

# This is What the Heart Looks Like // 8 – “Thou Shalt Be Generous”

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~~Les Mis CLIP... That is my one of my favorite movie scenes of all times. The movie is called Les Mis, and this act of unbelievable generosity transforms this bitter criminal, Jean Val Jean, into a person that loves other people, and uses his money to take care of the poor, the orphan, and the widow.~~

~~And that's what we are going to talk about today: the profound change that transforms the thief into a man of generosity.~~

The 8<sup>th</sup> command : “Thou shalt not steal.”

As with all the commands, there is a negative part of this command... “thou shalt *not* steal,” but behind it is a positive thing we are supposed to be... We’re supposed to be generous... People whose lives are not characterized by taking but by giving.

Ephesians 4:28 says it like this: [28] Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. (Ephesians 4:28 ESV)

- (Commentary)

*“You have not stopped being a thief (biblically speaking), when you have stopped taking. You have stopped being a thief when you start giving.” Tim Keller*

- Most of you get the not stealing thing... b/c you understand the rule of law. **But what this command really gets at is**

**becoming the kind of person who is naturally generous...**

whose life is spent pouring out for others.

- Jesus once made a statement... *“it is more blessed to give than to receive...”* Question: Do you really agree with that? Not just do you agree with it here... but you say, “Yes, that’s how I feel, and my life shows it. if you looked at my life, you’d conclude that I believed it is more blessed to give than receive.”
- If you look at my life, it’s not characterized by begrudgingly giving what I think I have to give so I won’t feel guilty... You can look at my spending habits and tell that I LOVE to give...
- You believe that?

3 things we’ll do today:

- Define what kinds of things Scripture classifies as stealing
- Explain why we steal
- I want to show you how we change from being people who are selfish (and steal, cheat, exploit) to being people who are generous and who give. And to do that we’ll look at the story of a guy that Jesus meant that went through that change.
- (Along the way I’ll mix in some humiliating personal examples of where this shows up in my own life)

So, 1<sup>st</sup> of all, **(I. What is stealing?)**

Stealing, Scripturally speaking, is simply taking anything that doesn’t belong to you

- That includes, of course, the obvious: breaking-and-entering; holding up a bank;
- Shoving extra Splendid packets into your purse at Starbucks...
- Returning a dress or a tie that you only had to wear once for a funeral or wedding.
- Pirating on your neighbor's wireless internet signal.
- Making it a "double feature" by sneaking into a second movie.
- Filling up your water bottle with milk from the dining hall
- You know... Things only really bad people do... that none of you have ever done.

- DT's car?

But there's a lot of things beyond jacking someone's car that are stealing...

**The book of James (5:1) says that as an employer, you can steal from your employees** by not paying them properly for the work they do for you. You just know they won't quit... bad economy. So you take advantage...<sup>1</sup>

**As an employee, you can steal time from your employer by not really putting in a full effort** into the hours you are paid to work

- Building a little sleeping area under your desk... so you can nap.
- Surfing the internet all day (read an article this week that said that the average 50-person company could save \$185,000 a year in lost man-hours if they would put filters on their internet)
- Or, you could just not do a half-hiney job

**Jesus said in the Gospel that you can steal from the government by not properly reporting on your taxes**

**You can steal from creditors by figuring out a way of to get out of paying your debts**

**You can download music illegally**

**Stealing doesn't always have to be monetary, either**

- You can steal credit that belongs to other people
- You can steal other people's homework... which is probably not a good idea if you play for a UNC athletic team

**You can steal emotionally from people in relationships**

- **1 Cor 7:9 says that withholding sex in marriage is a type of stealing**—because you are depriving your spouse of something that rightfully belongs to them.<sup>2</sup>
- **You can steal from your kids by staying late** at work all the time
- **Guys, you can steal from a girl by leading her on emotionally when you have no intention of having a serious relationship with her.** (As in, you show her attention and flirt w/ her because you want sex with her or it just flatters your ego or makes you not feel lonely when she's around.<sup>3</sup> You're stealing from her by leading her to think you want something you know you don't so she'll give you what she otherwise wouldn't give you.)
- **You can steal an intimacy or a positing that belongs to someone else...** easiest example of that is adultery... that may not be even having sex... you might just take an intimacy that is reserved for their spouse (Throw this in... every once in a while I get really disturbed when I hear some married person talking about a close friend of the opposite sex... BFF – V is my BFF—not big fat friend, but best friend forever)
- **You can steal from people by manipulating them through flattery...** you know really be kind to them or say nice things so they'll give you some favor or some position you want?<sup>4</sup>

