

The Generous Thief

Back in the 1980s, a kind-hearted man owned a small sign shop. He was far from a very successful businessman, but he treated his customers with respect and fairness.

One day, his pickup truck was stolen, and friends could tell how downhearted he was. The deed really, really bothered him.

A couple of months later, however, the truck was returned in a very unusual way. The story, in fact, made national news and was featured by Paul Harvey. Here is how it appeared in the DeWitt, Michigan, newspaper:

Kelly Terrell says the person who stole his 1975 Chevrolet pickup truck can take it again "any time he wants to." That's because Terrell, whose truck was stolen from a shopping mall, got the vehicle back – with a fresh coat of paint and a number of other repairs. Terrell told police he had received a call from a stranger who lectured him about his truck's poor condition. The stranger then told Terrell he could find the pickup in the parking lot where it had been stolen.

When Terrell arrived at the lot, he found his truck and a three-page list of repairs made by the thief. In addition to sanding and painting the pickup, the thief performed bodywork and made a number of mechanical repairs. "It is not a practical joke," Terrell said. "I have no idea who the man is. It is all very strange, but that man can steal my vehicle any time he wants to."

What a strange story of restoration.

In the spiritual realm, the Bible is full of stories of sin and restoration. Scripture tells us that God gives, but He also takes away (Job 1:21).

Our health, our earthly treasures, and even our lives will all one day be taken. But there is nothing that God takes away that He will not return to us – only much better than it was before.

Jesus had gone to Bethany see his good friends Mary and Martha at the time of the death of their brother, Lazarus. *Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."*

Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:21-25 NKJV).

That is amazing restoration!

– Beecher Hunter