

TEXT Luke 19:1-10

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES Leviticus 6:2-7; Numbers 5:6-8

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain what restitution is and its importance in maintaining a Christian life.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. — Luke 19:8

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. — Ezekiel 33:15

RESOURCE MATERIAL Tract No. 68 — Restitution

**ANSWER
TITLE:**

Postmark: Jericho

**SEARCH
TITLE:**

Squared Away With Others

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Jericho, the scene of today's lesson, is considered to be the oldest city in the world, situated by the Jordan River at the site of a ford which controlled the ancient trade routes from the East. The presence of springs of water and the resulting numbers of trees make Jericho a green oasis in the middle of this dry area of Jordan.

The sycamore tree, such as the ones which lined the streets of Jericho, was a type of fig tree. It had many strong, wide-spreading branches, so it was easy for a person to climb. The sycamore bore fruit several times a year, but people rarely ate it because it was not as tasty as ordinary figs.

Zacchaeus was a chief among the publicans, tax collectors, for the Roman government. Such men were usually Romans, but Zacchaeus, a Jew, probably represented the Jews in Jericho. As chief, he would have been the

one who sold the privilege of collecting taxes to the highest bidders. These men, in turn, could then add as much of a commission as they could collect. Zacchaeus, no doubt, started his "career" as one of these tax collectors, and was not held in any regard by the Jews.

As a class, the tax collectors were despised by their fellow Jews, because of their oppression and extortion of illegal taxes to enrich themselves. They were generally classified as "sinners." Zacchaeus, as well as all those about Jesus, must have been surprised that Jesus would choose to go to the house of such a person. Jericho was a city of priests, yet Jesus chose to abide with a publican.

Whether or not Zacchaeus knew the old Law requiring restitution (Exodus 22:1-5), he showed the true fruit of conversion when he promised to make right his wrongdoing.

YOUR OPENER

Squared Away With Others

TEXT: Luke 19:1-10

SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURES: Leviticus 6:2-7; Numbers 5:6-8

KEY VERSE: If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. — Ezekiel 33:15

RESOURCE MATERIAL: Tract No. 68 — Restitution

There are few, indeed, who are called from a sinful life who do not have restitutions to make. Some would tell us that when we are saved, God forgives our past and we can forget it. However, Scripture reveals that if we have in any way wronged our fellowman, God expects us to make this right. His Spirit will surely bring to mind the things for which we need to make amends. Restitution covers not only repayment of what may have been taken of monetary value, but also making right such things as lying, cheating, backbiting, and hatred.

1. Why do you think the Spirit of God inspired Luke to include the story of Zacchaeus? Surely there were many more dramatic incidents that could have been recorded.

2. Zacchaeus was a chief among the publicans (tax collectors) for the Roman government. Such men were usually Romans, but Zacchaeus, who was a Jew, probably represented the Jews in Jericho. As chief, he would have been the one who sold the privilege of collecting taxes to the highest bidders. In turn, these men could add as much of a commission as they could collect. Zacchaeus no doubt started his career as one of these tax collectors, and was not held in any regard by the Jews. Which verse in our text establishes the fact that Zacchaeus' poor reputation was known by those in Jericho?

3. What was required of a person bringing a trespass offering under the Mosaic Law? See Leviticus 6:2-7.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

RESPONSES

1. Help your students to conclude that while no one knows exactly why this particular story was written, it is one of the best illustrations of restitution to be found in the Bible. No doubt Luke had been impressed by the Holy Spirit with the importance of this teaching or he would not have included the story in his writings.

2. In verse 7, Zacchaeus is referred to as a "sinner." As a class of people, the tax collectors were despised, and generally considered sinners. Zacchaeus, as well as all those about Jesus, must have been surprised that Jesus would choose to visit the house of such a person. Jericho was a city of priests, yet Jesus chose to visit a publican. He would be a guest in Zacchaeus' home.

3. The students should understand that under the Law, God required a man to make restitution for any wrong done to his fellowman before bringing a trespass offering. When this was done, the priest would offer the sacrifice and the Lord would forgive the man for the things he had done wrong. Ask your class why they think it was necessary for the restitution to be made preliminary to the bringing of a trespass offering. Your students will likely conclude that it proved the sincerity of the repentance and the desire to be forgiven.

4. Restitution obviously played an important part in obtaining forgiveness under the Mosaic Law.

What part does it have in obtaining forgiveness in our time?

5. Explain in your own words the meaning of the key verse.

6. What evidence do we have that Zacchaeus, in his heart, met the required conditions spoken of in the key verse?

7. Why is it as important to make a small restitution as it is a large one?

8. What happens if we refuse to make a restitution?

9. What are some of the benefits that might be received as a result of making a restitution?

4. As your students discuss their answers to this question, the point should be made that God will hear the cry of an honest heart and will save one wherever and whenever he repents and believes. Unlike the priests in Moses' time, God can see the innermost heart and does not need a visible sign of true inward repentance. Thus, one can be forgiven before he makes restitution for the wrong he has done. But the one who seeks forgiveness will have to have it in his heart, as Zacchaeus did, to make things right with his fellowman.

