“I’m Thankful that God is Greater than Sinful Actions”  
_Luke 19:1-10_

**Jesus overcomes sinful actions by seeking out sinners who seek Him (1-5)**

God had been at work in Zacchaeus’ life. Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus, probably hearing about his miracles and about the authority of his teaching, so when Zacchaeus found out that Jesus was coming through his town, he went out to see Jesus. However, there was a problem that Zacchaeus encountered. The crowds were huge, and he was small. He wasn’t able to see over the crowds of people in order to get a glimpse of Jesus, so Zacchaeus did something unusual — even extraordinary — for a rich man like himself to do: Zacchaeus climbed a tree! The power of Zacchaeus’ desire to seek out Jesus led him do whatever it took to see Jesus that day, and this was no coincidence, because Jesus was also there to seek out Zacchaeus that day! God still plants the seeds of desire in seeking out Jesus into the lives of those who need Jesus, and today, Jesus still seeks out sinners who respond to the desire to seek out Him in their lives.

1. Do you think that it was an accident that Zacchaeus had heard about Jesus and had a desire to see Him? Based on this passage, why or why not?
2. What did it take for Zacchaeus to climb that tree that day to see Jesus? What do Zacchaeus’ actions show us about seeking Jesus today?
3. Is there anyone you know who is seeking out Jesus in their lives today? How can you best pray for them, and how can you be a part of helping them find who they are looking for?

**Jesus overcomes sinful actions by calling sinners to come to Him (5)**

What an amazing moment that day in Zacchaeus’ life! He just wanted to catch a glimpse of Jesus, but Jesus stopped and look at Him. Zacchaeus just wanted to put a face with the name of Jesus, but Jesus already knew Zacchaeus by name. Zacchaeus was willing to climb up in a tree to see Jesus, but now Jesus called Zacchaeus to climb down and to come to Him. In fact, Jesus told Zacchaeus that His plans for the day were to stay with Zacchaeus! What an amazing, unexpected, and undeserved moment in Zacchaeus’ life. The miracle worker Jesus, who everyone had been talking about, was calling the small, rich man to come to Him in order to spend time with Him that day. What a beautiful picture of the heart of Jesus in calling sinners to come to Him!

1. Jesus knew Zacchaeus’ name, and Jesus sounded like he already had plans to stay with Zacchaeus that day. What does that tell you about God’s concern for sinners in this world? What does that say about the purpose of Jesus in the world today?
2. When did Jesus call you to come to Him? Was it in a public setting like it was with Zacchaeus? Share your testimony of hearing Jesus invite you to come to Him for the first time. How did you respond?
3. What are the ways that Jesus still calls sinners to come to Him today? How do we do this work of inviting people as a church? How are you called to do the work of extending the invitation to come to Jesus to sinners who need Jesus?

**Jesus overcomes sinful actions by offering relationship to sinners who will receive Him (6-7)**

Zacchaeus’ response was the only right response to an invitation to come to Jesus. God’s Word said that Zacchaeus immediately came down the tree to Jesus and that he received Jesus joyfully. In other words, Zacchaeus accepted the invitation from Jesus. Zacchaeus came to Jesus that day in Jericho, and Zacchaeus received Jesus as his guest and brought Jesus into his home. The whole situation was scandalous to the
people who witnessed what had happened between Jesus and Zacchaeus that day. A tax-collector was a chief among sinners in the eyes of the Jewish people. Tax collectors were bad enough because they worked for the Roman Empire, but tax collectors were even worse because they became rich by taking more than just the required taxes from the people. The crowd couldn’t understand why Jesus would want to spend time with a tax collector like Zacchaeus, but Jesus knew exactly why: Because He had come to offer relationship to sinners who would receive Him.

1. Examine Zacchaeus’ response to Jesus’ invitation? What are some things that you see about Zacchaeus’ actions and attitude? What does this tell you about the proper response to the invitation to respond to Jesus today?
2. Examine the reaction of the crowd to the invitation of Jesus for Zacchaeus. If you have been there that day, what would you have felt about Jesus’ invitation to Zacchaeus? Was their reaction right or wrong? Why?
3. How is the work of the Gospel still scandalous to some today?

Jesus overcomes sinful actions by transforming the hearts of those who believe in Him (8)

What God’s Word revealed in Luke 19:8 is nothing short of a miracle. Zacchaeus had received Jesus into his home. There’s no record of what was discussed and of what Jesus might have said to Zacchaeus, but suddenly, Zacchaeus said and did something that was incredible. Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector, stood up and seemingly made an unbelievable pronouncement that was apparently unprovoked: Claiming that he would give away half of his goods to the poor and that he would restore fourfold anything that he had taken by fraud. What happened? What would have made Zacchaeus decide to do something that was completely against his character and that would completely destroy his fortune? The answer is simple and powerful: Jesus happened in Zacchaeus’ life! The simple act of joyfully receiving Jesus and entering into a relationship with Jesus had changed everything in Zacchaeus’ life. Jesus had changed the heart of Zacchaeus, and today, Jesus still has the power to transform the hearts of those who believe in Him!

1. Read Luke 18:18-23. What are the key differences between the responses of the rich, “righteous” ruler in chapter 18 and the rich tax collector in chapter 19? Which of the two were the “worst” sinner? Which of the two needed eternal life through Jesus?
2. Have you ever experienced the power of Jesus in transforming something in your heart? Share testimonies of how receiving Jesus into your life began to transform things in your life.
3. Do you know anyone who needs the transforming power of Jesus in their life today? Pray for them now.

Jesus overcomes sinful actions by saving sinners who are lost without Him (9-10)

In response to the amazing proclamation of Zacchaeus, Jesus makes an amazing proclamation Himself, which is that salvation has come to the house of Zacchaeus! Zacchaeus wasn’t saved by his decision to give away his goods to the poor and to restore what he had stolen; rather, Zacchaeus was saved because he had received Jesus. Zacchaeus had decided to let Jesus into his life and to welcome Jesus into his home. Zacchaeus had decided to enter into a relationship with Jesus, and his relationship with Jesus had immediately and amazingly started to transform Zacchaeus’ heart and mind. Zacchaeus’ actions in doing what was right in his life was only the evidence of his salvation through his decision to respond to and to receive Jesus. Jesus went on to state that his purpose was to seek and to save the lost. That is wonderfully good news for the world today! Jesus was great enough to overcome Zacchaeus’ sinful actions in his life, and today, Jesus still overcomes sinful actions by saving sinners who are lost without Him.

1. Read Luke 18:24-27. Discuss what Jesus said in these verses. What do you think about Jesus’ statement? Is this true, and if so, why?
3. Do you truly believe that Jesus has the powerful to overcome sinful actions in the lives of sinners? If so, how should that belief impact what you say and do around people who need Jesus? If so, how should that belief impact your effort to overcome sinful actions in your life?