

The guy with the donkey

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It's hard to believe, but Easter is right around the corner. So are taxes. This is another year where Easter and taxes fall on the same week. I find it ironic that as I sit at my computer trying to outline my Easter messages, I have the tax deadline weighing down on me. I have my Bible opened to the passage proclaiming, "He is not here, He is risen", and nearby is my tax material for 2008. With no apologies to the IRS, one seems spiritual and the other mundane. One minute I'm at the cross, the next I'm at my checkbook. Even though I might feel a little crucified financially, the time I spend on one seems holy, the other worldly. One reminds me how God in Christ paid it all, and the next reminds me that there's something I have to pay. In all of this, I try to keep in mind the words of our Lord to give Caesar the things that are Caesar's and give to God the things that are God's. Sometimes, however, I struggle with what I want or have to give.

I'm currently planning my message for the Palm Sunday Sunrise service at the Clewiston levee at 6:30 a.m. on April 5th, and I can't help but wonder about the guy who gave Jesus his donkey for the Palm Sunday procession. I wonder if the guy who gave the donkey for Jesus to ride into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday struggled with his giving or the fact that he was asked to give generously in a time when finances were tight. We don't know his name or what he looks like. We only know that Jesus told His disciples that "If anyone asks you why you are taking the donkeys, say that the Master has need of them, and he will send them at once." (Matthew 21:3) Did this guy just give the animals to someone in need, or did he know it was Jesus who needed the donkeys? Did he worry about getting the donkeys back? I wonder about these things because sometimes it's hard for me to give as freely as I might. There are times I like to keep my animals to myself for my own use. Sometimes I rationalize not giving by wondering if my little deeds and giving today will really make a difference in the long run. Sometimes I don't give it because I'm not sure what to give or how to give, or I get busy and put things on the back burner.

And then there are the times God calls to my heart and I respond to our Lord, and feel honored that a gift of mine would be used to carry Jesus forward to proclaim the Kingdom and make a difference in the life of another.

The reality is that all of us have a donkey. You and I each have something in our lives which, if given back to God, could, like the donkey, move Jesus and His story further down the road. Maybe you could reach out and help a friend or a neighbor, or encourage a child. Maybe you can sing, or hug, or teach a class, or speak a foreign language. Maybe you can give a cold glass of water to someone who is thirsty. Maybe you can write a check. Whichever, that's your donkey. Whichever, it could be that God wants to mount your donkey and enter into another place, another situation, another heart.