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## LINK TO JESUS

I once heard a cute story of a little boy who climbed a tree. His brother, who was still on the ground, looked up, rebuked his brother, and said, "Hey, Zacchaeus, you come down!"

We are going to learn from a story in the Bible about a man named Zacchaeus. Like me (smile), he was a short man. And, he was stuck behind a crowd. He wanted to see Jesus. So, what did he do? He ran ahead and climbed a tree! And, what happened next changed his life!

Would you like to know what happened? Well, let's take a look in *The Bible: American Sign Language Translation*. We're going to look at Luke 19:1-10. (View ASL translation video clips.)

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost."

Amazing story...Zacchaeus' life changed! How? Through Jesus. Jesus changed Zacchaeus' life.

When we reach out to others who are not Christians, we should follow the example of Jesus in this Bible story. What did Jesus do? What did Jesus demonstrate? Let's look at three things Jesus shared in this Bible story:

## **1. His love.**

Jesus shared HIS love. All the people in our Bible story knew that Zacchaeus was a sinner. They muttered, "He (Jesus) has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'" Jesus knew Zacchaeus was a sinner, too. Even though Zacchaeus was a sinner, Jesus still loved him. Even though Zacchaeus was a sinner, Jesus went into his house. Even though Zacchaeus was a sinner, Jesus did not reject him. Jesus accepted him.

Jesus wants to link with us. Even though we are sinners, Jesus still loves everyone. Romans 6:23 says, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." When we reach out to others, we need to demonstrate His love. We need to love other people just like Jesus loves them. Jesus shared His love with us. Now, it's our turn to share His love with others.

So, the first thing Jesus demonstrated and shared was His love.

## **2. His influence.**

Jesus shared HIS influence. While Jesus was at his house, Zacchaeus stood up and said to Jesus, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

How did that change happen? Through Jesus' influence. Jesus influenced Zacchaeus' life. Jesus went into Zacchaeus' house and spent time with him. Through spending time with Zacchaeus, Jesus was able to influence his heart, mind, and attitude. Through Jesus' influence, Zacchaeus made a decision to repent.

What does repent mean? I would like to look at the original language the New Testament of the Bible was written in – Greek. The Greek word for repent is metanoia. That word – metanoia – means "to change the mind." Repent means "change of the mind." Zacchaeus repented – Zacchaeus' mind was changed, which led to a change of action. That happened through Jesus influence.

You see...Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Many people did not like tax collectors during Jesus' time on earth. Why? Because tax collectors often cheated. For example, if a person really owed \$10.00, tax collectors would cheat by charging a person \$40.00. That's why many people did not like tax collectors.

Apparently, Zacchaeus was a tax collector who had cheated many people. Jesus influenced Zacchaeus. Jesus changed Zacchaeus on the inside. Jesus changed Zacchaeus' mind, heart and attitude, which led to a change in his actions. Zacchaeus decided to give half of his possessions to the poor. And he would pay back four times to anyone he had cheated. Amazing change, huh?

When we reach out to others, we need to spend time with them. As we spend time in

fellowship with others, we may share God's Word (the Bible) with them. Let Jesus' words in the Bible influence (change) their mind, heart, and attitudes. Allow Jesus' words and His stories in the Bible to work inside their minds and hearts and convict them to change their actions.

First of all, Jesus shared His love and second, shared His influence.

### **3. His plan**

Jesus shared HIS plan. In the last part of our Bible story, Jesus shared His plan. Jesus' plan was announced when He said to Zacchaeus, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and save what was lost."

Jesus' plan was to "seek and save what was lost." The apostle Paul repeated Jesus' plan in I Timothy 1:15, "...Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners..."

Yes, Jesus came into this world to save sinners. Though He was human, He was perfect. Jesus had no sin. Even though He had no sin, Jesus was crucified on a cross. He died for our sins. Then, on the third day after Jesus died, He rose from the dead. Jesus conquered death, sin, and hell so that He could save us. This is Jesus' plan for saving us.

Others need to know about Jesus' plan for salvation (life eternal with God in heaven). Many people out there are not Christians and they do not know God's plan for salvation. We need to share His plan with others so they may "link to Jesus."

In the Bible story of Zacchaeus meeting Jesus, we learned that Jesus shared with others:

- 1. His love**
- 2. His influence**
- 3. His plan**

Jesus shared all of this with Zacchaeus. Let's follow His example as we reach out to others so they may "link to Jesus."

Let's pray.



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This printed manuscript is the English translation of a sermon presented in American Sign Language.

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