

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean? We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

St. Paul explains this Commandment this way: *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need (Ephesians 4:28)*. I wonder if he was thinking about Zacchaeus when he wrote this. Luke tells his story in **chapter 19** of his Gospel.

Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector in Jericho, and he was very rich. People didn't like him because he worked for the Romans and cheated the people. Like every other tax collector, he collected more than was needed to pay the taxes and kept it for himself. He could do this because he had Roman soldiers standing beside him when he collected the taxes.

One day, he heard Jesus was coming to town and he wanted to see Him. But Zacchaeus had a problem. He was short and the streets were lined with people, people who wouldn't help him see because they didn't like him. So, he ran ahead and climbed up into a tree. Jesus knew he was there and called up to him, *"Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today" (v. 5)*. Zacchaeus came down and had Jesus come to his house for dinner.

God made a change in Zacchaeus' life that day and he said to Jesus, *"Half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone of anything, I will give back four times what I took" (v.8)*. Jesus said that Zacchaeus was saved that day because of his faith (**v. 9**).

Prayer: Lord, help us to not take in any way what isn't ours, but help us to give what we can to help others. In Jesus' name, Amen.