# Christmas in Flannel

By: Ricky Smith

Although flannel shirts are once again trendy and fashion forward, they have nothing to do with the Christmas story. However, another familiar use of flannel could. If you grew up in church, you can likely recall sitting in a classroom as a child and the teacher using a flannel board to bring a classic Bible story to life, through pictures that were moved around the board. Your imagination was left to fill in the blanks. I recall one particular Bible story that was delivered on a flannel board that also became a non-traditional Christmas reminder.

Zacchaeus was the a small character that my teacher placed on a board. This corrupt tax collector had lost his way. Perhaps he had allowed the circumstances of his surroundings to influence his actions. He had power and authority, that was coupled with being in a major trade route city where side deals were common place, and extortion was a reality.

We are all familiar with how the story unfolds in Luke 19. The sycamore tree, Jesus passing by, the crowd who criticized, and Jesus going to the house of Zacchaeus are all facts branded in our mind by the classic kids church song. But the element of the Christmas story is a subtle reminder we find in Luke 19:10. It reads, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

There it is! The encounter of Zacchaeus with Jesus is a story of redemption. The classic story told on a flannel board is a reminder of the hope of Christmas. Jesus came to this earth as a human, so that He could seek and save the lost.

The joy of this ordained purpose does not end with Zacchaeus, it resonates through the centuries and remains true today. As you navigate through the parties, socials, church services, and family traditions of this season, allow your mind to flashback to this classic Bible story and be reminded of what this is all about. But don't stop there, interact with friends and family with the eternal motivation of sharing the hope that only comes through a relationship with Jesus.