**You can steal from God**

- In Matthew there is the story of King Herod stole glory that belonged to God (Herod)
- Malachi says that not tithing, not giving the first 10% of what God gives to you back to Him, as a type of stealing. (You say, "Why is that stealing? It's my money." No it's not. God owns it all. He gave you the breath in your body and the soil under your feet that you earn it on, it all is His. He gave it all to you, and then says, to remind you that it all comes from me, I want

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<sup>1</sup> James 5:4

<sup>2</sup> 1 Corinthians 7:5

<sup>3</sup> 1 Thess 4:6

<sup>4</sup> See, for example, the stories of Absalom, how he "stole the hearts of Israel"

you to give me back, automatically, 10% of everything I give to you.) Malachi 3:10 says when we don't, it's stealing from God.

- The book of Proverbs (3:27–28) says that if you are rich and you don't use your riches to help others, you are stealing... Again, you say, "Why is that stealing? It's my money, not theirs." Yes, but the book of Proverbs says that God gave you what He gave you, in large part, to help others. That means if God has made you rich in money and you spend most of it on yourself and you turn a deaf ear to suffering and people who are lost, you have stolen from them.
  - Or, college student, if God has made you rich in talents and you plan to use all your talents and abilities to amass wealth for yourself, then you are stealing what God gave you to bless and serve others.
- Paul says in Romans 1:14<sup>5</sup> that for him not to take the Gospel to people who had never heard it would be stealing. Paul said, "God revealed himself to me through no merit or my own..." how could I withhold it? I am a debtor.

## II. Why we steal

As I explained to you on the 1<sup>st</sup> week, the reason we break any of the commandments always goes back to the first one, idolatry. Well, that is certainly the case with this one. The reason we steal something is almost always because it plays the role of a god in our lives. A god, if you remember, is anything you feel like you have to have in life to be happy or secure. You need it.

- So, when you steal money, it's because you think money is essential to something you really need in life, and you couldn't live or be happy without it, so you are willing to steal it.
- I explained this on the 1<sup>st</sup> week: people look to money to do 2 things God should do: provide significance, and provide security.
  - And here's how I explained that:

- For some people, money is the way to the good life. They define the good life as nice cars, vacation homes, nice clothes, live on a golf course and be a part of a country club, etc, the ability to fly 1<sup>st</sup> class, take great vacations, etc. These are spenders.
- For other people, money is security. More than anything, they fear being poor in the future. So, for these people, having the latest fads is not as important, but having a safety net, a good retirement account, enough to ensure that you are secure from every threat is what is important... and saved money is the key to that. So, these people don't spend their money, these people save their money. These are **savers**.
- As I've told you, these 2 people, the spender or the saver, by some sick law of the universe, usually end up marrying one another... Isn't that true? And the way your spouse spends money usually just bewilders you... the saver usually thinks the spender is irresponsible; the spender thinks the saver is a miserly killjoy who is obsessively worried about the future.
- Both the spender and the saver usually have the same problem, however... they both worship money; they both look to money to do what only God can do.

- When you steal non-monetary things, it's the same reason. For example, when you steal credit that doesn't belong to you, it's because you crave the attention that the stolen reputation gives to you.
  - **Give you an example of my own life:** The other night I had a chance to have dinner with a handful of really important people in the area... CEO's of some large companies in the area... CEO of Fidelity, Wachovia, BCBS, etc. **Well, I'm sitting at this table with all these CEO's... and it's obvious,**

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<sup>5</sup> Romans 1:14; 2 Cor 8:14-15

**“One of these things doesn’t belong...”** My host introduces me as a local Pastor... which doesn’t carry really the prestige of a CEO... but then... I almost feel like he needed to beef me up to show why I wasn’t out of place... so he talks about the success of our church, and then throws in there that I had started my own TV station... and I was like, “What?” ... *and everyone looks at me (and nods) and I was like...* so I sat there and thought, “What is he talking about?” and then I figured out that he must have misunderstood what I had told him earlier about our church being a multi-campus church where we broadcast from Brier Creek to the various other campuses. He heard the word, “broadcast” and concluded, “They have a TV station to which congregations around the world tune in.” That’s what he says... But I’m already feeling a little out of place, because, I’ve told you, what people think about me is overly important to me... “So, well... yeah... that evens the score a little bit... Oh, CEO of BCBS? Well... Do you have your own TV station? Nah? Yeah, one day you’ll get there.” **I was tempted to live on a stolen reputation because it got me some honor and prestige that didn’t rightfully belong to me.)**

You get the point? We steal because something plays the role of a god in our life. We crave something we feel like we couldn’t live or be happy without, so we steal.

