

## INTRODUCTION 引言

On that day, Jesus and His disciples were traveling toward the south. He was on His final journey to Jerusalem to die on the cross. As they passed through Jericho, Jesus encountered a tax collector named Zacchaeus. Through their interaction, Jesus reiterated His purpose to call people into the Kingdom of God. Even today, our Lord is sending us out for the same search and rescue mission. If we believe in the gospel then we must also share the gospel. Jesus is the only way to salvation. God is willing to give grace to those who do not deserve it.

## EXPLANATION 解釋

### 1. Resistance for the Lord 見主的障礙

In the story, Zacchaeus faced some resistance for the Lord. He had to overcome some problems before he could see Jesus. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. Some of you know the historical background about that profession. At that time, Israel was a territory of the Roman Empire. The government sold tax-collection rights to the highest bidders. Jewish tax-collectors paid the required amount they received to the central government, then they pocketed the rest. Therefore, it was an opportunity to gouge profit from their Jewish peers. They labeled tax-collectors as traitors. People had no choice but to pay whatever those officials asked for. You may have that experience before. Our family went on vacation in July. We visited amusement parks during the day. The food was a few times more expensive than elsewhere. We ended up paying more for lunches in the parks, than dinners outside the parks. I told my boys: “You’d better sweep up the crumbs because they’re worth a few dollars!” Obviously, no one likes tax-collectors. They had everything, except the acceptance from the public. On a certain day, Zacchaeus heard a commotion when Jesus arrived. He was aware of the things Jesus did. He performed miracles to heal the sick and cast out demons. He also taught with authority. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. How does He look like? But Zacchaeus had to overcome some resistances. First, there were some external barriers. It would be dangerous for him to walk into a big crowd because no one liked him. What if someone gave him a push or a bump? People might even step on him if he fell on the ground! Second, Zacchaeus was a short guy. He could not see Jesus unless he stood at the front. Zacchaeus was a smart man. He climbed on a tree. From that vantage point, he could safely see Jesus. Besides those external barriers, Zacchaeus also had an internal barrier. He surely knew that he was sinning against God and His people in his daily work. Who was he to get near to a holy man like Jesus? It would be better to keep a distance from Him. Zacchaeus did not want a hand-shake, an autograph or a selfie from Jesus. Just took a peek. Then Jesus went on His way and Zacchaeus resumed his life. Many seeker friends assume the same approach today. They may look up information on the internet about the Bible. It is a contact-free way to study about God. They keep a distance even when they go to a church. They come to our Friday dinner or drop their kids off to children’s ministries. Then they stay on the outside to observe. That will avoid any pressure to become believers. How can we help those Zacchaeus around us cut down their resistance for the Lord? Just treat them as your friends. Show them that you are a normal person like them. You have a day job and a family. You have the same concerns about issues like

the pandemic, inflation and crime. When opportunities come up, you can tell them how a relationship with Jesus means to you. How He helps you cope with the anxieties and problems you face. How Jesus gives you real joy and peace. How Biblical principles guide your decision-making. How God's truth make you a better employer, student, parent or spouse. Then they will know Jesus is not only a fictional figure to study. But He is actively living in our lives.

## 2. Acceptance from the Lord 被主的接納

Zacchaeus made an effort to minimize some resistances for the Lord. He was hoping to get a glimpse of Jesus. In the end, he received acceptance from the Lord. Zacchaeus' heart was pounding as Jesus was approaching. Finally Jesus walked by. Just when Zacchaeus thought mission was accomplished, Jesus looked up and asked Zacchaeus to come down. Do you notice in verse 5 that Jesus addressed Zacchaeus by name? How did Jesus know Him? For sure Zacchaeus was a well-known person around town. He was perhaps one of the few guys on the scene wearing fine clothes. Besides all those possible explanations, it also implies that Jesus is the all-knowing God. There are many records in the gospels that show Jesus even knew the thoughts in people's mind. Before Zacchaeus knew Jesus, Jesus already knew Him. He said to Zacchaeus that He would stay at his house that day. Jesus really had some thick skin. He did not even ask Zacchaeus for permission. I will not dare to say to you: "I get intel that you're having steak and lobster tonight. Add a pair of chopsticks for me." Zacchaeus had the money to prepare the best food and wine. But he did not have the courage to make the request. Why embarrassed himself? Jesus would more than likely reject his invitation. In many culture, eating together symbolizes friendship and mutual acceptance. Zacchaeus was accepted by Jesus. Therefore, he responded with joy. The crowd must be shocked by Jesus' announcement. Verse 7 tells us their reaction: **And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner."** Notice that they did not condemn Zacchaeus, saying: "Who do you think you're to eat with Jesus?" They judged Jesus for His decision. We see a similar attitude from the religious leaders in the gospels. They showed no joy when Jesus healed patients who suffered from diseases or possessed by demons for a long time. Instead, they disapproved Jesus for helping the wrong people on a wrong day or in a wrong way. Jesus' kindness exposed their hypocrisy. They were supposed to show God's love to everyone. By showing no compassion, they built a wall instead of a bridge between God and His people. They determined they were too holy to be contaminated by sinners. Perhaps they also thought that the temple was so sacred that it could not be polluted by filthy people. They reasoned that people had to come clean before they could approach God. Jesus showed the crowd that no sinner, not even Zacchaeus, was beyond the reach of God's love. Jesus once said that He did not call for healthy people, but the sick ones. It is like a hospital is for treating patients. It will be unthinkable for a doctor to reject anyone for being in a bad shape, or to kick them out because their groaning will disturb a peaceful environment. Likewise, God's salvation is for all who need a spiritual treatment. A church is not a club house where only registered members can enter. If Jesus welcomed anyone, so should we. Our task is not to screen certain people out and determine that they do not deserve God's grace. Our work is to guide people to the Savior. We need to accept people as they are, even though we should not condone their sins. Most churches may not have visitors who are drug addicts, ex-convicts or homeless. But every seeker friend shares the same spiritual condition because they run away from God's family. Our job is to show them the right way home.

