

## How Ten Shekels and a Shirt Came To Be?

Paris Reidhead:

In over fifty years of Bible teaching and preaching "Ten Shekels and a Shirt" is the only message that I feel constrained to explain how it came to be preached.

During a Bethany Fellowship Summer Conference in the mid sixties I was preparing to speak at the Tuesday morning Bible hour. Upon returning to my room after breakfast to meditate and pray about the message for that morning hour, I felt strangely impressed that I could not deliver the message that had been prepared for the session. Instead, I felt that there was some other message that was needed which I was to bring.

After prayer, the message that came to mind was one which I had begun preparation for the ministry at the church in New York City of which I was pastor at that time. My notes were not with me, but were in a file folder in my study. An empty envelope was on the desk in my room, on the back of which I wrote the scripture texts to be used and one or two ideas that came to mind. With the envelope in my Bible marking Judges, Chapter 17, and my self utterly cast upon the Lord, I went to the auditorium where between four and five hundred people waited to hear from the Lord through me.

I remember praying, "This morning I am utterly cast upon You because I am not really prepared." In my heart I seemed to hear His response, "Well is that so bad, already" (being from New York City it was given in a idiom I would understand.)

I delivered the message and gave an invitation. Shortly the altar across the front of the auditorium was filled with broken people seeking God.

The summer conference was soon over and I returned to New York City and the ministry there.

About ten years later, one of the Bethany Fellowship staff was in Washington, D.C., where we had moved and from where we still minister. His word was, "Paris, I want to tell you that God has repeatedly used your messages, but the exact message itself was preached only that once.

A week or two later Harry Conn from Rockford, Illinois was in Washington. He invited me to have dinner with him. In the course of the meal he said, "I buy that message of yours 'Ten Shekels and a Shirt' by the dozen to give people. God is really using it in lives." My response was that if you have a copy, I would like to have it sent to me so that I can find out what it is I have said. In a few days the cassette arrived.

Since I don't have a tape player in my office, I put the tape into the Sony dictating machine on my desk and listened through the little playback on the hand-held microphone. The element of distance in terms of time, and the distorted sound through the miniature speaker, let me listen to the message with no real awareness of who was speaking. From time to time I felt like exclaiming, "That's right! I wish I had said that!"

Then it dawned on me that it was my voice, but God was speaking through me. I realized that on a Tuesday morning during a summer conference, God had been able to get His message across because of my utter and complete helplessness. Here it is, just as the Lord gave it.

Paris Reidhead