**Stealing ultimately goes back to the fact that most of us are deeply dissatisfied people, not content with our position in life...** We want more money, more honor, we wish we were more talented, we want more emotional fulfillment, more sex, whatever... so we steal it.

Our lives are driven by consumption b/c we are not satisfied with God.

### III. How we change

Like I told you at the beginning, the best way I figure to show you this is to tell you the story of someone in the Bible who went from being the worst kind of thief to being one of the most generous people in the world. This is the NT’s version of *Les Mis*.

**Luke 19:1–10** *As (Jesus) entered Jericho... there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich.*

<sup>3</sup> *And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature.*

<sup>4</sup> *So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way.* <sup>5</sup> *And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.”*

<sup>6</sup> *So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully.* <sup>7</sup> *And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.”*

<sup>8</sup> *And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.”* <sup>9</sup> *And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham.”* <sup>10</sup> *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”*

**Few key notes here about Zacchaeus:**

**First of all, he is the chief tax collector.** “*Arche telonis*,” or chief of all the tax collectors

- Now, if you were to make a list the most popular jobs today, IRS agent would probably not be at the top (read an article where the term IRS agent had become so unpopular that their new name was “compliance directors”—I thought, “Yeah, that’s a lot better... compliance director... that’s some great strategic marketing thinking); so, it’s unpopular today, but

back then, a tax collector was more than just an annoying government official with **little-to-no** customer-service skills (not that I've had any experience talking to these guys on the phone), a tax collector was a traitor and a thief.

- The Romans had come up with a pretty ingenious system... when they took over a city, they wanted to tax the city pretty heavily to make the emperor and leading Roman citizens wealthy.
- Well, they quickly figured out that if they transplanted a Roman official there to collect the tax, the foreign Roman wouldn't know or understand the city well enough to really be able to know where the money was. So what the Romans did is they hired someone from the city, a native, who knew the city well, to get the tax for them. And they told them, "This is how much we want... anything you get beyond that you can keep for yourself. And here's some soldiers to help you enforce the tax."
- So the tax collectors guys would extract huge amounts of money from the people, give Rome their share, and then keep the rest. And perhaps the worst of it is they would use Roman soldiers to enforce it. These soldiers would beat up, murder and rape the people. The neighbors and friends and family of the tax collector. People they grew up in school with.
- Can you imagine a worse person? This is a thief who made himself rich by exploiting his neighbors, old friends and even his own family. The Jewish *Mishnah* said that a tax collector was so low that they should not even be considered people and that you were free to lie to them because lying to an animal was not a sin. Which is weird...
  - This is Zacchaeus. And, btw: Jericho was the richest city in Israel, because it was on a trade route. And Zacchaeus was the chief over all the tax collectors of that city. So, in other words, this is likely the

wealthiest, and possibly the most corrupt gov't official in the NT.

Here's the thing to understand about Zacchaeus: When you chose to become a tax collector you realized you were choosing to alienate yourself from just about every relationship you ever had. **That means a tax collector became a tax collector because they wanted money so badly that they were willing to sacrifice everything—their society, their family, their integrity—everything, to get it.**

See, there's a little, almost humorous detail here... He has to climb a tree to see Jesus... Now why does he have to do that? You say, "Well, b/c he's short. You know the song... Wee little man." But here's the thing: When a guy is short... you don't mind if he stands in front of you. If DT, or XP, stands in front of me somewhere, it doesn't affect me at all. He's a wee little man. But this crowd won't let Zacchaeus in anywhere.

They are like, "No, we're not moving for you, you pig; you wee little bad man." So he has to climb a tree.