### 3. Repentance to the Lord 向主的悔改

Zacchaeus knew that he was accepted by Jesus. Next, he expressed his repentance to the Lord through actions. Zacchaeus told Jesus that he was willing to share half of his wealth to the poor and repay four times the money to those he had cheated. That was way above the norm. The Old Testament Law dictates 20% as the compensation for a similar offense. For example, Numbers 5:6-7 say: **6 "... When a man or woman commits any of the sins that people commit by breaking faith with the Lord, and that person realizes his guilt, 7 he shall confess his sin that he has committed. And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong."** Zacchaeus made it clear that his repentance was sincere. He said it openly so that people could testify to his promise. Notice that Jesus had yet to point out Zacchaeus' sins. Did Zacchaeus know that he oppressed people? Of course he did. But being in the trade, he could not help but keep squeezing money from his Jewish peers. Jesus' acceptance gave Zacchaeus a motivation to change. All of a sudden, money became less important to him. He desired after Jesus' holiness. The apostle Paul went through a similar conversion experience. He shares in Philippians 3:8 – **Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ.** In comparison to knowing Jesus, Paul saw his background, education, social status and everything else as worthless. That does not mean we have to donate all our wealth, sell our house and quit our job before we can become Christians. But there has to be a change in our perspective when we decide to follow Jesus. We surrender the ownership of our possessions and our lives to Him. We maintain the same daily duties. But from now on we do everything for God's glory. The question for you is: have you experienced any change in your life after you became a believer? Does the Holy Spirit alert you to any area that needs adjustment? It can be some obvious and hidden sins. Do you need to seek forgiveness from the people you wronged? Or perhaps you need some changes in the use of time and money. It can be your life priorities and plans for the future. It can be the way you think, talk and dress. The Holy Spirit does not only point out issues that are contrary to God's will. He also gives us the strength and determination to grow to be more like Jesus. Repentance is a two-step process. We need to turn back from our past, but also turn toward God. The results are joy, contentment and freedom from sin. At the end, Jesus affirmed Zacchaeus' new life and He reminded people His mission in the world. Read verses 9 and 10: **9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."** Zacchaeus was a descendant of Abraham by birth. By receiving Jesus' salvation grace, Zacchaeus also became a spiritual descendant of Abraham by faith. Just like Abraham believed in God's promises by faith, Zacchaeus and any person must accept Jesus by faith.

### CONCLUSION 解釋

God is willing to give grace to those who do not deserve it. The word "see" is a key term keeps repeating in the passage. Our judgment depends on how we see ourselves and others. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus out of curiosity. But Jesus saw the spiritual need in Zacchaeus. The crowd was upset when they saw Jesus accepting a notorious sinner. As Christians, we need to see people the way God sees them. Everyone needs God's grace. We also need to help people see themselves in the eyes of God. They need to see the beauty of God's holiness, and seek after it. Jesus is calling us to continue this search and rescue mission to bring people into His Kingdom.

