



Give Up 10 **Week 1**

**On the road to Jericho,
Jesus meets Zacchaeus**

Curiosity, change and generosity

In this first Lent reflection, we find Jesus walking along the road which passes through Jericho. On his way, he meets a man named Zacchaeus. By exploring this story, we'll look at what happens when we step out in faith to make changes which create a more just and fair society.

Each reflection in our Give Up 10 Walking Humbly series features some of our lived experience partners, Christians who have used food banks in the Trussell community or faced hunger and hardship. In this reflection you'll hear from our lived experience partners Dee and Laura, as well as Abe: one of our Trussell team. Our partners were in conversation with Hannah-Fremont Brown, Justice Seeking Church Officer at the Methodist Church.

Quotes from our partners and staff represent their own views, experiences and theologies.

Opening Prayer

Generous God,

Thank you that you walk alongside us as we explore your word. As I 'Give Up 10' today, help me to be curious about what you are showing me. Challenge me through this story from Jesus' life, that I may walk humbly with you towards justice and love.

Amen.

Read: Luke 19: 1-10 (NIV)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. So, he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way. When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So, he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.” 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.” Jesus said to him, “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 the lost.”

Notice

When you read this story today, how did you feel?

Being curious

“

I do wish I was in the tree to have a good nose and see what was going on. To be curious. Curiosity is good.

”

Dee

Lived experience partner

This story begins with curiosity. Zacchaeus wants to see who Jesus is. When we bring curiosity to the Bible, we sometimes find new perspectives. Approaching with curiosity might also put our ideas and perspectives in the spotlight, which can be challenging.

Throughout Give Up 10, you will be hearing the reflections of Trussell's lived experience partners on each of the passages, as well as listening for what God is saying to you through the stories. Are you curious about what insights the lived experience partners have to bring?

Reflect

- Have you been taught that curiosity is a bad thing?
- Are there times in your life you wish you had been more curious?

Zacchaeus becomes an agent of change

“

Zacchaeus is so set on his word, and what he believes, that he's willing to be like, okay, well if I've done wrong, I will pay four times that. That's how strongly he believes.

”

Dee

The big, transformative moment in this story is when Jesus calls Zacchaeus to come down from the tree. In this moment, something significant happens to Zacchaeus. What has Zacchaeus heard or seen which makes him change his ways so dramatically?

Dee reflects:

“

I've used a food bank myself. I was so scared to go. You are waiting to go in, and you don't know what's going to happen. You're in a long queue and it's very scary. But we've had people who use the food bank, and then come back to volunteer. Or come back with things to donate, because they have been so grateful. They've put their faith in that situation. The fact that Zacchaeus says he will pay back four times as much... his faith was in that moment, so wholeheartedly, a bit like the people who come back to the food bank to say thank you. I'm smiling thinking about it, because it has such an impact. I imagine that's what Zacchaeus felt like.

”

This was probably a moment of deep humility for Zacchaeus.

Abe reflects:

“

It's not easy for people in high positions to actually put up their hands and say: I made a mistake, and I'm going to make it right. For him to be able to do something about the mistakes he has made, that shows humility.

”

Reflect

- What do you think Zacchaeus was thinking and feeling in this moment?
- Have you ever had a moment like this, where you've been motivated to change your behaviour or actions dramatically? What did it feel like? What changed afterwards?

The ripple effects

There is a big crowd gathered who hear Zacchaeus' declaration of change. The ripple effects of this moment must have been significant - not least because Zacchaeus says he is going to make a big donation to people who are struggling.

Dee says:

“

It would have created ripples, I imagine. I think the poverty line would have had a bit of a rumble that day! It doesn't matter which side you're on, whether you are the one that's been taken from, or you were the taker - both sides would have been rumbled.

”

As well as promising to give half of his possessions away, Zacchaeus also recognises that there are some people he has cheated in his work as a tax collector. Zacchaeus was someone who had power in his community because of his role. His actions would have had an influence on others.

We too can take actions that seek justice, like campaigning against an unfair system, or changing the way we make decisions in our church communities to include everyone. Actions like these can be signs of God's compassion and love for justice, and point towards the transformation on offer in God's kingdom. Who knows what the consequences might be?

“

That simple act...it's going to change generations!

”

Abe

Reflect

- Are Zacchaeus' actions political ones? What difference does this make to the story?
- When you take action for justice, what are you trying to show about God's character?

“Salvation has come to this house!”

“

I think I see that all the time in the food bank. People come in with really, really bad struggles, and the food bank rally around them, makes sure they're okay and say don't worry, you're safe, you are worth it. When Zacchaeus heard Jesus say, “Salvation has come to this house”, it was probably a similar feeling that people from the food bank felt, when they felt heard for the first time.

”

Dee

When Jesus noticed Zacchaeus, it changed his life. Laura reflects:

“

People didn't like Zacchaeus, and yet God wanted to spend time with him. I am amazed that God loves all people, including those we will try to avoid. He never leaves us. Sometimes we feel like we are not enough, like we fail God – but he's there. Why me? Why does God care about me? I wonder if that's what Zacchaeus thought. I know I do.

”

Have you ever felt like someone noticed you, or listened to you, when you felt ignored? Friendship can be a powerful thing. The biggest transformations can begin with the smallest act of friendship, just like in Zacchaeus' life.

Take action

Think about one person or family in your church community who might value your friendship. Pray for them this week, and ask God to help you to listen to them, and be present alongside them well.

Closing Prayer

Loving God,

You have known me and loved me since before I was born. Thank you that even when I feel lost in the crowd, you see me and welcome me in. Help me to see how my actions could have a ripple effect, showing other people your compassion, justice and love. I take a moment now to think of the person or family you have placed on my heart today. Help me to show them your love by reaching out in friendship. God, fill us with your love which transforms.

Amen.

Support

Food banks in the Trussell community aim to provide everyone who comes through the door with a cup of tea and a friendly conversation. If you don't already, could you give time or money to support your local food bank to offer hospitality to people in your community facing hunger and hardship? Thank you if you are already involved with, or donate to a food bank. Your compassion and support makes such a difference to people in your community.

Find and consider how you can support your [local food bank here](#).

Unit 9, Ashfield Trading Estate, Ashfield Road, Salisbury SP2 7HL

churches@trussell.org.uk **trussell.org.uk/churches**

Trussell is the operating name of The Trussell Trust a registered charity in England & Wales (1110522) and Scotland (SC044246). Registered Limited Company in England & Wales (5434524).