

How the Grinch Found Grace

By: David Burruss

We all know the story. The Grinch sat up on his mountain, bitter and alone, determined to steal Christmas from the joyful Whos in Whoville. He was angry, cynical, and cold-hearted. But by the end of the story, something incredible happens. His heart, once "two sizes too small," begins to grow. He returns the gifts, joins the feast, and becomes part of the very joy he once tried to destroy.

Now, it's a fictional tale, but there's a reason that story keeps being told. It touches something deep in us. Because whether we want to admit it or not, we've all got a little Grinch in us. We've all known bitterness. We've all let our hearts shrink in the shadow of pain, pride, or selfishness.

But here's the good news. No one is too far gone. Not the Grinch. Not Zacchaeus. Not you or me.

One of the most powerful real-life stories of heart change in the Bible is found in Luke 19. His name was Zacchaeus, and in many ways, he was the Grinch of Jericho.

Zacchaeus wasn't just a tax collector. He was the chief tax collector. That meant he was deeply hated, not only because he worked for the occupying Roman government, but because he made himself rich by taking advantage of his own people.

He had wealth. But no peace.

He had a big house. But no one to share it with.

He had power. But not the kind that changes lives.

He was spiritually isolated, watching others live with joy but unable to join in. Just like the Grinch peeking down at Whoville, Zacchaeus was on the outside looking in.

But then came Jesus.

Luke 19:5 tells us something amazing. "And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and saw him, and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must stay at your house.'"

He looked up.

Jesus didn't just walk past Zacchaeus. He didn't ignore him like the rest of the crowd had done. He stopped. He saw him. And He *called him by name*.

There's something so deeply personal and beautiful in that moment. Zacchaeus didn't shout to get Jesus's attention. He simply climbed a tree. And Jesus met him there with grace, not judgment.

And Zacchaeus, this man who had made so many mistakes, received Jesus joyfully. He came down from his tree and welcomed Christ into his home.

That's what grace does. It meets you right where you are. And it invites you into something new.

But the story doesn't stop at a warm welcome.

Zacchaeus doesn't just feel different. He *acts* different. He tells Jesus, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

That's real repentance.

He doesn't make excuses. He doesn't offer empty words. He takes action to make things right. Not to earn salvation, but because salvation had already begun to change him from the inside out.

Jesus responds with powerful words. "Today salvation has come to this house... For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:9–10).

Zacchaeus was lost, but not forgotten.
He was guilty, but not beyond grace.
He was hated by men, but loved by God.

And the same is true for you.

Maybe this season, you're feeling a bit like the Grinch. Angry, tired, or numb. Maybe you feel more like Zacchaeus. Stuck in your mistakes, watching life from a distance. Or maybe you've just forgotten what it feels like to be seen and called by name.

Friend, Jesus still looks up. He still sees. And He's still calling.

The question is, will you come down?

Will you step out of isolation, pride, or pain and let Him into your life? Will you let His grace lead you into repentance, restoration, and renewal?

Acts 2:38 tells us, *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* That’s how new life begins.

Romans 6:4 reminds us that in baptism, we’re buried with Christ and raised to walk in a new life. It’s not just a ritual. It’s a resurrection.

And if you’ve already been baptized but your heart has grown cold again... If you’ve drifted from the joy of Christ, know this: there’s still time to come back. Zacchaeus didn’t wait. The Grinch didn’t hesitate. Neither should you.

If you’re looking for a place to grow, to heal, to worship, and to walk with others who are following Jesus, we would love to welcome you at **North Main church of Christ**.

We’re not perfect people. We’re just forgiven people who’ve been called by name, just like Zacchaeus. And we believe that your story isn’t finished yet.

Whether you’re carrying guilt, questions, or just a heart that’s grown a little cold, there’s room for you here.

Come worship with us. Come find community. Come find grace.

Jesus is still calling. Are you ready to answer?