



**Educate
+ Engage**



APOSTOLIC
ID:



The Mission
is Mandatory

OVERVIEW

Jesus Christ is our example, and His mission is our mission.

Scripture Passage

Luke 19:10

"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

EDUCATE

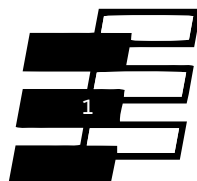
Iconic Jericho stood tall in the Old Testament as the walled city intimidating anyone who tried to breach its massive walls. God's people had to conquer Jericho as they continued their voyage toward their

Promised Land. Through the miraculous power of God, the towering walls fell, and the Israelites defeated the seemingly indomitable city without raising a spear or launching an arrow. Jericho became a symbol of victory on the way to a promise. The significance of Jericho is projected through Scripture, culminating in the New Testament.

In Luke 19 Jesus was passing through Jericho one last time on His way to Jerusalem when we discover the essence of His mission. In this encounter—a scenario seen many times in the Gospels—a meeting between the Savior and a sinner unfolded. Romans 3:23 teaches that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," but in the eyes of the Jewish religious community, a wealthy supervisor of tax collectors was a prime suspect for a sinner. He lived in the basement of public opinion next alongside prostitutes and thieves.

They had nothing virtuous or righteous to say about a Jewish chief tax collector who worked for the Romans to tax his own people. However, in Jericho we meet such a man named Zacchaeus. His name meant "righteous one," but it seemed to betray his unrighteous job. Yet Jesus saw that Zacchaeus could be redeemed and his life used for the glory of God even though everyone else only saw a sinner.

As the crowd accompanied Jesus, they may have thought his impromptu stop in Jericho was unnecessary. *Why was He stopping here?* They hoped Jesus would establish a new earthly kingdom and overthrow the oppressive Roman rule. Why wait, Jesus? Let's keep going. They likely



Lesson 1

viewed Zacchaeus as a distraction, but Jesus saw him as His mission. Jesus' kingdom is not of this world; Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

On His way to fulfill His mission to die on a rugged cross (fashioned from a tree) on Calvary, Jesus reached for a short, empty man with a tarnished reputation. Interestingly, this loathed man was perched in a sycamore tree. Jesus stopped the procession and called for Zacchaeus, making it known to everyone that Jesus wanted to spend time with the chief tax collector in the chief tax collector's house. Everyone gasped. A few shook their heads in disgust and disbelief. Jesus' gracious actions that day enlighten us in our day because His ultimate mission is still to seek and to save those who are lost.

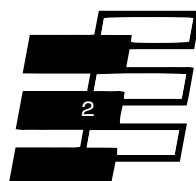
Discussion Question: Since His mission must become our mission, are you willing to accept this most noble calling?

One of the most comforting and inspiring verses in the Bible is Ephesians 1:4, which boldly declares that God has "chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Before the earth was spoken into existence and miraculously formed, God chose us. The mission of the Master was clear before creation: He wanted us. He loved us. He chose us.

God's mission is to seek and save those who are lost. He is not bound by limitations and seasons of life; He is reaching for the lost for eternity's sake. That should catalyze a renewed hope in every one of us as believers. If God's mission was centered around choosing us, we must allow His mission to become our mission. We must live to help others be right with God and ready for Heaven. We cannot save anyone, but we can seek them and introduce them to the one who can.

Discussion Question: How can embracing the truth of Ephesians 1:4 affect our daily interactions with the world around us?

Luke recorded a powerful parable in Luke 15 that seems to set up this story in Luke 19. Jesus' Parable of the Lost Sheep reveals the depth of care God has for anyone who is lost. Sheep are simpleminded animals that tend to go astray. We know from Genesis 31 that shepherds were responsible for each one of their sheep. If one sheep was lost, the shepherd paid the cost for it unless the sheep was killed by a predator. A true shepherd cared intently because each sheep had literal value, and no shepherd wanted to be viewed as a careless caretaker. The shepherd could not be comfortable with ninety-nine safe and sound sheep while one was still missing. He realized the value of every single sheep. We don't know if the shepherd was frustrated or terrified for the sheep, but we know he passionately looked everywhere until he found it.



When the shepherd finally found his lost sheep, he took the burden off the sheep to walk all the way home. He lifted it up, held it close, and carried it on his shoulders back into town, rejoicing the whole way! His joy was not just his own; he called together friends and family and called them to "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost" (Luke 15:6). Helping anyone spiritually lost to find Jesus Christ creates contagious joy.

The person helping lead a soul back to Jesus experiences true satisfaction.

That joy also resonates in Heaven, for Luke 15:7 declares "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." The angels understand the vast gulf between being saved for eternity and being lost for eternity, so they rejoice over even one sinner who turns to God in repentance. The mission of the Great Shepherd—to seek out the lost—must also become our mission.

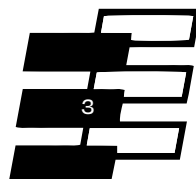
Discussion Question: Through the power of testimony, can you share the experience and feeling of helping lead a lost soul to the safety of salvation?

Closing

The current generation is passionate about purpose. No greater purpose exists than to fulfill Jesus' mission to reach people with the gospel. The biblical narrative for this lesson is found in Luke 19:1–10, the story of Zacchaeus. As we conclude, let's pick up his story again and end where we began. Zacchaeus simply wanted to get a glimpse of Jesus, but he had no idea that Jesus came looking for him as well. In fact, Jesus had been looking forward to this encounter with Zacchaeus from before the foundation of the world. On this day in Jericho, Jesus' mission was to seek a lost chief tax collector named Zacchaeus. And He found him.

Even though the crowd viewed Zacchaeus as much wealthier than they were, through the lens of eternity, Jesus saw a man who was spiritually bankrupt, lost, and in need of a Savior. So were we. Though we are poor and needy, the Lord is always thinking of us! Zacchaeus responded

to Jesus' call as "he made haste, came down, and received him [Jesus Christ] with joy" (Luke 19:6). A sinner's response to Jesus was joy unspeakable, while the Jews' response were murmurs and skeptic stares.



Lesson 1

How could Jesus spend His precious time with a corrupt tax collector the religious class has already rejected? Sadly, what happened in Jericho still happens today in many churches. Congregations are filled with transformed lives and powerful testimonies of deliverance from unrighteousness. Yet, many times we lack faith that God could reach again for the most disparaged and isolated members of society.

Jesus brushed off what everyone thought of Him and of His gracious host Zacchaeus. By the time Jesus left Zacchaeus, this one greedy, often despised tax collector promised Jesus, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8). Zacchaeus repented and promised to restore what he had stolen. Jesus smiled because He saw Zacchaeus's life start to bear the fruit of repentance. And Jesus answered, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:9-10).

The crowd called Zacchaeus a sinner; Jesus called him a son. That's all that mattered.

ENGAGE

If you are like Zacchaeus, searching for Jesus but not quite there, Jesus came to seek and save you. Your salvation is His mission. If you have already been saved, Jesus' mission must be your mission. We are called to seek the lost and introduce them to the one who alone can save them. Pray for God to use you to share your faith with someone Jesus wants to save. And be ready to be that witness for Jesus when He gives you the opportunity.

