

Resitution - Fruit Meet for Repentance

by Mose Stoltzfus

The sermon emphasizes the importance of restitution as a fruit of repentance and a way to make things right with God and with others.

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:24, Luke 19:1-11, Luke 19:27

Topics: "Repentance", "Restitution"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of taking responsibility for our actions and possessions. He uses the example of fire, stating that starting a fire carries the responsibility of ensuring it is properly extinguished. He then references a biblical passage about theft, explaining that if a thief is found, they must pay double restitution. The preacher also mentions a story about a rich man who desired to see Jesus, highlighting the importance of having a genuine desire to seek God. Overall, the sermon emphasizes the need for responsibility and the desire to seek God in our lives.

Transcript

Hello, this is Brother Denny. Welcome to Charity Ministries. Our desire is that your life would be blessed and changed by this message.

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Well, here we are, the end of a year. It's good for us, isn't it, all good for us to reminisce over this year as to whether we have lived our lives for the Lord Jesus Christ or whether there is an emptiness and a regret of not having done much or more, at least for our Lord Jesus. May we honestly take the time the next few days to consider that and to look honestly and openly at those things and see where we stand with God.

Have we been available for the great work of God that is before us and in this world or have we shirked that responsibility and left others to it? Also, I wanted to express my deep appreciation for the opening

meditation this morning. Thank you, Brother Don. That is certainly an encouragement to know that God is still interested in the Gentiles coming to the light and how we need to be available for that and to be ready at an instant, in season, out of season, to give the gospel to those that are hungry and thirsting after God.

All right, this morning we will turn our Bibles to Luke chapter 19. Luke chapter 19, And Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus, which was chief among the publicans, and he was rich.

He sought to see Jesus, who he was, and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house.

And he made haste and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying that he was going to be a guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor, and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

And Jesus said unto him this day, Is salvation come to thy house insomuch as he also is the son of Abraham? For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. The title of my message this morning is Restitution, the Fruit of Repentance. Shall we bow our heads for prayer? Father in Heaven, we thank You for the Word of God, that once again it shouts aloud and clear to us of a wondrous teaching and doctrine and principle that stands throughout history, throughout the Old and New Testament both.

And I thank You for that, Lord, and I know that Your Spirit has prompted many, many a case where men and women have, upon conversion, went on a path to make wrong things right and to restore unto people the things that they had taken wrongfully or stolen or in other ways had done great damage to the Kingdom of God and then, upon conversion, seek to make it right. I thank You, God, for this great teaching and I pray You would break the bread of life in it, help us to see it, know it and understand it that we may be able to embrace it and teach it to the next generation. We pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. A few weeks ago I received a very interesting phone call from a man in another state who at least gave testimony of a clear conversion. He was a wicked man, had lived incredibly a wicked life and had built the government out of tens of thousands of dollars by feigning to be injured in an industrial accident or factory or something where he was working and went on workman's compensation and sat there without working for a number of years and received, like I said, tens and tens of thousands of dollars in compensation for an injury that he never had.

And recently upon conversion, and there's a number of other things he did similar to that, he was out to milk anybody and everybody and especially the government for everything he could somehow weasel his way to get without having to work and in the meantime he lived in Las Vegas at times, he lived in fornication almost regularly the way it sounds and he lived a very debauched life with the money that he got illegally. But somehow he came to hear the gospel, opened his heart to receive the gospel and immediately this thing stared him in the face in an incredible way. He asked a man that dealt with him and helped him through, prayed with him there, what shall I do? And the man said, I don't know, I don't know what to tell you.

I don't know if there's a way that you can make those things right or not. He even admitted that some of the people that he had taken from were gone. They had died, the business had folded up I think and been sold and wasn't in existence anymore and he was at a loss on what to do.

And someone suggested, the sole winner that had worked with him had known me and suggested maybe that he call me and ask me what to do with his situation that he is so convicted and so condemned with what he has done in this life of thievery and robbery from the government especially and also from other people and the life that he lived. Is there a way to make those things right? And may I just say here for the record, lest I forget it, that yes, there is a way. I don't know what to do in the workman's compensation situation.

Nevertheless, I directed him to seek a public CPA, an accountant, and revealed to him the matter. But I do know that the Internal Revenue Service has what they call a conscience fund. That you are able to pay into when your conscience bothers you because of having cheated on your taxes.

That you are actually able to take a given amount of money, what you think you owe the government, and pay it into the conscience fund and therefore relieve your conscience of what you think you still owe the government. But in all of this, this whole matter and teaching of restitution came up. And again, lest I forget it, I don't know exactly where I'll quit and what time, but I would like for you to be prepared to maybe share some testimony this morning of how when you got converted that God worked in your life and you also have testimony of how God relieved your conscience and blessed your life by giving you the privilege to bring things to your attention and you were able to go back and make it right and therefore have the burden roll off of your back and you have a clear conscience in the day of judgment and especially ever since because you have had the privilege to make that right.

So we go to the New Testament here for this great principle that we believe is extant throughout scripture from beginning to end. But especially we think of the man Zacchaeus here in the teaching that is given here by the Lord Jesus Christ to give that as an example and by teach that great principle, that great truth. Now it is not specifically commanded exactly as to how far a person should go with these things and there are many people come to us and I've dealt with many of them that ask me these difficult questions.

Well, the man isn't alive anymore. What shall I do? And I believe we find the answer in this situation. Or maybe I lived a terrible life out in the west somewhere just going from city to city and I would have no idea how to make those things right.

Once again, I believe that the answer is found here in this scripture. Let us go through this account here first of all and make comments on the verses here before us. The word restitution means a giving back to the rightful owner of something that has been lost or taken away.

A restoring or a giving back to a rightful owner that which has been lost. Maybe you found it. You remember as we were children we used to tease each other when we would find the possession of our brother or sister.

We'd sing the little ditty about finders keepers, losers weepers and those kind of things and tease each other that way. But the Bible teaches no such thing that finders are keepers and losers should be weepers but rather that we should restore onto the individual and look for its owner. The story is given in the news just in the last day or so of somebody finding a box in the store, buying a box.

How it got there I have no idea. Opening it up at home and finding \$10,000 stashed away in it. And the individual of course went back and they traced and found the rightful owner and gave it back to them.

I also think of my own as a child when I once found a wallet that was left lay. We had a little ice cream store there where I grew up. We sold pretzels and chips and ice cream and candy and various things and the public would come in there to buy.

And a man left his wallet lie on a cabinet, an ice cream cabinet there. And I remember taking it and looking through it. It was such an exciting thing.

I might have been about 7, 8, 9 years old and seeing this money in there and the cards and everything. But we found the name in there of the man and called him up. And he was so grateful as we handed him back his entire wallet, not keeping anything, that I remember he reached in his pocket, gave me a \$5 bill for returning it on to him.

And I received my first great thrill that I had of actually finding something that belonged to somebody else. And I was able to return it and give it back. Restitution, the fruit of repentance.

