

God Cashes In  
St. Luke 19:1-10

As revealed in the life and teaching of Jesus, God desires to bring everything into balance. And given a choice between the cosmic and the ordinary, God chooses to redeem creation through the use of the ordinary.

Sylvia, like my mother, is the ideal coupon clipper. Methodical and purposeful she keeps her eyes open for opportunities to save money. I treasure her tenacity yet it is here that we detect another example of the difference between the female and male mind. To my wife all of the effort of locating and then processing said coupons is nothing compared to the money saved. And I believe that over the nearly forty-nine years she has saved our family a bundle.

Consumers like myself however, don't mind paying the extra rather than experiencing all the irritation of driving down the aisles trying to avoid crashes with other shoppers, while trying to decide which coupon to choose. Maybe the theory of good shoppers might speak to the issue of the way God goes about redeeming creation.

The word 'stewardship' is an excellent word to describe how God goes about balancing creation. God tends to use everyone in this process of redemption. As you recall redemption means to trade something for something else. Jesus modeled this so well. Jesus exchanged his teaching for changes in human behavior.

Zacchaeus is a fine example. When he discovered his false belief and his sin, when he became vulnerable over dinner with Jesus, he chose to change his lifestyle. Jesus' table teaching and his lifestyle moved Zacchaeus to restore his soul and his relationships in the community.

In St. Luke (19:8) Zacchaeus chooses to return four times the damages he caused. The Law only asked for three times. His commitment moves him to give beyond the requirement. In this example we can see God redeeming the World through the action of one person's choosing to change his life.

So, what about coupons? Zaccaeus cashed in one of God's coupons. Imagine if you and I took each selfish act we make nearly every day, and cashed them in at God's redemption center? Could it be that by so doing we would be helping God rebalance the world one coupon at a time, one person at a time?

The Holy Spirit shows us in the Holy Scriptures how Jesus lived and taught transforms people's lives. When we enter life's markets we can be 'little Christs' by converting our selfish acts into acts of love, kindness, and forgiveness. By our altered lives we become partners with God in the planned redemptive ministry of bringing creation to it's fullness.

There are so many areas that we can share our stewardship: Earth awareness, the political world, working with the poor. Such ministry is part of our worship as well as our commitment to be God's servant through Jesus Christ. Whether we take care of Mother Earth or human relationships, we will be doing our part in the redemptive work of Jesus.

If we model our lives after Jesus, one way to awake each morning is with the question: "*How may I help God bring balance to our world? We can check our calendars to see what our day presents and with that, where we might make a difference for good and for God. In our morning prayers we might include something along the line of "assist me to help someone today solely for the reason that it will help you balance the world."*

Yes, miracles are still happening but the balancing of creation will probably come not from a cosmic hand, but by daily human acts. Perhaps Sylvia's Coupon saving does much more redeeming than I have been prepared to see. Alleluia. Amen.