



Look up!
See the
branches
of the trees



Look down!
See the
ground
beneath your
feet
Stir the dust
with your toes
a little.



Look up!
Can you see
anything living
in the trees?
A Rowdy Cocky
A Blazing Rosella
A Busy Magpie
A Laughing
Kookaburra



Look down!
Can you see
anything on the
ground?
A creeping beetle
An Ant
A buzzing fly



Look up!
Look down!
Look all around!
This is
God's world.
It all belongs to
God.



But in this town,
in every town,
The army marches
up and down
The road.
Many feet stirring
up the dust
And swords
stirring up fear.



The crowd along the
road
is quiet as koalas
And still as a goanna.

And the commander
says
“This town belongs
to the great emperor
This whole land belongs
to the great emperor
And you must pay taxes
to the great emperor.”



Look around –
all of you.”
The Commander
points down at a
little guy in the
crowd.



"This little guy,
Zakxaios-
cool name,
by the way -
he's going to take up
the taxes
from you all.
And hand it up
to us



“And we’ll take it up to
the great emperor.
He can take up a bit
extra for himself
If he likes.
We don’t care.”



And the
army
marched on
down
the road
to the
next town.



This little guy
Zakxaios -
cool name -
Now thinks
he's the big guy
in town.
He takes up
the taxes
for the
Great Emperor
and a bit extra
for himself.



Look down the road!
Jesus is coming.
The crowd along the road
is rowdy as cockys
And they buzz like flies.



Look up over the
heads of crowd
Look! Look! it's Jesus.
A little guy can't see.
It's the little guy
Zakxaios-
Cool name,
Thinks he's a big guy.
But the little guy
can't see
past the crowd.



Look over there -
A large
gnarly knotted
tree
with long low
branches
that little legs
can climb.



Look at this
little guy run,
down the road
and up the tree
He catches
his breath
He thinks
no one was looking



The crowd along the road
is rowdy as
a flock of cockys.
And they buzz like flies.
Everyone is trying
to get a look at Jesus
as he walks
along the road,
his feet
stirring up the dust
and his stories
stirring up hearts.



Where is he from?
From out in the bush?
Is he from God?
How could we tell?
Looks pretty ordinary
to me...
But the things he says!
He tells ripper stories
About the ways of God.
Love and Justice.
Mercy and Hope.



Some people have been
looking
At the way Jesus lives
And cares
And helps
And heals
And puts things right
And stands up to bullies
And listens to children
“Jesus is the best person”
They say.
“The very best.”
Look closely and see for
yourself...



Jesus stops
He's under
a tree.
He's under
that tree.
The Little guy
is up in the tree
Up in *that* tree.



Jesus Looks up.
The Little guy
looks down.



The crowd
beneath him
ripples and rumbles.
And cockys squawk
and the flies buzz
As everyone looks
from Jesus
to the little guy
and back to Jesus.
Look up. Look down.
Look up. Look down.
Look all around.
This is God's world.



Jesus calls hello
‘Hey Zakxaios
Looking good
up there!’
A buzz goes
through the crowd.
Jesus has picked
the worst person
The very
worst person.
Everyone looks
upset.



Everyone knows Zakxaios only looks after himself. He's cocky. Stuck up. And he's always buzzing around like an annoying fly. Taking down our tax money. And piling up the cash for himself. He's the worst person. The very worst person.



And Jesus –
who some say is
the best person –
Calls again.
“Zakxaios! Look!
Come down!
Listen up!
I’ve got an idea I’d
like to share with
you.”
Says Jesus.
“And it starts with
us sharing some
dinner.
At your place.”



Zakxaios starts climbing down. The crowd look around at each other in shock. What's up? How could Jesus the very best person pick the very worst person? This is turning our heads upside down.



Jesus and Zakxaios
sit down
to share
dinner together.
At the end
Zakxaios
stands up
And says:

“Jesus,
I’ve been listening
to your ideas of
the ways of God.
Love and Justice.
Mercy and Hope.”



“I’ve got an idea
I’d like to share
with you.
And it starts
with me sharing.
I’ll give up
half my money
to the poor.”

(The crowd buzzed.
Almost everyone
in this town
was poor)



“And look around:
if I’ve cheated anyone –”

(The crowd laughed
like kookaburras)

“And you all know
I have,
I’ll pay it back
- times four.
And from now on
I’ll take up
God’s good ways.”



The Crowd say
“This is the best!”
Jesus says
“This is the best!
This is God’s world.
Emperors rise up
and are brought down.
Look closely
and see for yourself.
But God’s ways
are for always:
Love and Justice
Mercy and Hope
And they are here
in this very house today.”