**The Encounter**

**Zacchaeus**

**Watching Jesus** -maybe admiring or just curious about Jesus;

**Following Jesus** – shown in a behaviour change;

**Trusting in Jesus** – shown in a further behaviour change;

**Bringing others to Jesus** – or some other kingdom impact.

The story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10) is a great place to begin exploring the way in which ordinary people related to Jesus.

**Read the passage a few times to get a sense of the story. Look at it in context too.**

Note how Zacchaeus goes from watching Jesus, to following Jesus, to trusting in Jesus, to behaviour changes which had a positive impact on others.

**Watching Jesus**

*Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. 2A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. 3He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. 4So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.*

What do we know about Zacchaeus?

* (chief) tax collector – wealthy, despised
* short – had to climb a tree
* wanted to see Jesus

**Why? Was he curious about crowd? Had he heard about Jesus?**

**What people have you heard about by reputation? Maybe on TV? Good or bad?**

Jesus’ reputation went before him. Maybe Zac’s reputation went before him too. So Zac certainly observed Jesus. Did he admire him? Was he just curious about him?

Did he feel threatened by him?

The gospels are full of stories of people on the edge of the crowd, drawn to Jesus in some way, and wanting to find out more.

**Following Jesus**

***5*** *When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”****6****So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.* ***7****All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a ‘sinner.’”*

Jesus spoke to Zac; he addressed him personally, ‘I must stay at your house today’. And Zac responded to him. Zac ‘came down at once and welcomed him gladly’. So Zac had gone from *watching* Jesus from a distance to *following* him; he had gone from the edge of Jesus’ crowd to the centre.

**Trusting in Jesus**

*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.”****9****Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham.*

What happened next? What did they speak about? Did Jesus ‘put Zac right?’

Or did he show love and acceptance to him? (‘We love because he first loved us’ 1 John 4:19). Zac put his money where his mouth now was – and where his feet had taken him!

**He put his trust in Jesus. What did this look like in practice?**

He gave half his possessions to the poor; and paid *four times* what he owed. So Zac went from *watching* to *following*, and now, by these further actions, to putting his trust in Jesus. And Jesus was able to say ‘salvation has come to this house today’.

**Bringing others to Jesus**

‘For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost’.

**There is a fourth thing I want to draw from this story. Zac’s life was changed by Jesus. And that change resulted in other people’s lives getting better too. How?**

Inequality and poverty were addressed. A rich man was inspired to give to the poor. Injustice was addressed. Those who had been cheated were compensated. Not only was Zac changed for the better; but those around him were changed. By his good actions, others were drawn to Jesus.

**So …**

**Where are you today? Do you know Jesus only be reputation? Are you watching Jesus from the edge of the crowd? Do you follow Jesus? Have you trusted your life to Jesus? Has this had a transforming impact on your life? And is this having a transforming impact on those around you?**

**The Encounter**

**Luke 19:1-10 New International Version - UK (NIVUK)**

**Zacchaeus the tax collector**

**19**Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. **2**A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. **3**He wanted to see who Jesus was, but because he was short he could not see over the crowd. **4**So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

**5**When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, ‘Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.’ **6**So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

**7**All the people saw this and began to mutter, ‘He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.’

**8**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.’

**9**Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. **10**For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.’

**… so others are impacted by Zac’s encounter with Jesus too.**

**Further reading:**

**1 John 4:7-21**