## INTRODUCTION 引言

當天耶穌和祂的門徒向南邊走。祂最後一次前往耶路撒冷，並且死在十字架上。當他們經過耶利哥的時候，耶穌遇到了一個名叫撒該的稅吏。通過他們的接觸，耶穌重申祂的目的是要呼召人們進入神的國。直到今天，主也差派我們出去執行同樣尋找與拯救的使命。如果我們相信福音，那麼我們也必須分享福音。耶穌是拯救的唯一途徑。神樂意把恩典賜給不配的人。

## EXPLANATION 解釋

### 1. Resistance for the Lord 見主的障礙

在故事中，撒該面對一些見主的障礙。他必須先跨越一些困難，才能見到耶穌。撒該是個稅吏。你們有些人知道這個職業的歷史背景。那時，以色列是羅馬帝國的領土。政府將徵稅權賣給出價最高的人。猶太的收稅官將需要繳納的金額交給中央政府，其餘的便歸自己。因此，這是一個向猶太同胞榨取利潤的機會。他們稱稅吏為賣國賊。人們別無選擇，必須按官員的要求付錢。你可能有過類似的經歷。我們一家七月去度假了。我們白天去遊樂場玩。那裡的食物比其他地方貴幾倍。結果我們在遊樂場的午餐比外面吃的晚餐更貴。我告訴孩子們：「你們連屑屑都不可浪費，因為它肯定值幾塊錢！」顯然，沒有人會喜歡稅吏。他們擁有一切，除了大眾的接納。某一天，撒該聽到群眾的騷動。原來耶穌過境。他聽過耶穌的事。祂行神蹟醫病趕鬼。祂的教導帶有權柄。撒該想見耶穌。祂到底是長怎麼樣的？但撒該必須克服一些障礙。首先，他面對一些外在的障礙。他走進人群會很危險。因為沒有人喜歡他，萬一有人推他或撞他怎麼辦？如果他倒在地上，人們甚至可能會踩他！其次，撒該是個矮個子。除非他站在人前，否則他看不到耶穌。撒該是個聰明人。他爬上一棵樹。從那個有利位置，他可以安全地看到耶穌。除了這些外在的障礙，撒該還有一個內在的障礙。他明白自己的工作得罪神和祂的子民。他是誰？哪裡有資格靠近像耶穌這樣的聖人？最好和祂保持距離。撒該不期望和耶穌握手、要祂的簽名或與祂拍照留念。只要看祂一眼便心滿意足了。然後耶穌繼續走祂的路，撒該也回到他的生命中。今天，許多福音朋友都採用同樣的方法。他們可能在網路上尋索有關聖經的信息。這樣便不需要接觸任何人，很安全地認識神。就算去到教會，他們也會保持距離。他們也許週五來吃晚餐或將孩子送到兒童事工，然後他們留在外面觀察。這將避免任何成為信徒的壓力。我們如何幫助我們周圍的撒該減少他們對主的障礙？你只需要把他們看作朋友。向他們表明你和他們一樣都是平凡人。你有工作和家庭。你對疫情、通貨膨脹和罪案等問題也有同樣的擔憂。當機會出現

時，你可以告訴他們你與耶穌的關係對你有何意義。耶穌如何幫助你面對焦慮和問題。耶穌如何給你真正的喜樂和平安。聖經的原則如何指引你做決定。神的真理如何使你成為更好的雇員、學生、父母或配偶。然後他們就會知道耶穌不僅僅是一個值得研究的虛構人物，祂也積極地活在我們的生命中。

## 2. Acceptance from the Lord 被主的接納

撒該努力地排除一些見主的障礙。他希望能看到耶穌。結果，他被主接納了。當耶穌走近時，撒該的心怦怦直跳，最後耶穌經過了。就在撒該以為目的已經達到的時候，耶穌抬起頭呼叫撒該下來。你注意到在第 5 節耶穌直呼撒該的名字嗎？耶穌是怎麼認識他的？毫無疑問，撒該是鎮上的知名人士。他也可能是現場少數穿著華麗衣服的人。除了這些可能的解釋外，它還暗示耶穌是全知的神。福音書中有很多記載，提到耶穌甚至知道人心裡的意念。在撒該認識耶穌之前，耶穌就已經認識他了。祂對撒該說那天祂要去他家。耶穌的臉皮真的很厚。祂甚至沒有徵求撒該的許可。我絕對不敢對你說：「我聽說你今晚要吃牛排和龍蝦。給我加一雙筷子吧！」撒該有錢準備最好的食物和酒，但他沒有勇氣提出這個要求。何必要讓自己難堪呢？耶穌很可能會拒絕他的邀請。在許多文化中，一起吃飯象徵著友誼和彼此接納。撒該被耶穌接納。因此，他高興地回應。群眾一定對耶穌的宣告感到震驚。第 7 節指出他們的反應：眾人看見，都私下議論說：「他竟到罪人家裡去住宿。」請注意，他們並沒有譴責撒該，說：「你有什麼資格和耶穌吃飯？」他們卻批評耶穌的決定。我們從福音書中的宗教領袖身上看到了類似的態度。當耶穌醫治長期患病或被鬼附的病人時，他們沒有表現出任何喜樂。相反，他們認為耶穌在錯誤的日子或以錯誤的方式幫助了錯誤的人。耶穌的憐憫暴露出他們的假冒偽善。他們應該向每個人顯示神的愛。由於缺乏同情，他們在神和人之間建造了一面牆而不是一道橋樑。他們認定自己太聖潔了，不能被罪人玷污。或許他們還認為，聖殿是如此神聖，不能被骯髒的人污染。他們認為人們必須先潔淨自己才能接近神。耶穌向群眾表明，神的愛能夠臨到任何罪人，甚至是撒該。耶穌曾經說過，祂呼召有病的人，而不是健康的人。就像醫院是為了治療病人而設一樣。醫生不會拒絕情形太差的病人，或者因為他們的呻吟太吵而將他們趕走，這是難以想像的。同樣，神的救恩是賜給所有靈魂需要被醫治的人。教會不是只有註冊會員才能進入的場所。如果耶穌歡迎任何人，我們也應該如此。我們的責任不是將某些人排除在外，斷定他們不配得到神的恩典。我們的工作乃是引導人們歸向救主。我們需要接受人的本來面目，縱然我們不應該認同他們的罪。大多數教會可能沒有吸毒者、出獄的罪犯或流浪漢拜訪。但是每一位福音朋友都有相同的屬靈狀況，因為他們逃離了神的家庭。我們的工作是向他們展示正確回家的路。

