

FEBRUARY 2025



Bible Study | Faith in Action

## Prepare

- Bible
- Journal
- Pen/pencil

## Get Started

The familiar children's song about Zacchaeus warms our hearts. The paired hand motions help us act out Zacchaeus's determination to see Jesus, then the Savior saying, "I'm going to your house today." While Jesus' calling was likely a beckoning wave, not a finger wag, the song shows how Jesus initiated conversations about salvation and built relationships as He came and went.

## Study and Learn

### • Read Luke 19:1–10.

My husband and I recently considered going on a short-term missions trip halfway around the world. As we talked, we reflected that people are often willing to share about Jesus outside their community but fail to talk to their neighbors about Him. I was convicted that I need to share the truth of salvation with people in every circle I naturally come across—not out of obligation but because I love the people God made.

When Zacchaeus climbed the tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus, he may not have known what he was looking for. Scripture doesn't indicate whether he had a need for connection or was simply curious. He was wealthy and influential, the boss of the other tax collectors. For much of his life, he may have felt proud of his accomplishments. But when he heard Jesus was close by, he was compelled to see Him.

The crowds were watching Jesus too. The Bible doesn't clarify who was among the crowd in this instance, but most certainly these people included religious leaders, who should have been excited to see people draw close to God. But they didn't view Jesus as God. So when Jesus told Zacchaeus He was going to visit his house, they scoffed. They may have seen this as evidence of Jesus not being God and asked themselves why God would socialize with a sinner. They were blind to the redemptive work at play.

After meeting with Jesus, Zacchaeus repented of his sin and selfishness (v. 8). Unlike the rich young ruler in the parable in Luke 18, Zacchaeus held nothing back. Perhaps no one saw it but Jesus: God's Spirit was moving in Zacchaeus's life.

## Apply

Consider how Zacchaeus came to faith. Jesus called to him, and they shared time together in Zacchaeus's home. It was comfortable and familiar. Sharing the gospel isn't always about preaching a sermon. We can sometimes be disheartened when we invite someone to church and are rejected. Instead, start by being with people where they are. Rather than expecting them to make all the change and effort with little context established, enter their lives to build relationships and then share.

- Have you, at times, shared the gospel as a duty to accomplish and neglected to see the person in front of you?
- Do you fear being rejected by people? How can you establish warm places of comfortable conversation that encourage different perspectives?
- Do you love people enough to enter into their lives and engage with them in meaningful ways in order to establish relationships of trust and care?

## Follow Up

In the Gospels, we see Jesus living with one aim—seeking and saving the lost. Every day, He remained committed to this goal, and it played out differently depending on the people He was engaging with. Sharing His gospel message with Zacchaeus looked quite different from the ways He shared it with religious leaders. To live out love before others, our eyes must be fixed on Jesus, our hearts must be convinced He is our only hope of salvation, and our hands, minds, and mouths must be engaged in the work, rightly dividing the Word of truth. Pray God would renew your joy in your salvation, give you eyes to see where He is at work, and strengthen you to share His truth through your life.

## Commit to Memory

Verse: **Luke 19:10**

Challenge: **Philippians 1:27–28**

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**KRISTEN WHITE** loves to mentor children and young adults, especially in Scripture memorization.

# Faith in Action | Take Action Against Food Insecurity in Your Community

By Amanda Martinsen

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.*

—Matthew 25:35–36

Hunger and food insecurity can affect anyone. According to the United States Department of Agriculture report on Household Food Security in the United States in 2023, around 47 million people in the US, including 7.2 million children, lived in food-insecure households. Globally, the scale of food insecurity is even larger.

While community food banks and shelters are great resources and can certainly use your donations and help, an outdoor blessing box is another way you, your family, or your myMISSION group can help people around you who are in need.

You may be familiar with the idea of a free library box, which gives community members a chance to freely exchange books with one another. An outdoor blessing box works in a similar way and is a great way to serve your community by providing nonperishable items to people in need, who can take food from the box with no questions asked.

Making outdoor blessing boxes provides a tangible way to meet the needs of people in your community and love your neighbors by showing them the love of Jesus.

## Planning for the Boxes

Determine the best location in your community to display a blessing box. The box should be easily accessible to the public and receive a lot of foot traffic. Consider areas that have a large number of families nearby and/or rural areas

that may not have local food banks or resources close by. If you are making the blessing box as a family or small group, consider having children help by decorating it. This is an opportunity to teach them about food insecurity and inspire them to help.

## Items to Include in Your Outdoor Blessing Box

- Canned foods with pop-tops
- Prepackaged snacks
- Bottled water
- Seasonal clothing, such as winter hats, gloves, and socks
- Personal care items, such as toothbrushes, combs, and feminine care products
- Sunscreen
- Disinfectant wipes
- Church information cards

## Maintaining the Boxes

With your family or group, plan for a time to pray over the blessing box as you place it in the community. Determine how often you will check the box to refill items as they are taken. Discuss with the group how you will respond as you see people making use of the box. What a wonderful opportunity to extend the love of Christ and show you care.

Jesus cared for the hungry. He not only helped meet needs by providing physical food to eat, but He also met spiritual needs by showing love and mercy and drawing people to Himself. Outdoor blessing boxes open the door for you to share the gospel with others and show them they are not alone.

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