**(Can I throw something in here real quick?** (Totally off subject)... but Zacchaeus does not Jesus' hypocritical, judgmental, self-righteous followers discourage him from coming. A lot of you won't come to Jesus because you've been burned by Jesus' followers. Zacchaeus has to climb a tree to get "above" Jesus' followers to see Jesus. Perhaps you need to do the same... That was free.))

***Second thing I want you to notice about Zacchaeus. I want you notice why he is coming to Jesus...***

- Namely, that he's not in a financial crisis. There's no indication he's in financial ruin or that he's been diagnosed with cancer or even that his wife has left him. No indication of that. We are left to think that, financially, things are going really well for Zacchaeus. In fact, we know that at the end of the story he

is still unbelievably wealthy because he gives away huge amounts of his money.

- The reason I say this is that a lot of times skeptics think that the only time people come to Jesus is in a time of crisis. But that's not Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus is coming to Jesus because he's intellectually open, and he's seeing something about Jesus that is blowing His mind.
- **Let me say something, and I don't want to be misunderstood: In my professional opinion, crisis is not usually the best time to seek God.** I'm not saying in a crisis you shouldn't seek God, just that imo it's not the best time.
- You see, in a crisis, you are usually pretty desperate; you're not thinking clearly; honestly, you're kind of gullible. You'll grab a hold of anything that you feel like can get you out of the mess you are in.
- And so, a lot of times in a crisis you end up seeking Jesus for what He can do for you, not for who He is in Himself. And so when you get out of the crisis, you go on about your way, because you were only using Him to get you out of a jam. Crisis conversions don't usually last long, because as soon as you get back on your feet you are back to the place you were when you felt like you didn't need Jesus.
- If there is a crisis... it's this... he realizes that what he's given his life to won't satisfy or save him. Zacchaeus had lived a life of materialism, cheating and exploitation, b/c he thought money was way to happiness. But now he's seen that there's something more to life and that his money won't save him in death. He's not in what you would usually call a crisis; he's just in the crisis of realizing he's built his whole life on something worthless...
- Now, again, I'm not saying that when you're in a crisis you shouldn't seek God. (Don't walk away from this saying, "Well, I'm in a crisis. J.D. said I can't come to Jesus until I get out." No... I'm just saying that you need to be very clear on why you're coming to Him. Are you simply coming to Him so He can get you out of your marriage troubles, or out of your

financial troubles, or gives you your best life now, or are you coming to Him because you realize that He is God and He's the only thing worth living life for?

- ~~Had a chance to meet with a professional athlete... for a few seconds of fame and glory on the athletic field. The bigger crisis here is not that you'd lose your abilities, or fortune, or your marriage; the biggest crisis in your life is that you are losing your soul because you are building it on something besides God.~~

*Does that make sense?*

Zacchaeus recognizes Jesus is the only God worth living for. Jesus is not a way to money or a way out of troubles; Jesus is an end in Himself.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> thing I want you to notice... How Jesus enters Zacchaeus' life.**

This is so beautiful.

- In v. 5, Jesus tells Zacchaeus that He is going to his house. Now, you say, "What's the big deal about that? Jesus seems a little presumptuous here... but Z obviously can afford it; and he doesn't seem to mind."
- No. There's a scandalous order to this story. In that day, to eat with someone, to go to their house and share a meal, was a sign of very intimate fellowship. To eat with someone meant that you were accepting them; that you were committing yourself to a loving relationship with them.
- But Jesus is eating with Zacchaeus *before* he cleaned up his life. See? Vv. 5–6, Jesus eats with Zacchaeus; and it's not until vv. 8–9 that Zacchaeus cleans up his life.
- That's why, vs. 7, the Jewish leaders are like, "What? He's eating with a guy who is a sinner?"

But, watch this... so good... Jesus is showing Zacchaeus the difference in Gospel and religion. He says, **"Zacchaeus, salvation has come to your house. Before you change. In fact, the fact that salvation comes to your house is why you will change."**

- **Listen:** every other religion in the world would have said to Zacchaeus, “Zacchaeus, there’s the way to God... there’s the way to salvation; now *go* and do that, and you’ll find salvation.”
- But Jesus says, no Zacchaeus, salvation has *come* to you.
- And, in response to salvation coming to you, you will change.

