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~ **The Blind Men of Jericho** ~

You can learn much more about this story by doing these three things:

1. Read Luke 18:35-19:10.
2. Discover key cultural and historical insights.
3. Answer the reflective questions.

**1. Read the text of the story.**

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Luke 18:35-19:10 NASB	Luke 18:35-19:10 NLT
<p><sup>35</sup> As Jesus was approaching Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the road begging. <sup>36</sup> Now hearing a crowd going by, he <i>began</i> to inquire what this was. <sup>37</sup> They told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. <sup>38</sup> And he called out, saying, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>39</sup> Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” <sup>40</sup> And Jesus stopped and commanded that he be brought to Him; and when he came near, He questioned him, <sup>41</sup> “What do you want Me to do for you?” And he said, “Lord, <i>I want</i> to regain my sight!” <sup>42</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.” <sup>43</sup> Immediately he regained his sight and <i>began</i> following Him, glorifying God; and when all the people saw it, they gave praise to God.</p> <p>19 He entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup> And there was a man called by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. <sup>3</sup> Zacchaeus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. <sup>4</sup> So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. <sup>5</sup> When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.” <sup>6</sup> And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. <sup>7</sup> When they saw it, they all <i>began</i> to grumble, saying, “He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” <sup>8</sup> Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.” <sup>9</sup> And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a</p>	<p><sup>35</sup> As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind beggar was sitting beside the road. <sup>36</sup> When he heard the noise of a crowd going past, he asked what was happening. <sup>37</sup> They told him that Jesus the Nazarene was going by. <sup>38</sup> So he began shouting, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”</p> <p><sup>39</sup> “Be quiet!” the people in front yelled at him.</p> <p>But he only shouted louder, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”</p> <p><sup>40</sup> When Jesus heard him, he stopped and ordered that the man be brought to him. As the man came near, Jesus asked him, <sup>41</sup> “What do you want me to do for you?”</p> <p>“Lord,” he said, “I want to see!”</p> <p><sup>42</sup> And Jesus said, “All right, receive your sight! Your faith has healed you.” <sup>43</sup> Instantly the man could see, and he followed Jesus, praising God. And all who saw it praised God, too.</p> <p>19 Jesus entered Jericho and made his way through the town. <sup>2</sup> There was a man there named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in the region, and he had become very rich. <sup>3</sup> He tried to get a look at Jesus, but he was too short to see over the crowd. <sup>4</sup> So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree beside the road, for Jesus was going to pass that way.</p> <p><sup>5</sup> When Jesus came by, he looked up at Zacchaeus and called him by name. “Zacchaeus!” he said. “Quick, come</p>

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<p>son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”</p>	<p>down! I must be a guest in your home today.”</p> <p><sup>6</sup> Zacchaeus quickly climbed down and took Jesus to his house in great excitement and joy. <sup>7</sup> But the people were displeased. “He has gone to be the guest of a notorious sinner,” they grumbled.</p> <p><sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, “I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!”</p> <p><sup>9</sup> Jesus responded, “Salvation has come to this home today, for this man has shown himself to be a true son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup> For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.”</p>
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## 2. Discover key cultural and historical insights

*Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* – Kenneth Bailey

1. In the ME, a crowd from a village or city will go out to a dignitary or famous person and escort that person back to their village. There will probably be a banquet in the home of a person of comparable stature.
2. In the ME, beggars play an important role – they provide an opportunity for the pious to give to the poor. Sometimes they will say, “Give to God,” which means “I am offering you an opportunity to serve God by giving to me. If you do this in public you will show others that you are a pious person.”
3. Sometimes when a beggar receives money he will stand and praise the one who has given him money and invoke the blessing of God upon him.
4. Tax-collectors and their families were considered unclean. Lying to a tax-collector was condoned. Because Zacchaeus was a tax collector, he was probably hated and would not want to mix with the crowd because of danger.
5. Sycamore trees have low branches and large leaves. They were cultivated for their use as beams in houses. Later they would not be allowed to be grown inside a city except on a person’s personal property.
6. The Greek in Luke 19:7 says that Jesus went to find lodging at the house. Zacchaeus’ house would be considered unclean and Jesus would be considered defiling himself by entering his house.
7. Zacchaeus’ offer to give half his possessions is an exaggeration but is intended to show the sincerity of his repentance.

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*Encounters with Jesus* by Gary Burge

1. Jericho's abundant water irrigated over 2500 surrounding acres. This water along with 12 months of sun provides rich harvests of balsams and palm and it is known as the city of palms.
2. Here Herod the Great would live in the winter months to escape the cold, wet winters of Jerusalem.
3. Because of its strategic location, fortresses were built close to Jericho. Its road went up to Jerusalem, 17 miles away, and it was a climb in elevation of 3600 feet.
4. Jericho was also on the major route where goods from the east would travel into Judea. Thus it became a tax station.
5. Expansive villas were built there with pools, baths, tiled courtyards lined with columns, plastered frescoes, and countless palm trees.
6. A race track has been found there for horses and chariot races, the great hippodrome. Attached to the race track was a theater.
7. A synagogue with ritual baths has been found there.
8. The elders would have gathered with the crowd. They will come to meet Jesus and escort him to an appropriate home where his feet will be washed and he will be provided food and beverage, conversation and rest. They are honoring him and they will bring honor to the entire community.
9. The Jews collected the temple tax from every man, a half shekel to be paid into the temple treasury and usually collected at Passover. In addition, land taxes, 10%, were collected from each family to pay for the running of the country, of Jerusalem and the temple, and to pay Levites.
10. But in addition, the Romans levied taxes. Herod Antipas was required to pay Rome 1.2 billion denarii every year. To collect these taxes, they divided the land into tax districts and set up collection points – Capernaum, Jerusalem, Gaza, Ashkelon, Joppa, Sepphoris, Gabara, Magdal, and Caesarea. Jericho also was a tax center.
11. Rome sold the right to collect taxes to the highest bidder. The highest bidder would charge extra for his personal profit which opened the door to fraud and abuse.
12. The Jews called tax collectors "thieves".
13. Zacchaeus is a form of zakkai which comes from the Hebrew word, righteous.

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**Answer these reflective questions.**

**In the story of Blind Bartimaeus, the people were sternly telling Bartimaeus to be quiet. Why were they trying to silence him?**

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**It was obvious Bartimaeus wanted to receive his sight. Why do you think Jesus asked him, “What do you want me to do for you”?**

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**Jesus told Bartimaeus that his faith had made him well? How did Bartimaeus show his faith? How do you show your faith?**

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**Zacchaeus humbled himself by running in public and by climbing a tree. This humility caught Jesus attention. In what ways have you shown humility with the Lord?**

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**What did Jesus mean when he said that Zacchaeus, too, was a son of Abraham? In what ways did he show it?**

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**What did Jesus mean when he said that that he had come to seek and to save that which was lost?**

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