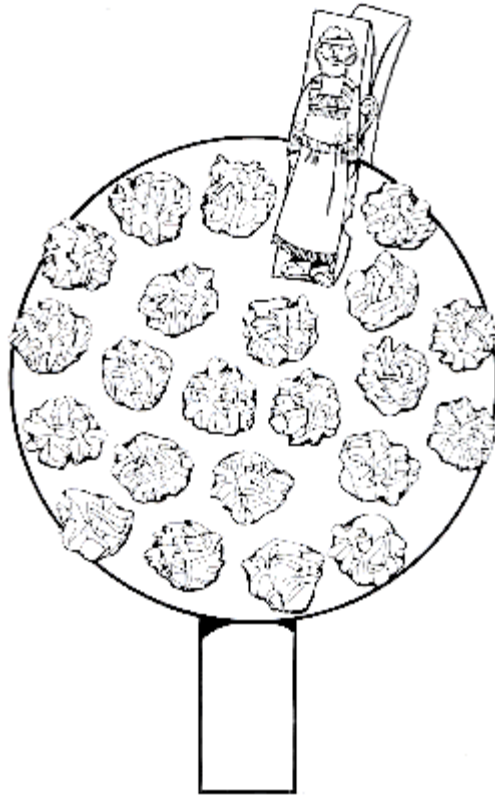
## Craft

### Materials

- Paper plate, green tissue paper
- Scissors, pencil, glue
- Brown construction paper
- Tagboard, spring clothespin
- Crayons or markers

### Directions

1. Cut tissue squares, twist them around the end of a pencil, and glue them to the plate.
2. Cut a rectangular tree trunk from brown construction paper and glue it to the bottom of the plate.
3. Cut a piece of tagboard the size of the clothespin.
4. Use crayons or markers to draw Zacchaeus on the piece of tagboard.
5. Glue the piece of tagboard onto a clothespin.
6. Use the clothespin and tree to tell the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus.



# Lesson 1

## Craft

### Materials

- Three strips of cloth for each student (1 inch wide and 2 yards long)

### Directions

1. Give each student three strips of fabric.
2. Have your students work in pairs. One student holds one end of three of the strips while the other student does the braiding.
3. Then have the students switch roles, and help his partner make his belt.