#### Which leads me to the 4<sup>th</sup> thing... **The change that comes into Zacchaeus’ life**

- **It was a massive change.** Vs. 8 says he volunteered to give back 4x to people whatever he’d stolen.
  - In the book of Leviticus, if you stole from someone you were usually supposed to repay them and just add like 20%. **Cattle. Udder failure.** But Zacchaeus is saying “I’ll repay 4x.” Not because he has to, but because he wants to.
  - Then the part about giving away 50%... that’s just on top of that... it’s gravy. In fact, there’s a nuance in Greek you might miss. **In vs. 8 says, “Look, Lord... I’m giving away 50%.”** There’s a delight in what He’s doing. He’s not all, “Oh sovereign king, what must I do to earn your favor?” He’s almost like, “Look daddy, look at what I’m doing!” There’s an eagerness, a delight and an overflowing joy in what He is giving away.

What’s happened to Zacchaeus? **Money no longer has a hold on him.** He’s found a greater treasure. Jesus. In experiencing Jesus’ glory and grace, he is set free from his love of money.

- Remember, Zacchaeus was in a tree because he was despised. And, as we learned, rightfully so. But, Jesus does not treat him with the scorn and reject he deserves. Jesus pays him one of the highest social compliments, one of the highest expressions of acceptance and intimacy. He comes and eats with him!

- And, what’s more, in the larger context of the book of Luke, there’s some irony in this. Jesus will end his life by being hung up on a tree. There was an Old Testament reference every Jew knew... (Deut 21:23) “Cursed (despised) is everyone who is hung on a tree.”
- Zacchaeus deserved to be despised in a tree, but Jesus told him to come down into fellowship. Then Jesus, who deserved acceptance and fellowship, was strung up on a tree and despised. Jesus received the curse and the scorn and the shame Zacchaeus deserved and gave him the love and acceptance Jesus had earned. Jesus traded places with Zacchaeus.
- And when Zacchaeus sees that, and tastes it, it changes him from a man of greedy exploitation to a man of lavish generosity.

Money lost its hold on Zacchaeus.

***Where, and how, does the thief’s heart change?*** How do you go from being wee little bad man to being a person of lavish generosity? ***By embracing the grace of Jesus which has already embraced you.***

- Maybe you steal because you feel like you have to have money to be secure in the future. Maybe that’s why you don’t give away money, either. You say, “Well, if I don’t have money, who will take care of me in the future? So I can’t give it all away, I’ve got to get more of it.”
- The only way your **wee little stingy fearful heart** will change is by looking at the cross. The God who rescued you when you were His enemy will surely provide for you now that you are His child.
  - I’ve been thinking about it a lot about this recently... Of those 2 personality types I told you at the beginning, I’m more of a saver... (What is V?) But Jesus has promised me that He will provide for me forever... He has said, “Don’t

worry about what you need for tomorrow... your heavenly father knows you have need of all these things.”

- “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything... let your requests be made known to God.” **(Philippians 4:6)**
- Jesus gives me security, so, see, I can give money away.
- I’m not saying it’s wrong to save something, just that I don’t depend on it. I don’t have to save extravagantly because Jesus, not money is my security. So, I have the freedom to give large amounts of money away.
- Or, maybe you steal, or you’re not generous, because you feel like you need to raise your standard of living pretty significantly before you can be happy. Happiness is a better cable package; membership at the golf club; a nicer car; a nicer house; nicer vacations. Are you one of those people who always feels like “the good life” is always about 20K more than what you’re making now?
  - Again, if that’s you... look at the cross... the God who poured Himself out for you is the God you possess... and the God whose plan you get to be a part of.
  - Listen: let that kingdom be your beauty. Jesus has an eternal kingdom... and I get to have a part of it. That kingdom is seeing lost people rescued; seeing poor people empowered and brought to Jesus; seeing forsaken orphans adopted in Jesus’ name. That’s a kingdom that will last forever. It’s truly beautiful.
  - And when that fills your soul, you can live on less... You won’t have to have the nicest clothes or car or vacations because God is your beauty. So you can give it away and find my beauty in God’s kingdom.
  - Again, not to say that you don’t enjoy some of your money, just that it’s not your primary beauty.

- It’s like Zacchaeus... he’s giddy. He’s having more fun giving money away than he ever did accumulating large sums of it and buying stuff with it.