Now John the Baptist is the one who originally, even before the ministry of Jesus, when he was preaching in the wilderness, we have this in Luke and in Matthew, Matthew chapter 3 or 4 there, where he says to the Jews that came out to be baptized, bring forth fruit, meet for repentance. And I would believe that restitution is one of those fruits of repentance that will give a signal that an individual is serious about things and is willing to be out of pocket of his own riches or own money or his own sustenance in order to clear his conscience before God and man and so stand justified before God and the world. So John the Baptist taught it first of all that we are to bring forth fruit, meet for repentance.

And one of those seems to be throughout history is this teaching or doctrine of restitution or restoration to its rightful owner of the things we have wrongfully taken. Also we notice that faith needs action. And we like this one very much, this example that is before us.

Let us begin. Well, Jesus entered and passed through Jericho. Now it is interesting to us, we knew that Jesus loved sinners.

The city of Jericho had been destroyed many, many years ago and there was a curse on this city for anyone to rebuild it. And here we have it rebuilt and we notice that Jesus did not take a big bypass away from the city because he was under a curse, because he himself came into this world to remove the curse of sin upon people's lives. But anyway, he went right through that city even though it was a city that was not a blessed city or not supposed to have been.

And it just shows the compassion again, brother Don, that Jesus had for people. It did not matter to him whether they were publicans or sinners or where they were, caught in adultery or whatever happened. He was interested in ministering to them and so he passed and entered through Jericho.

And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus which was chief among the publicans and he was rich. Now, may we just come in a bit on the typical publican's life. Publicans were tax collectors for the most part, I believe.

It's referring to the kind of a group of people that were authorized by the government to be the tax collectors. And there was such a dishonesty in those days that if an individual would be a tax collector, he

was able to charge a little extra and especially here it says by false accusation. Later on when he made things right, he realized that when he had taken things by false accusation, he would restore them.

Well, as best as I can understand, false accusation was a method that they had to bring a certain accusation against a property owner or a householder and somehow extort extra money than the taxes that he normally would have paid. And so the publicans, they were masters at this. They would make a false accusation and they would charge extra money and then they would hand their given amount maybe over to the higher government but they would keep the extra that they had extorted by false accusation as they went around collecting taxes.

And we understand it's very interesting that Matthew had been a tax collector when Jesus called him to come and follow him. It shows us that Jesus wants people to come from all walks of life. Even though this was a profession of ill repute, we might say, an undesirable kind of a scum of the society.

People narrowly looked upon them I believe many times for their dishonesty and knew they cheated and all that but that didn't stop Jesus from actually wanting to redeem them and to help them out of their situation and that's the way it was here. So he was not only a publican but he was chief among the publicans. And history would give it that there's even a possibility that he was able to accumulate extra because he was a chief among the publicans that he had lesser men who would go out and extort and then somehow he was able to keep even some of that money and pass it on.

And here we have the statement that he was rich. He was rich. Now the Bible gives a lot of warnings about being rich.

In the chapter before, it's very interesting, Luke seems to be written a lot more in chronological order than some of the Gospels are, especially John. John seems to be written primarily on the last week of Jesus' life. But here we have pretty much a chronological order starting with his birth, ending with his death and resurrection.

And so you have a lot of the happenings that kind of happen in sequence there in the book. And in the previous chapter, we have clearly taught here the story of a rich young ruler that came to Jesus and said, Good Master, what must I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus, of course, challenged him why he called him good. There's none good but God.

But then he challenged him with the Old Testament law, the Ten Commandments, and he said, All these have I kept from my youth. Then he said, Now there's one thing more that you lack, and that you ought to go and sell what you have and give to the poor and come and follow me. Because Jesus knew him and he knew that he had great possessions.

He, of course, diverted there and ended the conversation. And the Bible says he went away sorrowfully because he realized he was touched in the area, that he was not willing to give up and not willing to yield himself. And so Jesus gives this teaching right on the heels of that.

How hardly, in verse 24 of chapter 18, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God. Now, he did not say that it was impossible. But he did say it was a rare thing.

And the Bible teaches us the reason for that is because rich men tend to trust in their riches for whatever they need. They tend to buy whatever they want and they think that their money can get them friends and fame and fashion and whatever they want. And so they trust in that money in order for the things they

need and not on the living God for salvation.

And they're not down and out and they're not a needy person. Where we notice through the tenor of the New Testament that Jesus catered far more to the poor and the needy people because they heard him, they were needy, they knew they were needy. They didn't have that confidence in their money and therefore they would come to him and follow him a lot quicker than the rich would.

But he did warn here and said how hardly it is for those that have riches to enter into the kingdom of God. Then he made this profound statement on that it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. Well there's a lot of speculation on what the needle's eye is.

Some take it literal, it actually means the eye of a needle and that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And I don't know how the disciples here interpret it but they seem to feel it's totally impossible. But then others feel that a needle's eye was a low door in the wall of Jerusalem and that men could come in late after the main gates were shut.

They could come through this little hole in the wall called a needle's eye and that they could get a camel through if he would go down on all fours and slide through on his belly like and be able to come in through that gate. And so what they, others would take that it takes a great humbling and a lowering of oneself in society as a rich man and then he can get into the kingdom of heaven. So I'm not here to settle that controversy today.

However, I do know that the disciples looked at it as impossible. Who then can be saved? I mean it's impossible. So they must have taken from it that it actually was a little needle's eye or at least something that seemed impossible for a man to go through.

Jesus then said these words, the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. And he corrects their impossibility teaching there and balances it out and says, but it is possible for a rich man to get into the kingdom of God. That possibility lies with God.

And then comes the next chapter and we have Zacchaeus and he was a rich man and he got into the kingdom. And so I believe that he used that story, illustration to illustrate what he meant to the disciples that this is how a rich man can get into the kingdom of God. So we notice that he was chief among the publicans and that he was rich.

And he sought in verse 3 to see Jesus who he was and could not for the press because he was little of stature. We have the children's song about him being a wee wee man. Many of you remember that children, don't you? About Zacchaeus being a wee wee man.

We take him to be, oh, maybe about five foot tall is what I would take in the average man. Maybe he would have been even less than that. But most men are at least about five foot, four, ten, five foot tall.

Hardly anybody is less than that. But when they get into a crowd, they are not able to see much because everybody is normally about five, eight, ten and six foot high and they are just not able to see. But this man, though he was rich, he desired to see Jesus.

The first step for rich or poor in order to get right with God and experience salvation is that a man would love to see Jesus. And he has that inward desire. Now, I don't know by this time whether his conscience was bothering him because of his ill gotten riches or wrongly gotten riches that he had received as a tax

collector or what was bugging him at this hour of his life.

But it would seem to me that something was. And he had heard about Jesus and heard some of the things he did and he just had the great desire, maybe he had that nagging conscience within, that gnawing away, that eating away of him, something is not right in my life. I need something and I wonder if that Jesus that is walking around here would be able to help me.

