

Short people love this Gospel; it's like having a patron saint. Short people need assurance once in a while that their lives are worth living. They get tired of buying their clothing in children's wear and being the last one outside to know when it's raining. Short people are nice to have in families because they get out of the shower quicker than everybody else. When I was in college we started an organization for short people called height watchers; we tried to talk everybody out of growing tall. The shortest person in the Bible is not Zacchaeus at all, but a character who appears in the Book of Job--Bildad the Shuhite. I'd ask all the short people in church to stand for recognition, but we probably wouldn't see you anyway.

Children love this Gospel too. They know what it's like not to see in a crowd; they know the advantage of climbing trees. They know that when you're little, people don't notice you very much. They ignore you and talk to someone who's, well, taller.

Sometimes when we look into our spiritual mirror, we all look short. Short on prayer, short on charity, short on forgiveness, short on patience, short on giving to the needy. We don't always like the person we see in the mirror, so we wear "elevator shoes"--we put people down to put ourselves up, we lie to ourselves about how good we are, and we tell jokes about people of a different nationality, color, gender, or height. We know that God sees through our spiritual mirror, so like Zacchaeus, we figure we'll just get lost in the crowd. God surely wouldn't single out the likes of us for any reason--might as well climb a tree and watch.

Surprisingly, though, Jesus does pick Zacchaeus out of the crowd. Funny how when we pull away from God and the church we figure no one will notice; right, like no one notices a grown man who climbs a tree. God sees us; God sees our short spiritual stature and still calls us to be disciples. If you're up a tree, it's time to listen. God may be calling you down.