

Team Talk

After hearing from Scotty the Scout and listening to the story from Jesus' life, here are some questions to help us consider how this can affect us. We've also included our own thoughts to help you with your own reflections, or to help the group discussion along.

Day 1 – Zacchaeus

- 1) What was stopping Zacchaeus being Jesus' friend?
- 2) In what ways did Jesus treat Zacchaeus differently to everyone else?
- 3) How did this affect Zacchaeus' life?
- 4) Did you know that Jesus wants to know you, even if you're not perfect? How does that make you feel?

Imagine Lionel Messi was visiting your town. The streets would be packed, the crowds straining to get close to the one they'd all heard so much about. Who do you think Messi would pick out to visit? The best footballer? The most popular community leader? Maybe a rich local businessman. What would your reaction be if he ignored all these and instead visited the local prison to spend time with a criminal, or maybe went to the homeless shelter to talk to the people that everyone else ignores?

Zacchaeus was a loathed by everyone – he was a cheat who betrayed his own people. Surely God's Son would go to a respectable person's house, someone who was well regarded as honest and generous with their money. Surely not *his* house? But Jesus picked out Zacchaeus. As He said another time, "it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2.17).



None of us are too bad or too unpopular for Jesus to accept and welcome us. It's exactly why He came, to bring the whole world back to friendship with God. When we do come back to Him, it changes everything, just like it did for Zacchaeus.

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away and the new has come. (2 Corinthians 5.17)***

Day 2 – Martha

- 1) Why was Martha upset?
- 2) Does Jesus' response surprise you? What might you expect Him to say?
- 3) Being a friend of God is not about working hard and keeping all the rules – what did Martha learn was much more important?
- 4) How does this make you feel?

People seem to get the idea that being a Christian is all about working hard and keeping all the rules. Don't do this, don't do that. Remember to do this, never do that. Work hard and you might please God enough to let you into heaven. But in fact the Bible says this couldn't be further from the truth! As Jesus showed in His reaction to Martha, it's by simply coming to Him that we discover God's new life for us.

In fact, none of us can reach God by our own hard work. Christianity is not a big scoreboard of good and bad deeds. Christianity is about you admitting that you are totally unable to be all God designed you to be. It is about you turning to Jesus and asking him to make his home in your heart, to transform you with His love, from the inside out.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. (Ephesians 2.8-9)

Day 3 – Thomas

- 1) Did Jesus tell Thomas off for not believing?
- 2) What did He invite him to do instead?
- 3) Thomas needed to meet Jesus himself before believing in Him. He wouldn't rely on other people's experiences. What experiences have given you faith in Jesus?
- 4) Jesus welcomes our doubt and our questions. What questions do you have for Him?

The world around is full of questions. Science drives forward technological progress by asking 'what if?' and 'how?', while philosophers have long wrestled with the question 'why?'. Our faith in God doesn't have to be any different. The Bible is full of people asking God questions, and they are a great way of getting to grips with who God really is. Like Thomas, only your own experience of God - not just believing what others tell you but exploring it for yourself - will give you the right foundation to build your life on.



How can we experience God? Prayer, spending time learning from the Bible and talking to other Christians are all great ways. But only if by doing these things we are doing the most important thing we can ever do - coming to Jesus just as we are, with all our faults, struggles and questions.

Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest (Matthew 11.28)