And it seems like that desire was great. May I just once again emphasize, that is the desire that everyone, man, woman, boy or girl, who you are at the age of accountability, you will not jump into the kingdom or be swept into the kingdom of God in a nonchalant way. That you simply don't have much care, much concern and all at once you find out that Jesus saved me.

It is to him that seeketh he shall find. And all of you, if you are going to have any experience with the Lord Jesus Christ and have a reality to that experience, you will need to seek the Lord and desire to see him. And desire, and this is very exemplary, in Zacchaeus' life.

He didn't care what it cost him. This man was ready to part with his riches or whatever. He so wanted to see Jesus that he allowed himself to be vulnerable as to whatever that would mean in his life.

And I really like that. That's a wonderful thing. Copy him, young men, women, young ladies.

Copy this man in a desire to see Jesus. And he could have said, well, I'm too small, you know, and just give up so easily like so many people do. I can never see him anyhow.

The press is great. I can't push in to get into the inside circle. I'm just going to forget it.

After all, I tried a little. And maybe God will, at the judgment, at least give me a little bit of effort for the effort that I had to desire. No, that wasn't good enough for Zacchaeus.

And so he devised this plan that he would run ahead of the crowd. He saw a sycamore tree standing there in the route that Jesus was going. And he climbed up in that sycamore tree and waited until the crowd came by.

And, of course, being up in that tree, he was able to look down and able to see Jesus as clear probably about as anybody in the crowd, except for those right on the inside of the circle. And by that we see this diligence. This man was a rich man.

Can you imagine a rich man climbing a sycamore tree? We already see the humility of his life. We already see the fact that he didn't care if his pants got dirty a little bit or he might have even ripped a shirt or something at a branch somewhere. He was so earnest in wanting to see Jesus that even as a rich man, he climbed up in that tree and waited until the crowd came his way.

And that is commendable on this man's life, to have such an emphasis there to want to see the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus came to the place, verse 5, he looked up and saw him and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste and come down, for today I must abide at thy house. That's amazing here how soon things fall into place and work out for an individual that presses into the kingdom of God first.

In other words, that he first has that diligence and he first puts that effort forth, how things unfold in that individual's life shortly thereafter to also see that God is coming his way. The Bible says, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force. And that scripture means that there are those

that earnestly press into the kingdom of God and they should, that's a good and right thing, but you will find that if a man is diligent and presses into the kingdom of God to see the Lord Jesus, to have an encounter with Him, you will find Jesus soon saying, Hey, come down, I'm coming to your house.

The others will miss that. Normally they will never have that experience. And they might even say, Well, I wouldn't mind seeing Him for the last ten years, but somehow I never run into Him.

You cannot say that. You cannot have that alibi and that excuse. If you are diligent to press in to see Him and you do what's on your part, Jesus will stand at the bottom of your tree and say, Come on, I'm going home with you.

And I so appreciate that, to see that Jesus is also looking for serious searchers. He wasn't just looking for the crowd that wanted, like the five thousand, that wanted to be fed of the loaves and fishes and wanted some benefit for themselves and that's why they had followed Him. He was looking for a man that would press into the matter, that would take it serious and that was earnest, and that man, above all the others, got to have a noon meal with Him.

And that's still that way today. You want Him to come to your house? You want Him to... You know what I think as I talk to Don a little bit in the back here about the man he was talking about that got converted out of a dark religious setting like that? I'm sure that man pressed into that. He made contact.

He wanted somebody to come see him because he was sick and tired of what he had and he wanted something more in life. And those people, I find the world over, they find. They get something.

The rest, nothing happens. And I'll tell you, it's an answer. To all of us today, if you seek God with diligence, with an effort like that, you will find Him.

That's a promise in the Word of God. And the Word to you is when Jesus does show up and does come up and look at you and then the Word is, make haste. Like I said in brothers meeting the last time, you know, if you are beset with sin and with temptation, you ought to run for help.

You ought to run for a counsel and for somebody to pray with you and say, brethren, I'm having a struggle. I want help. I want out of this situation.

It's for those that victory comes to. Those that will make haste. For today I must abide at thy house.

Well, he obeyed instantly. The Bible says he made haste and he came down and received Him joyfully. And that's another prerequisite for the Christian life.

If you are skeptical, can you imagine if Jesus would have come to his house and he would have said, well, now, I wasn't really prepared for you. I wasn't really expecting you. I'll let you into the living room, but I don't really want you to go anywhere else in the house.

So, make sure you just stay here in the living room. I'm ashamed of what I have in the back room and upstairs in the attic and all those places. I just don't want you to see anything else.

No, he just received Him joyfully. Come on in, Lord. Into my life, I don't care whatever you find.

Because He was of a mind that whatever is not right, I'm going to make right. He has that picture of coming unreservedly to the Lord Jesus. Without reservation, without any hidden rooms, without any

cupboards locked up.

And I so appreciate that in this teaching here. Well, we don't know what happened. Of course, when the people around there saw it, they murmured.

Perhaps they had a bit of jealousy, but I would think not. I think they were the kind that were reserved. I'm not sure we want you in our house.

You know, I'm not ready for that. And so, when Zacchaeus got to have Him and he went with Him, then they murmured. Because they knew that He was a sinner, and He went to be guest to a man that is a sinner.

Now this is a very interesting teaching here too. We notice that Jesus ate with publicans. And He went to the house of sinners.

And by it, we have a lesson. He did not go there for social fellowship with a sinner and sit there and talk about the sinful things that He was enjoying in the world. It's such a difference as to how we go to a man's house.

If we go to a man's house because we have a message for him and saying, I understand, and we sense there's a hunger and a thirst after God, and therefore we go and we sit down. We don't care how bad he has been in the past. We are there to lead him to Christ.

We are there with a message to salvation. We're not there for carnal fellowship. We're not there for entertainment.

We're not there just to visit Him because He's our relative. So many people are contaminated in a wrong way by having social fellowship with the ungodly and going into the places of the world and worldly homes and worldly entertaining places and all that. And then they say, I got in the wrong crowd and the crowd pulled me down.

And all that is true. But if you go to a sinner's house, then go as a Christian, as a representative of the Gospel, and give them the message of truth. If you go with that reason, you can go most anywhere.

I even believe men have been able to walk into a bar that way. It's not a very recommendable place to go, but men have done that. And I preached the Gospel to a man sitting at a table and he got saved.

You can go a lot of places if you're right with God. And you go for the right reason. But don't have that carnal desire, boy, I'd really like to see what it's like in there.

And you know, you have all those kinds of desires and you're liable to get tripped up. Well, Jesus was open and He just invited him in. And then we have no record of the conversation.

I don't know what all took place and we're going to have to wait through eternity to find out what the conversation was. To me, it really doesn't matter. The details of exactly what happened in this conversation are not all that important.

