

DAY NINETEEN

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 19:8-10

The look on her face was a combination of anger and utter amazement, "You expect me to do what?" she nearly shouted. "You want me to stand in front of people and actually tell them what we are going to give? No way!" In a slow and measured response I said, "No, I am not expecting or telling you to do anything, I am asking you to pray about the possibility of talking with people about your gift."

Isn't it amazing how in most of our churches we will talk about anything and everything except our money and finances? In our scripture today Zacchaeus meets the Christ and his life is changed forever. Because of this encounter, his response is to boldly declare his faith!

The gift, the amount, is really secondary. The primary issue is gratitude for a changed life. In telling a stewardship story, the first question is always, "How and where have I met Christ in my church?" How have I been blessed? How has my life been forever changed? And, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, I may then, with Zacchaeus, boldly say, "because of what God has done for me, this is what I am willing to do for God."

And, oh, by the way, the young woman at the beginning of our story, after much struggle and prayer, told one of the most beautiful stewardship stories I have ever heard. She spoke about how she met Christ through the people of her church. And then, with a grateful heart, she told them about the gift she was willing to give.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. How have I met Christ in my church?
2. How is my life changed because of meeting Christ?
3. How is my life different because of Christ and the church?
4. Can I pray about sharing with others, privately or publicly, about my willingness to give as a grateful response to God's love?

PRAYER

Oh, Giving and Loving God, remind me now of all the wonderful ways You have blessed me, touched me, and changed me. Give me the courage and boldness to share my story with others, through Christ our Lord, Amen.