*I read this thing this week that talked about how stealing is a rush... when you steal it releases dopamine in your bloodstream and gives you a high. When you steal something together with somebody it gives you this strange intimate bond because you experienced this thing together. That’s like the plot of all these Hollywood heist movies. A guy and a girl steal together and that gives them this incredible bond.*

*Listen, you think that is a rush? Try giving stuff away... Zacchaeus is on a much greater high at the end of this story than he was as a tax collector.*

*Zacchaeus is on an adventure, a better adventure than he ever had with stealing and getting stuff... where he gives things away because the no longer have a hold on him.*

**Here’s the problem... some of you don’t steal... you’re moral... but you’ve never gone beyond that to a life of generosity... you are bored. You have forsaken one thing, without embracing the other! By all means... choose one. Steal! Or Give.**

- Or, maybe you don’t give money away because the poverty in the world or the fact that so many people don’t know Jesus doesn’t move you...
  - Again, look to the cross. Where would you be without Jesus? The same place they are without you. You and I were condemned in our sin, hopeless, when Jesus came to rescue us. Those who have experienced that pour out their lives for others.

- 8,000 people born with AIDS. Why are you any different? Is it not fair that those of us who have been given health and life yield our lives to bring that to those who don't yet have it?
- 6500 unreached people groups.
- Do you know the Gospel b/c you are more worthy?

**Old Scottish preacher, Robert Murray McCheyenne:** *"The more you understand who Jesus is and what He has done for you, the more generous you become..."*

People are always asking me the amount, "Pastor... how much is enough?" Can I say something... As long as you're asking that question, that shows you still don't get the Gospel. *The Gospel changes you from a person who asks what you have to give to a person who asks what you get to give.*

- There are several places in the Gospel of Luke where Jesus talks about giving. Here's the thing. In each of them, Jesus talks about a different amount.
  - In Luke 18, the chapter right before this one, Jesus is talking to a rich young ruler who has tons of money and Jesus says, "Give away all of it. Every penny, and come and follow me." this is the person who leaves a lucrative career to go and follow Jesus. **Jesus is saying to that guy, leave it all...! 100%.**
  - Luke 11, Jesus says to the Pharisees, "You tithe... (which is giving away 10%) and that is good."<sup>6</sup>
  - Here in Luke 19 Zacchaeus gives away 50% and he says, "That's good."
  - So, you say, "Well...which is it, Jesus? Is it 100? Or 10%? Or 50%?" Need a little consistency here.
- And the point is: There is no one answer... It's free. When you experience the Gospel, and you have been liberated from your

bondage to money, **the question becomes not about what you must give, but what you can give.**

- If the Kingdom of Jesus is your beauty; and Jesus is your security, and you are overwhelmed by the generosity of Jesus, you'll just give.
- You don't depend on money for security; you don't depend on money as your beauty. Money has lost its hold on you and you'll be free to give.
- You start to love seeing lost people come to Jesus more than you love stuff!
- You can start to, as we love say around here, **"live sufficiently and give extravagantly."** Where is your beauty and security? If Jesus is your beauty, you won't spend extravagantly on yourself, you'll spend on Jesus kingdom (not b/c you have to, but want to); If Jesus is your security, you won't save extravagantly, because Jesus is your security.
- If Jesus is your God, you'll spend and save sufficiently, and you'll give extravagantly.
- *(If you don't give... don't understand the Gospel... if you feel guilty about what you give... don't understand the Gospel, either. The Gospel is freedom.)*

Which leads me to the last thing I'll say: Jesus uses the fact that Zacchaeus is generous to prove he's experienced conversion.

- In the Christian subculture I grew up in, there were all kinds of things that proved you'd met Jesus. Cut your hair; not listen to rock music, and don't drink beer. Looking back on it, it was kind of ridiculous. But there is something that proves whether or not you've met Jesus. Generosity. Scripture says the proof you know Jesus is that you are generous. That's because to be truly converted means that Jesus is your beauty and your security, and you understand how much God gave to forgive you. That makes you, by definition, a generous person.

<sup>6</sup> Luke 11:42

Let me go back to that statement by the old Scottish preacher: *"The more you understand who Jesus is and what He has done for you, the more generous you become...* I fear there are many hearing me who now know they are not Christians because they do not love to give. To give largely and liberally, not grudging at all, requires a new heart. An old heart would rather part with its lifeblood than its money."<sup>7</sup>

***Robert Murray McChyenne***

Where does that new heart come from? Letting Jesus bring salvation to you. The Gospel is that He's come to your house. He doesn't tell you to go and find salvation, He's brought it to you. But, like Zacchaeus, you have to choose to let Him in. You have to receive His invitation, His free offer to save you. He will forgive your sin, unite you to Himself, and put you under His eternal protection. Have you ever received? Have you let Him come to *your* house? You can do it right now.