I only know that at the end of it all, the fruit of repentance was all over the place. And that's what we're interested in in our subject, restitution, the fruit of repentance. Zacchaeus stood and said unto the Lord, and I would assume that for a while they were sitting down.

And I often see this. We go into a house and someone who is searching and someone who is seeking and they begin to ask questions and they want to know, what about this? And if I can use my imagination a little bit, I would imagine the very thing that made Zacchaeus seek for the Lord Jesus also made him ask certain questions when he had him in his house. I can imagine he said, you know what, I have things on my heart that are bothering me.

You know, I'm a publican, I've been a tax collector, I've cheated people, I've stolen from people, I've given false accusations. What does a man do with those kind of things? They lay in my heart, they lay in my conscience, you know. And Jesus would have instructed him and would have led him to believe on him.

And maybe even, it was still under the law, he had not given himself as a sacrifice, but perhaps he was able to talk about his sin and he was able to see his sinfulness and repent of that and all that. We assume that that took place. But then we have him standing up.

And I love it. I just love it. If again the diligent part is upon you and I after having met the Lord Jesus and sat down and had a discussion with him, or maybe you are on your knees and look at the conversion experience that happens when you and I get on our knees before God.

We weep over our sins. We confess them. We acknowledge them.

But that is not the end of the road to the experience of salvation until we stand and say, I am going a different direction. I am going to make all wrong things right. I am going to give my life for the Lord Jesus from here out.

And that is what I see in that because we have the results of what he said when he stood. When I just like that, he stood. He said, All right, Lord.

I am going a different direction from now. I am going to go a different direction. My old life is past.

I do not want to be a publican anymore. I do not want to cheat people. I am finished with that.

I am not going to give any false accusation. Now I want to live for God. I want to live a godly and upright life.

Therefore he said that. Behold, Lord. You know what? This is what I am going to do.

I am going to solve this problem. I am going to bestow half of my goods I am going to give to the poor. Now here is what I think.

I believe this is the answer to the man that called me from out of state. If you have made a lot of wrongs, you have taken a lot of money, and you have no idea how to make right. You do not know where the people live.

You met them somewhere, and you extorted them somewhere, or did something, or overcharged them, and you have no idea where to find them. There are many of those situations. He said, half of my goods I am going to give to the poor.

And it seems like that that is the way to make things right when you do not know where the people live. You do not know how to go back and make it right. You do not know how to pay back where you took.

Then just take a good chunk of the riches you have and give them to the poor. I think that is a logical remedy to make restitution that I am going to just give some of my goods to kind of make right for where I took from the public that did not belong to me, I am going to give to the public, and I am going to let them have and distribute among them, and that is going to resolve the issue in my conscience. I think that is the way.

And we will see that maybe as we go back in the Old Testament and look at some of the Old Testament settings of this. Now he says, he is going to give half of his goods to the poor. And if I have taken from anything from any man, if the Lord brings to my mind an individual that I have cheated and overcharged or not paid the bill and it got forgotten, I will make it right with him.

If I have taken anything from any man, in other words, if the Lord shows me who it was, and that is very interesting, I have met people different times in life that say they might have been a Christian four years, and all at once they drove by a certain street and a certain store or a certain house, and there it was. They came back to their mind, you know what? I stole something out of that place one day. I am going to go in and see if the man is still there.

And they make that attempt and God reveals to them the actual man that they cheated or it may be a resident somewhere or whoever. And you meet the man years after you become a Christian. You say, you know what? I took advantage of that man and I make it right.

I will restore unto him fourfold. He has already given half of his goods to the poor. Now he is going to every individual that he might remember and that he might meet that he had wronged, he is going to restore him fourfold.

And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation. Come to this house. Now we have talked many times about premature birth.

We have talked about people just trying to accept Jesus, you know, and they don't look at their life and they are not willing to turn from their sin and not willing to repent. Or they just want to add the Lord Jesus Christ to their life. That has been commonly preached from this pulpit over the years.

But I think here is again a revelation of that very thing. Jesus didn't say as soon as he met with him, this day is salvation. Come to your house.

But he waited until he stood and declared how he would change his life, change directions, make wrongs right. And then Jesus said, this day is salvation. May I just emphasize again that there are times we declare the conversion a bit too soon, prematurely.

We may even have seen a few tears and all that, but we have not heard any desire coming out of the man's mouth a real confession of how he desires to change his ways. I know I always rejoice in leading a soul to Christ. At the end of it, when he thanks God for salvation and you can just tell his desires are so different.

He wants to go a different direction. He wants to just change course in his life. That is when often you can say, you know, salvation has come to this house.

Now Jesus didn't wait until he did it. He didn't wait until he worked it all out before he said, you're saved man. He said it when he saw that his desire was right.

This is what I'll do. And he saw he had a set confidence or countenance and statement of what he was going to do. Then Jesus said, salvation is come to this house for as much as he also is a son of Abraham.

And now he was a son of Abraham by promise, not a Jew. Even though he probably was a Jew, he would have been a son of Abraham by lineage before. Now he was a son of Abraham by promise.

And that's what we need to also become sons of Abraham by the promise of grace that has come down through Abraham because he received it not of works, but by faith. And I also believe that Zacchaeus truly did believe in Jesus and truly did accept him as the Messiah, the Savior of the world. And that is what it took to finish the work there in salvation.

Now, I'd like to take and look at a few other scriptures here in, oh let me see, Luke 11.41 I want to have marked here. I just want to see if that's one. Yes, it's simply a statement like this in Luke 11.41 But rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean unto you.

It just shows that when a man is willing to part with his riches in order for the poor, that that is a blessing and a right thing to do for any man. Rather give alms of such things as ye have, and behold, all things are clean to you. Somehow, when that is done in a right heart, I believe men can give to the poor and try to kind of earn points for acceptance with God in a wrong way.

But if a man does it with a right heart, like we believe that different ones did, the widow with her two mites, and Zacchaeus, you know, that is a real fruit of true repentance in his life. Now, let us, and then also along with that, in Psalms 41.1, we have another Scripture that blesses giving to the poor. Blessed is he that considereth the poor, the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

I just had to look at that verse again and marvel at how many times I have actually seen those things. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth, and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of the enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

It just shows again that a man who remembers the poor and considers them, that he will be blessed upon the earth, and God will take care of him in a very real way. Now, I want you to consider with me, I know that much of our laws have eroded over the past, but you know, we have, what is it? There is about one person in a hundred of the population of America is incarcerated in a prison. But you notice that that was not the case in Bible times.

They did not have prisons to just put all evil doers away, especially not under the law. If the crime was serious enough, the individual was put to death. But for many of the crimes, we are looking at, that Zacchaeus and his men were involved in, we simply have this matter called restitution, and if a person did that, then he was left go.

If he was willing to restore the things he had taken, and we will see this as we read, go back in the law, and show you these verses, then that individual was not incarcerated for his theft. He was left go, but he had to give extra what he had actually taken. If he confessed it himself, we will see that he had to give a fifth more, 20% interest.

