



## A change of Heart

Obviously the most important thing about Zacchaeus was that he was vertically challenged!! This must be so, as hearing the story many times in my childhood the two key things I remember are that he was short and he climbed a sycamore tree. This was so that he could see Jesus walk by, but there were crowds of people, who it seems, wanted to do the same thing.

Zacchaeus was a tax collector, a Jew working for the Roman Government, the ruling power of Israel. Worse, he was a chief tax-collector, not only lining his own pockets with money he cheated off his fellow Jews, but making even more than all the tax collectors working under him. He was hated by those in Jericho. So these fellow Jews were unsurprisingly very put out that Jesus spotted Zacchaeus and asked him if he could go to his house.

I think Jesus knew what life was really like for him despite his ill-gotten wealth. Zacchaeus may have lived in luxury but he was probably lonely and trapped in a lifestyle he didn't know how to get out of. Something about Jesus, maybe something he said or his loving acceptance of this short chap made Zacchaeus have a radical change of heart. He starts giving everything back and more than he took in the first place! I wonder if he was then short of money! He was returning such a lot because of this change of heart. He must have thought it was worth it because now he was restored back into the life of his community and had a right relationship with God.

Changes of heart can be so hard especially if we have thought and behaved a certain way for a long time. For Zacchaeus it was a dramatic and fast transformation. But because Jesus is full of loving compassion he will meet us where we are and walk with us as we endeavor to change an area of our life which causes our heart to be hard and unyielding. I am working on a change of heart! Because I expect so much of myself (and failure is not an option!) I know that I expect too much from other people and my expectations of both myself and others are unkind and unrealistic. I have to change, so I am trying to, taking it step by step and asking God to help me so that I can appreciate and love myself more, but also, all those who I live and work alongside. *Liz*

## **Suggested Donations**

**Family of 2: £5**

**Family of 3 or more £7**

You will have noticed we have a notice suggesting an amount you may like to contribute each month to Messy Church. We love to have you, but craft materials and food do cost and we would appreciate your help so that we can continue Messy Church. You are of course welcome to contribute more and this month you will receive a letter from Des about giving to St Mark's, giving is part of growing a bigger heart, like Zacchaeus. However, we will never turn anyone away who cannot afford to give the suggested amount.

Thank you