

Read: Luke 19:1-10

How Do You Say “Thank You”?

Luke 19:8-10

Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I am going to give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone out of anything, I will pay back four times as much.” Jesus said to him, “Today, salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“So, what do you say?” Millie had just received a piece of candy from the friendly man behind the counter. She was so surprised to receive the sweet treat that she forgot to thank the kind man at the store. Once she heard Mom’s reminder, she blurted out, “Thank you!”

Do you ever forget to say thank you? We all have. Sometimes we don’t pay attention. Sometimes we simply forget, but every day God gives us lots of reasons to say thank you. Thank you for smiling at me. Thank you for preparing a tasty meal. Thank you for helping me with my homework. Thank you for keeping me safe. Thank you for teaching me about math, when I struggle with it. Thank you for telling me about Jesus. Thank you for giving me a hug.

So how do you say, “Thank you”? Sometimes, just saying “Thank you” is enough. But other times, we say thank you with our actions. Maybe you write a thank you note. Maybe you give a gift. Maybe you help the person who helped you. Maybe you pay it forward. That means you show kindness because someone showed you kindness. In fact, Christians have paid it forward for centuries. Why? We’ve been shown the greatest kindness of all!

God’s Word today tells us about a man named Zacchaeus. He was known for being cruel rather than kind. He was a dishonest tax collector and made people’s lives miserable. Nobody liked him. Everyone avoided him, except... Jesus. As Jesus was traveling through his city, Zacchaeus had trouble seeing over the crowd, so he climbed a tree. There Jesus found him. Imagine that! Jesus—God himself and the Savior of all on his way to the cross for our sins—looked up and found Zacchaeus. Jesus cared deeply for that lost, sinful man. Zacchaeus wanted to say thank you for God’s undeserved love with actions. So he paid back everyone he cheated and gave more to help the poor.

Jesus loves you just as much as he loved Zacchaeus. He knows what’s going on in your life. Yes, he knows when you are cruel and dishonest, but he cares deeply about you. He came to save you. He sacrificed himself for you, so you could be his holy child forever. So how will you say thank you? With words? With action? How about with an entire life devoted to giving thanks to God for his gracious love to you? May God grant it!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name three things you can thank Jesus for today.
- What caused Zacchaeus to thank Jesus?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Recall the last time you said thank you to someone. What made it easy or hard to do?
- Name two or three ways you can “pay forward” to others the love Jesus showed to you.

Questions for Middle School and Above

- It’s easy to forget to say thank you to people and God. What Bible passage can help you remember to say thank you for all God’s gifts? (e.g.: Psalm 136:1)
- Jesus said, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.” How does knowing that fact about Jesus help you take action and share his love with others?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, you are the Savior of sinners. Thank you for saving me too. Let my entire life be filled with thanksgiving for your amazing grace. Amen.