If he was caught, he had to repay double or four times. And I think Zacchaeus just so voluntarily wanted to make sure and give extra that he gave a fourfold, and he probably knew that that was in the law, and he just simply said, hey, I'm not going to be marginal about this. I am going to go all the way what is required.

So, that to me, if I can just give my opinion, even though I know it will never be that way in this world again under this economy, capitalistic economy, but that would be so much better than prison. You know these men, they burn a barn down and they put them in prison for five years, and you never have to pay anything. Or they steal a car and wreck the car sometimes in running away from the police, and they're put in jail for a couple of years and then left go, and they never restore, they never repay the thing that they took.

If men and women would have to make restitution, and they'd be held to that, that they must make it right, everything that they had made wrong, plus 20% interest at least, or double, that would just be so different than for us as a nation, in my opinion, for us to, it costs us about \$36,000 to \$40,000 to keep a man in prison for one year. He's there for two or three years, it may cost us about \$100,000 to keep the individual, and he still hasn't made things right, and the man he stole from still hasn't been repaid unless he had insurance, and that we all pay for by our insurance deals or charges, and so that's not really the answer either. Maybe the individual gets his money back, but we all pay for that.

The individual should be held to make it right, but we live in an imperfect world and people who don't live by the word of God, so what can we expect, but perhaps in a thousand year reign it will be that way. But let's just look at the heart of God, as we go back into the old law, and see where this whole matter of restitution comes from, and what Zacchaeus was saying that he wanted to do, and why he wanted to do what he wanted to do in order to clear his record. Ezekiel, or Exodus, 22, 1-17.

Exodus 22, 1-17. If a man steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, has the money of course from it, he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. Don't ask me why it was five and four, but that's the way the Lord spelled it out.

But here he would either eat it, and so he couldn't return it, or he would sell it, and pocket the money, and he wouldn't be able to go get it unless he somehow could go buy the thing back and give it back. If caught, he was asked to restore fourfold or fivefold back to the individual. I think that would be a pretty good cure for thievery, don't you? Alright.

Verse 2. If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him. That is still somewhat in effect in the United States, and it's interesting how much of these laws do reflect the law of God, because you know that's where all law comes from. It comes from God.

From God's word, and today many laws are based on that, but many are not also, and there's an erosion there. But here if a man is breaking in, and of course he's caught there, and the owner takes the advantage and kills him, there was no blood to be shed for him. Other than that, it would have been an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, but here the owner was exonerated if he caught a man breaking in, and he would kill him while he was trying to break into his place.

If the sun be risen upon him, there shall be blood shed for him. For he should make full restitution, and if he have nothing, then he shall be sold for his debt. Now that is interesting again.

We have a lot of poor people today that are on drugs, they have no money, and they're robbing banks. How can they ever make it right? Some of them will steal \$50,000, you know. Well, they don't have any money to repay it.

Well, that was the case in the Old Testament. They didn't have any money to pay it. If the individual was sold as a slave to pay that debt off, and when it was paid off, then he was set free again.

Interesting, isn't it? I had to think of the boys who tore through the building here at that wedding and did about \$10,000 damage. You know, we have gotten just a slightest little trickle now and then of restitution for the last, what is it, three, four years already? Three years, I'd say. You know, these boys probably don't have a job or they don't pay, and there's nobody on their case, and the restitution at this rate is going to take the rest of their life, you know, to pay that \$10,000 back of the damage they did.

But that's just the way it is in society. But here, if you didn't pay and didn't have the money to pay, of course you were sold and you had to work it off for somebody else until your debt was paid. If a theft be certainly found in his hand alive, whether it be ox, ass, or sheep, he shall restore double.

If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten and you shall put in his beast and shall feed on another man's field and the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution. Very, very interesting. As I grew up, this was a problem.

A certain neighbor didn't have good fences. His cattle would get out into your alfalfa or into your corn patch and about 30 cows in the middle of the night, you know, and do a lot of damage. Well, the Bible says here that you were then supposed to take the best of your field and you were supposed to graze his cattle, the neighbor that your cattle had eaten of, and bring them over and let them graze on your alfalfa patch.

You were supposed to make full restitution and what the bottom line of this whole thing is, responsibility, responsibility. We are called upon to be responsible individuals and when we do damage to our neighbor, we are supposed to make it right. That was a wonderful upbringing I had in my home.

My father was very conscientious in this matter. If his cattle would have got out or the horses went through the fence and grazed all day in a nice planted field and clipped the corn off, you know, down at the roots and my father would have been there within hours the next day to pay for it or to make it right or to somehow and with great shame that he didn't keep his fences up so that the horses or the cattle get out. And that's a good thing.

You know that today if you have a horse or if you have an ox and it gets out on the road in the middle of the night and somebody comes along and hits it, you are held responsible for not keeping your fence and that the ox or the horse or whatever animal had got out on the road and was hit by a car, you are responsible. He just had one recently like that that a man was out hunting and he shot. He shot his gun off at a deer, I presume.

Wasn't watching where he shot. Just happened a couple of weeks ago here in deer season. The bullet went through the house and clipped off the nose of their dog.

Well, guess what? He has to have artificial nose replacement and the man that shot the gun has to pay for the whole thing. Probably a very precious dog. But he has to make restitution.

One of the freakiest things that can happen but that's what happens. And our laws are based on that. We must be responsible people where we shoot, what we let out and let our fences deteriorate and the next thing you know our cattle are out in the middle of the road and we're in trouble.

I love it. Young men, stay keen. We are to take responsibility for our actions and for our possessions in life.

That's the principle that runs all the way through the Scripture. And when Zacchaeus got up against that and he realized he was a responsible man for all the things that happened, he took responsibility in full. And Jesus said, salvation came to your house.

Alright. Verse 6, If fire break out and catch in thorns, so that the stacks of corn or the standing corn or the field be consumed therewith, he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution. Uh-oh.

You start a fire, you better be careful where you start a fire. If you're going to catch the wheat field on fire by the little bonfire you make, or like the man in Montana who started a little bonfire or started a fire along the road for whatever reason and left and didn't douse it with water. The wind blew the sparks around and got into the dry grass and thousands of acres burned because of it.

It's neglect. Well, they tried to prosecute the man but the sum of money was so astronomical I never found out what happened but I think they did finally find the man who lit the fire and did prosecute him at least to some degree for it. So, we are responsible for fires that we light.

And especially so if our children playing with matches in a neighbor's barn. It's a terrible thing. Often can be \$100,000, \$200,000 damage.

We must teach our children what an awesome responsibility when you handle a match. You are able to burn a city down with the fire that you kindled. And we must teach our children and ourselves that we are responsible for fire whenever you start a fire.

That you take responsibility for it and make sure it's out. Verse 7 If a man shall deliver unto his neighbor money or stuff to keep and it be stolen out of the man's house if the thief be found he shall pay double. Verse 8 If the thief be not found then the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges to see whether he hath put his hand unto his neighbor's good.