5. The students should understand that God's standard of righteousness has always been high. Restitution was required in Ezekiel's time, along with walking in the statutes of life. In other words, we must, as much as lies within our power, restore and compensate for any injury or loss we have caused. We must then continue to walk according to God's Word without committing iniquity, that we may ensure our hope of eternal life.

6. The class should learn that it was more than idle curiosity which prompted Zacchaeus to climb a tree to see Jesus. The Lord knows the thoughts and intents of the heart and He knew right where Zacchaeus was and called him by name. Our text states that Zacchaeus came down in haste, received the Lord joyfully and immediately promised to make restitution, the act required to meet the conditions stated in the key verse. And Jesus said, "This day is salvation come to this house."

7. All sin separates from God, whether it is a "little" sin or a big one. We will have to be squared away with our fellowman, whenever possible, if we expect to make Heaven our home.

8. The students should know that if they refuse to make a restitution, they are refusing to do what God requires of them. In addition, they are disqualifying themselves from receiving continued blessings from God. And, most importantly, instead of their sins being judged beforehand, they will follow them to the Judgment (1 Timothy 5:24).

9. Have your students discuss some of the benefits they have noted. Some may mention the excellent opportunity afforded to witness to the saving grace of God when they make a restitution. Other benefits mentioned might include: a clear conscience, repairing breaches in personal relationships, joy and peace in the heart. Encourage your students to give examples from their own experience or knowledge of making a restitution. For additional resources, read the following Apostolic Faith tracts: No. 48 — "My Search for Salvation," No. 51 — "Prayed Out, Stayed Out," and No. 64 — "Pardoned!"

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

What is restitution?

Jesus knew Zacchaeus' heart and where he was. How does this story show that Jesus knows our thoughts and intents?

We read that Zacchaeus was the chief among the publicans. What was a publican?

Why do you suppose Zacchaeus told Jesus he would give to the poor and restore fourfold the money he had actually stolen? Is it necessary to repay fourfold as Zacchaeus did?

Is there a difference between big wrongs and little wrongs when it comes time for making restitution?

Besides things stolen, what other kinds of restitutions might God show us we should make?

Do Christians ever do things that might require making restitution?

How does one go about making restitution?

What will happen if we refuse to make restitution?

THINGS TO DO

Invite someone to come to your class to tell of a restitution he made, and the results or effects of that.

Discuss, or list some synonyms for, the word *restitution* (repay, restore, give back, make right, apologize for, etc.). It may very well be a "foreign" word to some of your students.

Wear a sign on your dress or lapel which reads, "I'm Square." Use this as an opener for your lesson to explain what it means to be *squared away*, and tie it in with the conversion of Zacchaeus. You might wish to conclude your lesson with a portion of your own testimony and the importance of living a life that proves you are square with God and man.

Take to class a T-shirt on which you have written the word CHRISTIAN. Above the word, have an arrow that points up. (Use colored adhesive letters, or cut letters from dark tape, or iron-on letters.) Ask students their opinions

about wearing such a shirt. If they did, all who saw them would suppose that they were followers of Christ, and expect them to show it by their actions. One of the first things that shows up in a person's actions when they become a Christian is the desire to do right and make amends (or restitution) for any previous wrongdoing. These outward changes in behavior indicate the reality of the inward change. Discuss with your class things that Christians do or don't do, letting the students make the suggestions. Give an opportunity for your students to share changes that Christ made in their lives when they became Christians: something they had to take back, or apologize for, or a lie they had to straighten out, etc.

Several tracts, such as No. 48 — My Search for Salvation (Reverend Loyce C. Carver), and No. 64 — Pardoned! (Bruce Archer), deal with restitution and could be dramatized.

Answers for ANSWER

Make It Right

Restitution is an important part of a Christian's life. Zacchaeus realized this and set about putting his life in order. In the maze below help Jesus find Zacchaeus. Then, find all the words on the list in the word-find.

LOST
SAVE
JESUS
JERICHO
RESTORE
FOURFOLD
JOYFULLY
SYCAMORE
PUBLICANS
SALVATION
ZACCHAEUS

E	R	O	M	A	C	Y	S	S	E
S	E	W	G	K	J	B	A	D	S
N	R	B	H	E	O	Z	O	U	
A	O	V	S	M	Y	H	V	K	E
C	T	U	O	W	E	H	A	B	A
I	S	K	B	A	U	C	T	U	H
L	E	A	P	D	I	I	W	C	
B	R	O	M	O	L	R	O	G	C
U	E	Z	S	E	Y	E	N	V	A
P	G	T	K	B	O	U	M	K	Z