

Guided meditation: Jesus visiting Zaccheus

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through it. A man was there named Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax-collector and was rich. He was trying to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree to see him, because he was going to pass that way. When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, hurry and come down; for I must stay at your house today.' So he hurried down and was happy to welcome him. All who saw it began to grumble and said, 'He has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner.' Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, 'Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay back four times as much.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost.'

Luke 19.1-10

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Meditation

This meditation is a response to the story of Zaccheus. If you find it difficult to picture scenes in your mind's eye, put the scene and story into words in your imagination.

Take up a posture that is comfortable and close your eyes.

Now become aware of your breathing. Become aware of the air as it enters and leaves your nostrils . . . Not as it enters your lungs, just as it passes through your nostrils . . .

Do not control your breathing. Do not try to deepen it or change its rhythm. Simply observe your breathing, in and out, in and out . . .

[read the passage]

Now imagine that Jesus has just invited himself to your house, and you are on your way home with him, through the streets of Jericho.

Take some time to imagine the scene as vividly as possible . . .

the buildings either side . . . stalls lining your way . . . crowds coming and going, a mix of people going about their lives, religious leaders, and Jesus and his group . . .

What can you hear, see and smell?

Compose yourself in the scene.

What thoughts and feelings does it evoke? . . .

Now all the hubbub is fading away, and you are focused on Jesus and your conversation. You might still be walking side-by-side, or stopped and facing each other as you talk.

What are you talking about?

What questions would you like to ask Jesus? Ask them . . .

You become conscious that people around you are grumbling.

How does Jesus respond? How do you respond? . . .

Your conversation with Jesus might lapse into silence . . . stay with that . . .

Enjoy simply being in silence with Jesus

If your attention becomes distracted, become aware of your breathing again and then gently return to the scene . . .

Now return gradually to an awareness of your breathing and your posture . . .

When you are ready, open your eyes.

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Notes

This is the fourth of a series of meditations responding to *Befriending Silence* by Carl McColman, one of the books which the Slow Book Group at Exeter Cathedral has been reading. The book comprises an Introduction, eleven chapters, and a brief Final Word, which we are dividing into six sessions for reflection over the six months April, May, June, July, September and October 2024. In June we covered Chapters 6 and 7 on compassion/community and prayer/liturgy.

The style of the meditation is based on Ignatian meditation and the "unsuspected and untapped source of power and life in our fantasy" as presented by Anthony de Mello in [*Sadhana: A Way to God, Christian Exercises in Eastern Form*](#) (pdf).

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