Here if a man says, well, okay, I was keeping this expensive dog for you but somebody stole it. Well, then you are supposed to bring the man who said that before the judgment and examine him as to whether he didn't sell the dog. So to say, and pocket the money.

Instead of just saying, well, it got stolen. You're supposed to find out who is responsible for this thing and execute just judgment upon the situation. In verse 9 there, he simply says, for all manner of trespass whether it be for ox or for ass or sheep or raiment or any manner of lost thing which another challenges to be his the cause of both parties shall come before the judges of whom the judges shall condemn.

He shall pay double unto his neighbor. And if a man deliver unto his neighbor an ass or an ox or a sheep or a beast to keep and it die or be hurt or driven away no man seeing it then shall an oath of the Lord be between them both and he shall not put his hand unto his neighbor's goods. And the owner of it shall accept of and he shall not make it good.

And if it be stolen from him he shall make restitution unto the owner thereof. Meaning that if you are keeping something for your neighbor and you allow a thief to get in and you don't protect it and you just let it sit outside and then it gets stolen you don't go back to your neighbor and say, I'm sorry your tractor that you had over in my barn got stolen last night. You are responsible and you must pay for the tractor.

That's how it was in the Old Testament. Now I'm not saying that we have to live according to the Old Testament law and let it be that kind of a law to us. But as we see Zacchaeus we know the principle is not dead in the New Testament and that responsibility should continue with us throughout life.

Just a few other scriptures here in Proverbs Chapter 6 Verse 30 and 31 Verse 30 Men do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his soul when he is hungry. But if he be found he shall restore sevenfold he shall give all the substance of his house. There it just then he talks about adultery the same way.

And so the teaching here is that and I don't know again why here it's sevenfold. If a thief is hungry and he steals a little bit in order to satisfy his hunger men don't despise that. But if he be caught stealing people have no idea why he's stealing but he's caught in the middle of the act.

He is a thief and has to be treated as one and must restore sevenfold. Now I would just like to give a little illustration a few stories on this subject on a practical way. I have here in one of Billy Graham's meetings years ago Evangelist Billy Graham got five \$100 bills with the request that they be forwarded to the Internal Revenue Collector.

In more recent days three others sent \$765 tagged as restitution for shortages in past income tax reports. Now this is interesting we know that Billy Graham wasn't the most practical preacher you know as far as these kind of things we're talking about this morning but he preached the gospel in his time and men would get saved and would send the money into him and say can you somehow see that the IRS gets this money I am troubled by having kept back some of my tax money and therefore here it is and I'm paying. Very very interesting.

I want to read part of the letter here. Partly through the lack of knowledge and also from wrong advice from an accountant I did not pay certain taxes in full. The letter went on but God hasn't let me forget it so I want to get the money I think I owe to the Treasury.

I hesitate to send cash to the Internal Revenue Department lest it be a temptation to anyone into whose hands it might fall. None of the letters were signed. Just send the money in to Billy Graham and let him see to it that it got to the IRS.

The point I want to make about this is the fact that in the old days there was a lot of that. I remember of revival meetings going through the county here back in the 50s with George Brunkner's that way and other times too when there were revival meetings and young men and I boys would get converted or other young boys and I remember we had that store and we used to have pumpkins and watermelons and they'd come out and steal a few watermelons at 11 o'clock at night after we were all in bed you know. But when a revival meeting come through these boys would come to our place and sometimes a deacon was with them and they would walk right in there and come right to my grandfather and wanted to pay for the watermelons they stole from a revival meeting.

That's the old time religion. But a person so often does not hear of those kind of things today. It seems like it's it's waning and therefore I rejoiced when I got that phone call but I have another story here I would like to give that is happening right now.

Just has been happening and I wanted to talk to Jeff's son here to see whether he heard about the story in Nicaragua perhaps you know it much better than I do but I'll give it the way I know it. A man by the name of Omar was a Spanish, Hispanic man in Southern California and as I understand he, I don't know whether

he was here legal or illegally but he had a girlfriend and she became pregnant in their relationship and had an abortion and he was a lover of children and he got so angry at her for having an abortion that he threatened her that if she has another abortion he would kill her. And sure enough she had to be, she aborted the child and sometime later she was pregnant again and she aborted it the second time and Omar killed her.

And he ran from that murder scene and headed back down for Nicaragua where he was from and as I understand the story that the law was hot on his tail. They realized he had done it or thought he had done it and they were after him but he got away and fled back to Nicaragua. While in Nicaragua he got involved in a drug ring down there and it wasn't long in the dealing of drugs and you know how it goes many times or we know that by the news he murdered another individual and now he fled back to the backwoods of Nicaragua and there he was in hiding and I don't know how he got himself a little cabin back there and what have you but later on a man had a vicious dog.

He was a cross between a pit bull and a rottweiler and when he left that dog loose or when he was around this property where he was he killed three animals one day and so the man said I can't have this dog and this Omar's father knew where he was in hiding and he said I'll take the dog back to him and let him handle it and so he took this rottweiler pit bull cross and he took him back there and he had to drag him I think he took him on horseback and he took him back there and Omar came out to get him and drug him the rest of the way home and he decided he's going to befriend this dog and the story goes that he looked him straight in the eye and he talked to him for a while and finally the dog hung his head and subdued himself and they made friends that day and so he was his friend and he

went with him wherever and one day he came home from being away and just as he opened his door to his house the rottweiler went in first just like he knew there was some danger in there and he pounced on the bed and grabbed one of the most poisonous reptiles in Nicaragua was laying under the pillow or on the pillow and that's where Omar would have laid his head down and went to sleep and he took that reptile but before he got it under control it bit him it bit the dog and so he did kill it then also before he died but then he had the reptile killed and then the dog died and Omar got the picture here of someone he loved or somebody who cared for him enough that he gave his life in order to save Omar's life and he began to think about that apparently and he began to, you see the picture of

