

One Goat

By Kimberly Sowell

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. 2 Corinthians 8:9 NKJV

The famous 19th century missionary, David Livingstone, once met with a tribal chief in Africa. The chief told Livingstone he could not proceed into the territory without first abiding by their trading custom: the chief could choose to keep any of Livingstone's possessions, and the chief would then respond by giving Livingstone something of worth. The tribal chief looked over Livingstone's items, then seized his goat, handing Livingstone a walking stick in return. The missionary was distraught about losing his goat, which was his source of milk since he couldn't stomach the drinking water. However, a tribesman explained that the carved stick now in his possession was the chief's royal scepter, which would serve as an entry pass into every community in the territory. Livingstone was suddenly overjoyed with the trade.

Livingstone had a passion to reach the people of Africa with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who are you passionate about reaching with the gospel? What are you willing to sacrifice in order to share the good news with them? Livingstone was upset about the loss of his goat, something he truly needed, until he realized that the sacrificed goat became a gateway for his greater cause: the gospel. And because you know the goodness of the God we serve, you can be sure that God provided nourishment for Livingstone to replace what he had given away.

Perhaps God is calling you to give up something – a habit, a sense of security, or a possession – in order to break down a barrier to share the gospel with someone. If the people of God are going to reach the world for Jesus Christ, we are going to have to be willing to sacrifice for the cause of the Savior. Our great example, Jesus himself, laid down his very life that others might be saved. Lay out your possessions before the great chief, Holy God above. Are you willing to say to the Lord who gives and takes away, "Take anything I have if it will help me reach someone for Jesus Christ"?