

# COMMANDS OF CHRIST

## 1. REPENT



Jesus said, “If you love me you will obey what I command.” Maybe we don’t think of Jesus giving commands, but as you read through the gospels you will discover that there are some important things that He tells us to do. In this series of studies we are going to discover what some of these commands are.

The first is in Mark 1:15. “Repent and believe the good news!” God wants to change our lives, but it begins with us being willing to turn away from our sin and putting our trust in Jesus Christ. We are going to look at the story of a man called Zacchaeus whose life was changed when he did just this.

### Scripture Reading: Luke 19:1-10

#### **Some suggestions:**

- i. You could read the story one time and then ask each one in the group to read it themselves.
- ii. Act out the story, with someone to take the part of Jesus, another Zacchaeus, his wife, the disciples and the crowd.

#### **What was Zacchaeus like before he met Jesus? See v2, 7**

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. His work was to collect tax from the people for the government. We are told that he was very rich and this was because he cheated the people. He would ask people for more tax than they owed, so that he could put the extra in his pocket. In v7 it says that he was a sinner. Although we may not do what Zacchaeus was doing, the Bible tells us that all of us are sinners.

#### **How did Jesus greet Zacchaeus? See v5**

Jesus greeted Zacchaeus by name! He called to him in the tree, “Hurry down Zacchaeus.” Jesus also knows each one of us by name. We are special to Him and He has a wonderful plan for our lives. Then Jesus said that He wanted to go to Zacchaeus’ home, even though He knew what kind of man he was. Jesus accepted Zacchaeus as he was, and even more than that, He loved him. Did you know that Jesus also loves and accepts you, and wants to come into your ‘home’ and live with you. He died so that you can be forgiven and you can come back to God.

#### **How did Zacchaeus respond to Jesus? See v6, 8**

Zacchaeus hurried down from the tree and welcomed Jesus into his home with great joy. Then he said that he would end his dishonest way of living and give back four times as much to those he had cheated. He turned away from his sinful ways. This is what the Bible calls ‘repentance’. It means that if you have been cheating, you will stop cheating. If you have been using bad language, you stop using bad language. Sin separates us from God, and it is only when we ask God’s forgiveness and turn away from our sin, that we can come back to God. God loves you and sent Jesus to die on the cross for your sin, so that you can be forgiven and can have the power to live a life that pleases God.

#### **When Jesus saw Zacchaeus’ repentance what did He say? See v9**

Jesus was glad when Zacchaeus turned away from his old sinful life. He said, “Salvation has come to your house today.” When we turn away from our old life and turn back to God, He is pleased to welcome us and give us the gift of eternal life. Read Romans 6:23, 1 John 1:9.

*(Suggestion: If there is anyone in the group who has never accepted Christ as their Lord and Saviour, give them an opportunity to do so. There may be Christians in the group who need to ask God’s forgiveness for something they have done. Encourage them to do that now.)*