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<sup>7</sup> I am not sure if the last part of this quote is McChyenne. I heard it attributed to an old Scottish preacher, but not sure it was him. The 1<sup>st</sup> part is.

# Bullpen:

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Objection 1: “J.D., this is my money.” Well, Christ might have said, “my blood is my own, and my life is my own.” Where would you be, then?

Objection 2: “You tell me to give to the church and to the poor, but many of these churches will not use my money properly and many of the poor are undeserving.” Well, Christ might have said, “these are just wicked rebels, I won’t lay my life down for these because they are undeserving.”

Objection 3: “Alright, but the poor that I give to might abuse it.” Christ could have said the same thing. Christ knew that 1,000s would trample his blood under their feet, that most would despise it, and many would make it an excuse for sinning more; and yet he gave his own blood.”

- It’s not that we have to give; it’s that we get to give, because Jesus is our beauty and security and He has given so lavishly to us that we want to give that way to others. We can, as we say around here: “Live sufficiently and give extravagantly.”

## Zacchaeus

- you know the hand motions.
- Zacchaeus was a tall, dark and handsome man.” No, wee little man! “I’ll show them, I’ll have the money.” He made a wreck of his life morally, socially
- Short on options; branches out
- *Arche—telonis*: chief tax collector.
- Article: IRS, saying that the title “revenue agent” had gotten so unpopular that the new name for the agents was

“compliance director.” Guess what they do? None of us want to receive a phone call from a “compliance director.”

- **Israel was occupied by Rome!** Rome had a pretty “ingenious” system: each collector “bid” for a city. Rome got the money, he got the profit. the chief over tax collectors. Jericho was a trade route: he was wealthiest man in the NT.
- gamblers, people who loaned out money at usury, prostitutes, dung collectors (woman had a right to divorce him and receive money). “Mama’s don’t raise your sons to be dung collectors.” Tax collectors were lower.
- Jewish Mishnah says that you were even allowed to lie to tax collectors (they’re not really people!).
- **Nobody is moving for the tax collector.** Nobody offers to put him on their shoulders. You can stand in the back, Zacchaeus, you wee little bad man
- OT law required you to repay plus 20%, he pays back 300%. 50%. Joyfully, not dutifully!

This is an active thing... our hands once worked to bring money to ourselves; now they work to give away.

## Keller:

- Intellectual openness
- Didn’t let Jesus followers discourage Him
- Didn’t care what people thought
- Nobody moved for him
- Salvation came first
- Radical change the result
- Faith is extending an empty hand to God to receive his gift of grace (Tozer)

(his crisis of faith was he realized that money couldn’t save). UP until then, he’d built his life on money...) **Illus. Andrew Carnegie wrote a personal mission statement that said he would cap his personal**

income at \$50,000 and give the rest to charity. Said that “the amassing of wealth is one of the worst species of idolatry. To continue much longer overwhelmed by business cares and with most of my thoughts wholly upon the way to make more money in the shortest time, this must degrade me beyond hope of permanent recovery.” Carnegie recognized that money was a spiritual power in his life. Money was more than just money. It was a way to get him “in;” for him to get security. Recognized what it was doing to his humanity. Money has a power because it promises to give you what it can’t. Can never heal this deep down feeling that, “I’m an outsider.”

C.S. Lewis in his sermon “The Inner Ring” says:

“I don’t believe that the economic motive or the erotic motive can account for most things that happen in the world. What does is a lust. A longing to be inside, to be on the inner ring. It takes many forms. People who believe themselves to be free from the snobbery or the ambition to be on the inside of what is called ‘society’ may be devoured by the desire to be on the inner ring in some other form. Maybe they don’t want large lighted rooms or champagne. They want instead that sacred little studio. The delicious knowledge that just we four or five people, we’re the only ones who really *know*. My purpose in this essay is to convince you that this desire is one of the great permanent mainsprings of human action that creates the world as we know it, the pell-mell of struggle of competition and confusion, and unless you take measures to prevent it it’s going to dominate your life as well. Until you conquer the fear of being an outsider, an outsider you will remain.”