



GIVING FIRST TESTIMONY BY ROSS SCARBOROUGH: SUNDAY, October 26, 2025

I'm humbled to stand here before you all today, surrounded by friends and family, old and new.

My first lesson in giving came when I was about four years old, right here in the South aisle when, seeing a silver platter topped with dollar bills sailing my way, I reached in and grabbed money *out* of the collection plate!

Sensing a teachable moment, my father started letting me put money *into* the collection plate, which helped me feel invested in church even though I was too young to fully understand.

I was taught about the importance of giving when I was young. But nothing prepared me for the challenge and the joy of when I asked God to be first with my money.

I have a lot of insights sitting up there in the choir loft. And it wasn't too long after I moved back home to Charleston that God very clearly put a message on my heart: "This is where you are supposed to be." And He started to work a change in me.

I started by giving my musical talents to the music ministry. Then I began to give my Tuesday mornings to an amazing Men's bible study.

Then God said, "Are you ready to put Me first in your money?" I said "yes."

Before I made a commitment to GIVE FIRST, my approach to giving was sporadic and based more on what I deemed worthy of receiving my hard-earned money: at bottom, it was selfishness dressed up as charity. But as God began working in me, I realized that I could actually calculate what God wanted me to give. Not being a great mathematician, I simply took my gross income, divided it by ten, and divided that by the number of weeks in a year, and that became the basis for my tithe.

Friends, I don't stand before you today to say that I'm a perfect tither or that since I invited Jesus to be first in this area of my life I haven't worried about money. Quite the contrary. It's humbling when I think of how hard it is. But, His mercies are new every day! When I put God first with my money, I stopped thinking about it as *all mine*. I see my money as a gift *from* God to be returned *to* God. And I've experienced more peace and financial clarity than at any other time in my adult life.

Putting God first with our money requires a deep commitment to our faith. I want to be one who walks by faith. Won't you please join me on this faith journey, as we give first of our money to God, just as he has made us the first fruit of the Resurrection?