

LITTLE MAN...BIG ATTITUDE
By Helen Jameson

GENRE: Light comedy

TIME: 4-5 minutes

CAST BREAKDOWN: 1M

THEME: Generosity, forgiveness, grace

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Luke 19:1-10., Proverbs 11:25, I Timothy 6:18-19

CHURCH SEASON: Any

SUGGESTED USE: General service/Evangelism

SYNOPSIS: Zacchaeus was a little man with a little heart who was so driven by his desire to see Jesus that he climbed a tree. Tax collecting was a despicable profession. Jesus accepts/recognizes Zacchaeus as a forgiven and valuable soul. Zacchaeus came down from the tree and went to the Jesus tree for forgiveness.

CHARACTERS:

Robin Bleach (voice only)

Zacchaeus, an old man

PROPS: 1 artificial ficus tree, cube or stool, chair, fake grass mat for base of tree, sign that reads "Ficus sycomorus", 1 walking cane

COSTUME: Dark suit – oversized (The illusion is that Zacchaeus is a small man; may have to pad the shoulders.), oversized shoes, gray beard, derby hat

SOUND: Opening song to "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous", Pre-recorded voice of Robin Bleach, Zacchaeus song (Veggie Tales), 1 lapel microphone

LIGHT: General

SETTING: The ficus tree is placed on a black cube/stool to give added height. The base is covered with green fake grass mat. The sign "Ficus sycomorus" is propped against it. A chair is placed to the side.

DIRECTOR'S TIP: The actor playing Zacchaeus does not need to be short. Use costuming and the height of the tree to indicate small stature. The actor speaks in a Yiddish accent. He is a caricature of a wee little man, but it is done with genuine heart and is respectful. Actually an actress played this role in the original presentation. That sounds strange, but it is the ability to do the accent and the authenticity of the emotions that make the skit effective.

Scene opens with **SOUND**: theme music to "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous." Music stops as Robin Bleach speaks in a British accent.

ROBIN: (VOICE ONLY.) This is Robin Bleach, and welcome to "Lifestyles of the Not So Rich and Fairly Famous." Yes, tonight "Champagne wishes and caviar dreams" are being replaced by more Biblically correct desires and actions. We have searched the world over and are travelling via satellite to a remote location where a man of short stature but with a big attitude is willing to share a glorious panoramic view of salvation experienced personally...and we will get a first hand look at his most prized possession. Let me introduce this man...I give you...Zacchaeus.

(**SOUND**: Zacchaeus song plays. Zacchaeus enters walks/dances on stage. As he steps onstage he motions for the song to stop.)

ZACCHAEUS: (Wheezing/clutching his chest/speaking in a Jewish accent.) Oy vey...Oy vey....my...I can't dance like I used to...I remember when I was a young man...ahh...I may have been short, but I could really kick up my heels.

This satellite thing is very amazing. Mr. Bleach, wherever you are, I thank you for the opportunity to talk...to schmooze with these lovely people about my experiences and, not to forget, to talk about the thing that I prize the most on this earth.

(Talking to the audience/teasing them.) Do you want to know what it is?

I'm sorry...(cupping his ear)...I'm getting a little hard of hearing...what did you say? (Smiling.) All right! All right! You want to know what my prized possession is...Well it is...(Teasing them again.)...it's going to surprise you. Hahahaha...

(Laughing/wheezing/motioning for them to come closer.) All right...I will tell you...It's a tree. Now you are thinking "a tree"? A tree? (Pointing to himself.) Maybe the old man has lost all his marbles. (Tapping his head.) I haven't lost a single one...

(Walking to the tree.) Here it is. It's pretty big...definitely bigger than me. The branches are not as thick as they used to be. It is a sycamore fig...*ficus sycamora*...to be exact. Ahh, but the story that this tree has to tell makes this old man cry.

This might surprise you, but I wasn't always a nice old man...no... in my younger days...I was a tax collector...and not just any old tax collector...chief tax collector...anybody out there like paying taxes?

As "chief tax collector"...I had a bad reputation. I loved to take a little here... add a little there...just enough to keep my money bags fat. The people hated me...called me sinner and a few other names that I can't mention in polite company. And...oy...my attitude...I was short...what I lacked in height, I made up for in lousy attitude. Let's just say I was not always the nicest person to be around... Ahh...but that was before I met someone who changed my life...just like that (snapping his fingers)...here at this tree.

Get comfortable now...because the story now begins.

It was a sunny day in Jericho. I had been out collecting when the word came that He...Jesus... was passing through town. I said to myself "This man I want to see."

I had heard all the stories of healings and miracles. In my heart I knew that I needed a miracle. I didn't like me...I really was a small man...inside and out, and I was a sinner.

The crowd was large. The word was spreading up and down the street that He was approaching. Everywhere I stood all I saw was shoulders...no Jesus. A hunger came over me...I needed to see Him, but at my height all I was going to see was His feet. Then I saw this tree...I ran for it...like a little boy I climbed it...I didn't care how foolish I looked...me, the chief tax collector. I had to see Him...this great Master.

The leaves were so thick, and the branches hid me...it was just me...in that tree...well, there could have been squirrel there too...I don't know. Anyway He passed right beneath the branches and stopped. He looked straight up at me. How did he know I was there?

Oh...the words said He to me... "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." My house? The crowd muttered among themselves. It wasn't so good that He wanted to stay with me. (Tearful.) My house.

His words made me big inside. He chose me...My little heart changed right then. I vowed to pay back what I had taken...and to give even more to those I had cheated. Do you know what Jesus called me? (Wiping his eyes.) A son of Abraham...a son of Abraham.

My life changed...my heart became larger...my actions generous. Money...it means nothing...but this tree...ahhh...on a sunny day in its branches...my life changed. Oy...where's the time going... I'd better go before Mr. Bleach here decides to pull the plug, and at my age that's not so good. (Bowing.) Thank you. Shalom. (Exits.)