## 3. Repentance to the Lord 向主的悔改

撒該知道他被耶穌接納了。接著，他以行動向主表達自己的悔改。撒該告訴耶穌，他願意將他一半的財產分給窮人，並將四倍的錢還給他曾經欺騙的人。這遠遠超出了常規。舊約律法規定類似的罪的賠償為百分比二十。例如，民數記 5:6-7 說：6 「... 無論男女，若犯了人所常犯的罪，以致干犯耶和華，那人就有了罪。7 他要承認所犯的罪，將所虧負人的，如數賠還，另外加上五分之一，也歸與所虧負的人。」撒該明確表示他的悔改是真誠的。他是公開地說出來，在場的人都可以證明他的承諾。請注意，耶穌還沒有指出撒該的罪。撒該知道他壓迫人嗎？他當然知道了。但是人在江湖，他必須不斷地向猶太同胞壓榨金錢。耶穌的接納給了撒該改變的動力。突然之間，錢對他來說變得不那麼重要了。他渴望耶穌的聖潔。使徒保羅也有過類似的轉變經歷。他在腓立比書 3:8 中分享：不但如此，我也將萬事當作有損的，因我以認識我主基督耶穌為至寶。我為他已經丟棄萬事，看作糞土，為要得著基督。與認識耶穌相比，保羅認為他的背景、學問、社會地位和其他一切都一文不值。這並不意味著我們必須捐出所有的財富、賣掉房子、辭掉工作才能成為基督徒。但是當我們決定跟隨耶穌時，我們的價值觀必須有所改變。我們將我們的財產和生命的擁有權交給耶穌。我們保持相同的日常職責。但從現在開始，我們所做的一切都是為了神的榮耀。請問你：你信主之後，你的生命有何改變？聖靈有否提醒你任何需要調整的地方？這可能是一些明顯和隱藏的罪。你需要向被你冒犯的人尋求饒恕嗎？或者，也許你需要在時間和金錢的使用上作出改變。它可能是你的生活優先次序和未來的計劃。它可能是你思考、說話和穿著的方式。聖靈不僅指出不符合神旨意的問題，祂也給我們力量和意志，使我們變得更像耶穌。悔改是兩個步驟的過程。我們需要轉離過去，同時也需要轉向神。結果是喜樂、滿足並遠離罪。最後，耶穌肯定了撒該的新生命，祂並且提醒人們祂到世上的使命。請讀第 9 和 10 節：9 耶穌說：「今天救恩到了這家，因為他也是亞伯拉罕的子孫。10 人子來，為要尋找，拯救失喪的人。」撒該是亞伯拉罕的後裔。藉著接受耶穌的救恩，撒該也因信成為亞伯拉罕的屬靈後裔。就像亞伯拉罕憑信心相信神的應許一樣，撒該和任何人都必須憑信心接受耶穌。

## CONCLUSION 解釋

神樂意把恩典賜給不配的人。「看」這個字是這段經文中不斷重複的關鍵詞。我們的判斷取決於我們如何看自己和他人。撒該出於好奇想要看耶穌。但耶穌看到了撒該的屬靈需要。當群眾看到耶穌接納一個臭名昭著的罪人時，他們很不高興。作為基督徒，我們需要從神的角度看人。每個人都需要神的恩典。我們還需要幫助人們以神的視野看自己。他們需要看到神聖潔的美善，並且尋求它。耶穌呼召我們繼續這項尋找與拯救的使命，將人們帶進祂的國度。