Christ there, you know how this dog saw the danger and went in there to take care of the serpent even at the risk of his own life which it cost his own life to do it he again befriended another young lady and was living with her without marriage and she had a child and so again you remember this man loved children so he had a daughter I believe and then later on another daughter still in hiding back there in the woods of Nicaragua and when a second daughter was born sometime later this child got very sick and in that time he apparently had enough of witness of God and there is a God that he held that child up before God and said God if you heal this child I'll give my life to you and I think he was on his way to get help some and maybe saw some doctor or nurse or somebody who ministered

to the child and the child got well and Omar began to seek after the Lord in his course of searching he found a brother Pablo Yoder down there who has been a missionary for many years in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and he found him and he told him his story and he dumped the whole thing out and Pablo led him to the Lord now here's the problem what shall he do from here like Zacchaeus he got up and he said I'm willing to do whatever so Pablo called just in the last month or two or six weeks here called the United States government or the police department in California where the scene of the accident took place and

told him the whole story about Omar to a detective there he was reluctant to believe it, skeptical but he gave Pablo gave him his phone number and they deliberated up there a while

and he called him back and he said Omar is ready to do whatever if you however he also turned himself in immediately to the Nicaraguan government and Nicaragua has a law that if you're on trial in Nicaragua you cannot be extricated to another country in order to satisfy a crime there, you must live this crime, well the difference was that in Nicaragua for the murder in the drug ring that he had made he would have got about seven or eight years and California was saying life in prison for the girlfriend that he had killed in cold blood there and maybe even the death penalty but I don't think they have the death penalty in California so I'm not sure about that but anyway they called back and forth him and Pablo and finally the detectives said okay I believe your story enough that we're

willing to come down and they debated a while of what they would do and where they would meet and Omar said I'm willing to meet just an incredible story just before he did that there was a date set that they would meet at a certain hotel in Managua Nicaragua, the capital city I think it is and his uncle called him from Florida found out he had got converted found out he wanted to meet with the authorities and he had been involved in a crime or had committed a crime that Omar had been at least an accomplice or had been with him and so he was so afraid that Omar would also confess his sin that he threatened that he would come down and kill him or that he would hinder him and whatever but Omar wouldn't be changed he went on with his meeting and his uncle actually did come down but somehow

the Lord kept him away and they went into this hotel and the detective walked up to him and they sat down at a table in a lunch area there for four hours they grilled Omar from one end to the other he had a satchel along he had evidences along of the crime scene and everything and he laid everything to Omar and Pablo was along and they just went through the whole thing from beginning to end and Pablo had prayed with him numerous times before they went in and said tell him the truth tell him the truth Omar and Omar told him the truth and as it stands right now he's still begging him to somehow come to the United States to be tried there but that is basically he's caught in between the two countries it's illegal for him to go to the United States and turn himself in when he is under

obligation to the Nicaraguan government first of all so there he hangs with the entire story off of his chest and both murderers given to both countries and the authorities that are involved I was so blessed with that story there's so few so little of that happening in our time in our day so pray for Omar as he finds his way through that he knows he may not see oh yes I did want to say that Pablo did baptize him in this time of confession and then they married him the same day his wife was baptized I think or maybe him too but I know the girlfriend he was living with had two girls with she also got converted in the whole thing and the day they baptized her they married both of them and left them live together until the prosecution takes place there and that's where the story ends for now

as we're not sure what will happen but he has the heart and the willingness that he said he would go to California if it needs be and be away from his family for many years and suffer whatever it takes in order to make things right he's willing to do that a lot of people say well if I confess then what they'll arrest me I'll go to jail and a lot of people are not willing to do that and therefore they hedge and try to keep things hidden even though they've committed a major crime sometimes in honesty when people go back to those places and they try to make things right depending on the level of the crime they're forgiven and pardoned and let go seeing the change in their life and Omar's willing to risk that but there are other times when they have to have a sentence although it's often

much less when they give their whole story voluntarily confess they're not caught but they come forward and so it's highly recommendable if you have an issue that is illegal or wrong your sentence is less many times when you come voluntarily than if they discover it and they find you and you're caught and that's the encouragement that I want to give here this morning in this matter of restitution the fruit of repentance I believe it is a very necessary doctrine in the word of God I do believe it threads the whole way through the Bible from cover to cover and that it is a necessary thing for us to believe embrace and teach and so that when we get converted the true fruit of repentance is that we are willing to make things right may God give His blessing I'll turn the testimony time over to

Brother David I do believe that there are probably a few in here that the Lord has spoken to regarding this issue and if you recall Brother Mose had suggested that maybe during our testimony time here as we open it up that you would consider maybe sharing a testimony this morning of maybe how God moved in your heart at the time of your conversion or shortly thereafter or maybe even this morning maybe God moved in your heart in the same way that He moved in Zacchaeus' heart and what a better place to open up your heart than here before the church before God's people I found it was interesting too in Luke 19 the passage that Brother Mose read regarding Zacchaeus that at the end of that passage in verse 10 many Bible commentators consider verse 10 the key verse of the book of Luke and it's

interesting that that verse which is considered by many commentators as being the key verse of the book of Luke comes at the end of that passage regarding Zacchaeus and that verse states this way in verse 9 Jesus said you know this day is salvation come to this house for as much as he also is a son of Abraham regarding Zacchaeus' conversion and his fruit of repentance but then verse 10 says for the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost and that is the key and that's the affirmation of one of the fruits of a converted life so I would like to open up this morning raise your hand and we'll get a microphone to you maybe you would share something this morning right up here in front and then back there sister Sherry I have a few experiences of restitution in my own life one

time when I was really young I don't know how this works because I wasn't converted but when I was 6 I was frequently stealing and then when I got to be about 12 and this thing laid in my heart as a little girl I didn't know who to give this all this money back to of the things I've been stealing I'd actually been stealing in my kindergarten class and stealing quite a bit bring it home I walk to school I'd carry it under my coat and bring it all home hide it in the house and I went to my principal at my new school and I told him what I'd done and he said bring all your money you have to me and your conscience will be clear he was a very wise man so as a little 12 year old I emptied my piggy bank of all the money I had and I gave it to that principal and he blessed me and said you did the

right thing and you don't have to try to find that teacher out or anything else you did the right thing your conscience can be clear and then about 14 years ago my husband and I got a hold of a tract from Charles Finney and it clearly read that you've committed sin one at a time and you need to confess sin one at a time and with much trembling and fear my husband and I went back to our lives again and my husband helped me and when in one incidence I called the wife of a previous boyfriend and asked her if I could talk to her husband and she had known that he was my boyfriend earlier before I was married and I just confessed my sins to him and made that clear in life even though it wasn't a stealing or things like that and also my husband took me other places that I needed to go and just

confess those sins before the people I had committed those sins to and probably the first time in my life as a Christian felt a clear conscience because everything that the Lord had told me and convicted me of I

was able to go and make them right with the people I had sinned against Amen Amen, thank you Cherie Jonah, yes Amen Brother Mose, thank you for the message which I too as a youth growing up got into a lot of different things stealing and lying and cheating and I've been walking with the Lord for almost 19 years now and I would say for probably the first 10 years there was many things some that was brought to my mind almost immediately I was I had to pay restitution to the state the state I was in because I was caught in certain deeds they made me so there were some things that was

just instantaneous that I had to pay and then as my heart so I thought was clear at that point as life went on and it was like what Brother Mose had said you know it was driving by a house seeing an individual that I hadn't seen in a while, whatever the situation may have brought but God would prick my heart about a particular situation and I found that it wasn't optional you know it's like hearing a hot message and God begins to deal with sin in your life it's not optional to deal with that sin either you deal with it or you go backwards I'd like to comment a little bit about the message as well but I find that this portion of scripture in chapter 19 is the acid test of a true conversion and those that are truly born again you know maybe we haven't stolen and maybe we haven't been in

