

Here is my favorite fund raising story from Scripture. I do not think it is often viewed as a story about faithful asking and generous giving. The story comes from Luke, Chapter 19 beginning at the 28th verse.

“And after Jesus had said this he went on ahead going up to Jerusalem. As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives he sent two disciples saying to them, “Go to the village ahead of you and as you enter it you will find a colt tied there which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone asks you why are you untying it? Tell them, “The Lord needs it.” Those who were sent ahead found it just as he had told them and as they were untying the colt its owner asked them. “Why are you untying the colt?” They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

Jesus sends his disciples ahead of him, telling them they are going to find a colt tied up in front of a certain person’s house. They are to go up, untie the colt and bring it to Jesus. He also tells them that if anybody comes out and asks them what they are doing they are to say, “the Lord needs it.” Armed with this directive they go into Jerusalem.

We know from the history of that time that a colt was a very prized possession, one of the most valued possessions a household could own. It would one day serve as transportation, pull a plow, cultivate fields and carry items to market. In short, this young colt was going to play a major role in the health and prosperity of this family.

So these disciples come along and find the colt as Jesus had said and, as they were instructed, they start untying it and leading it away in broad daylight. The Scripture says that the owner sees all of this happening and his response is a simple question, “why are you untying that colt?” That may be what he said, but I don’t think that is how he said it. I think he likely picked up a stick, and came running out at them yelling in anger at the top of his lungs, “*why are you untying that colt?!*”

All that the disciples say in response to the man’s protest was what Jesus had instructed them to say, “the Lord needs it.” The Lord needs it. We assume that the owner of the colt knew who “the Lord” was and that the Lord was his Lord, too. And that is all that the owner needed to hear. What a response of faith!

The owner of that precious colt did not need a direct mail fundraising letter. The disciples did not take out a brochure and say, “well, this colt is part of the Triumphant Entry Campaign. As you’ll see here by our table of gifts we need five contributions at the ‘colt level’ and we are hoping you would consider giving one of those today.” They offered no plaque on the walls of Jerusalem. No seat next to Jesus at the major donor banquet.

“The Lord needs it.” That is all the disciples said to this angry man brandishing a stick. And upon hearing those words, the man just let it go. What a marvelous picture of a heart tuned to God. ***Imagine what it must have been like for that man in a few short hours to see the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords riding triumphantly into Jerusalem on his own colt.***

I love this simple example of a person giving sacrificially for the right reason and then seeing what amazing things God does with that gift. My prayer is that in working with our donors we can help them become generous givers by cultivating an obedient heart. As we do, our life's work becomes the joyous task of telling God's people about great opportunities to invest in the work of the kingdom. We ask them to search their heart and ask themselves if God is saying to them, "I need you to share what I have given you that this work may be completed." And we pray and trust that they will respond obediently, which, in Kingdom terms, always means abundantly and joyfully.

Reprinted with permission from, "The Seven Deadly Sins of Christian Fundraising" (Kingdom Life Publishing, 2007).