thievery and such but there's things that we've said and lies that we've told I don't know that anybody could honestly say there's nothing to pay restitution for and I think that that is the acid test if one is born again maybe in times you know there's many of us that can't point to a particular day or particular hour but there was a change of heart that caused men and women to have a desire to make those things right that they had done wrong and that's exactly what we see here in Zacchaeus and I was thinking there as Moses was preaching you know if well first I find it interesting that it wasn't an illegal thing of what he was a tax collector and he was within the law of taking the money that he took even by false accusation as Moses said it wasn't like he was just going against what

the law said so all of his riches he gained in a legal way even though maybe it wasn't moral or right but if he had had a million dollars at this point after he gave half he would have been left with 500,000 and if he took about 12 percent of that million dollars say that he took by false accusation would have been 125,000 and if you multiply that by 4 you'd have another half million dollars so I think we could honestly say that that after Zacchaeus was repenting and making things right he wasn't a rich man he was a new individual and I think that goes with even what Luke said in Luke 15 or Jesus said in Luke 15 that except you give all you forsake everything houses, land, wives, brothers, you cannot be my disciple so with man it's impossible but with God all things are possible.

Amen. Amen.

Anyone else? Good morning everyone. My name is Braxton I'd just like to thank the Lord first for bringing me here and visiting I'm originally from Philadelphia and I got a lot of great stories to tell but I wouldn't hold you hostage but I also received a good message this morning about what you were talking about the preachings this morning my first thing is that I used to be a drug addict and alcoholic in the streets of Philadelphia and thinking that I wasn't harming anyone I remember when I first sought after the Lord he revealed to me that not only that I was robbing for myself I was robbing for my mother I was robbing her sanity I was robbing her from her sleep I was also robbing her from her financials and it's just like the Lord sits in my heart and I saw this and at the time I wanted to get myself clean and get right because not only was I screwed up I also had a brother who was dying at the time because of his addiction and you know sometimes they say someone must die for another one to live and I'm sorry that he had to die the way he died but it taught me a lot it opened my eyes to do the things that I've done to get to where I am today and

I'm truly grateful to the Lord for delivering me from the streets of Philadelphia and from the drug addiction and the other things I was caught up into but the one thing I was capable of doing is I used to keep secrets from my mother and when I became a member to some AA meetings or NA meetings I was taught that you only stay as sick as the secrets that you keep and for me to continue to keep secrets I had to reveal those secrets so I can get better with myself and be honest with myself and the Lord as well because the Lord does know my heart.

He knows everything that I do before I even do it and I was capable of asking my mother for forgiveness thinking that she wouldn't forgive me and believe it or not for the last four years that I've been sober and clean I had the best relationship with my mother now than I ever had and that's the greatest gift of all and I haven't seen my mother much but just recently I had a chance to get with my brother we drive tracked the trailers and I had the most wonderful visit with my mom and it was just awesome to see her full of joy to see me healthy for a change and I'm alive and doing well and it also made her proud and it gave me a sense of pride to continue doing what I'm doing so I thank the Lord for each and every day that I had for the last four years because I haven't had a bad day yet

even my bad days were good so I'm truthfully honest and anything I have also a part about fishers of men I had two great fishers that I ran into that caught me up on route 272 brother Jeff and brother Steve I didn't see the boat but I had two hooks in my mouth when they pulled me in so I'm truly grateful to be caught with that on that line and that I'm here today to just swim in a pool of righteousness now instead of swimming in a pool of death and destruction and I thank you very much for listening Yes I would just like to take this time to thank brother Mos for that message I know many years in my time growing up I don't remember hearing a message or I may have but my ears were not open but I can remember of thinking about this restitution and what to do with it and then as I guess we

started attending here and began to listen to testimonies and messages where the Lord convicted me and I began on a road of restitution there for a time and how that it was after that time when I was able to reach out in faith and receive the Lord Jesus into my heart after a time of restitution and that was just a blessing again to hear that today and the thing about restitution if there's something there bothering you if you open it up and you bring it out and you take care of it then it just can't it's gone it can't come back to to haunt you because you can always take the devil to that place where here I made this right and it's under the blood so thank you brother Moses Anyone else would like to share a testimony this morning of how God's worked in your life either in the past or

maybe recently Yes I also want to thank brother Moses for this message Growing up we were taught those things in my home and I remember having that major struggle in our church was required to have fruits of repentance before you can be baptized and there were some things I had to confess to people it wasn't stealing or things like that more like going back and apologizing for words I have spoken or things I have said and I remember a major struggle to humble myself and go ahead and do it but I thank God now when I look back because we need the grace of God in order to grow and unless we humble ourselves there is no grace in our life and I remember a period of my life about 7-8 years as a Christian where I neglected that principle my conscience would be pricked about maybe angry words I

said to somebody or words I have spoken I would just not humble myself to go and I would just be part of the church and kind of smile on Sunday and yet my relationship with the Lord was not where it should be and not until I started humbling myself and going back and making things right and so I thank God for this good message for us Anyone else?

Anyone else that would like to share this morning? Yes, I want to thank Brother Moose for the message I too remember I had been in church since I was about 8 or 9 years old and I had never heard a message on restitution lots of messages on forgiveness but we had been we had been born again and God had already dealt with us about many things we had to make restitution for but there was still something that the Lord brought to my mind it had been many years since I had been a Christian it was Brother John David Martin for those of you who might know him and I sat there I just, I couldn't believe it I didn't even want to hear it I knew it was right but I just couldn't hardly face it I had been a Christian all these years and this was brought to me and I knew I had to deal with it and like Brother CJ said it's just the humbling you know, of yourself and I thought, but what do I have to lose when you have all of eternity to gain and I just encourage anybody here that has anything that's brought to your mind today that you would just deal with it quickly and thoroughly and may God give you the grace to do that because there is so much peace to be gained from it and I just praise the Lord that now I can sit through a message like this and be totally clear and thankful and God bless you for the message Thank you Susan for that reminder it really does take a humbling and I think there are probably maybe a handful here or more that maybe feel compelled or felt compelled during that message that you need to get something right it is the fear of man it is pride in our life an unwillingness to humble ourselves that often prevents us from that and if we don't do those things then as Brother Mark shared the accused of the brethren can come along very easily and just keep our spiritual life at a lower level than where it could be because as Susan said, we have all eternity and take a moment to get things right and would we sacrifice that moment eternity for that moment of humbleness Yes I just say amen to what Susan said don't put it off I remember even before I was converted I had the worst conviction I ever had and I struggled fought it for probably over a year constantly, day in and day out I think of it it just haunt me and I finally did confess it to the individual and I was free for a period of time but I wasn't totally free until I confessed it to other people that it wasn't just a secret anymore it was open and it just encourages everybody to as God reveals it to you just make things right now every time something gets real to me in the heart it's like oh no not this again but you go through, you follow through and it just brings a victory it brings a time to share the testament with people it's challenging but it's rewarding thank you for the message

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