The Promised Half

A peasant was plowing in the field and plowed up a precious stone.
He was going home when a neighbor, a very old man, came toward him. He showed him the stone:
"Who's it for?"
"Take it," he says, "to the tsar."
He carried it off; he came to the palace and met a general. He bowed to the ground:
"Father! Lead me to the tsar."
"Why do you need that?"
"I'm bringing a gift from the village."
"Well, peasant, whatever the tsar rewards you with, give me half; and if you don't want to, you'll never reach the tsar."
The peasant agreed. So the general led him to the tsar himself.
"Thank you, peasant!" says the tsar. "Here are two thousand rubles as a reward for that."
The peasant fell to his knees:
"I don't need, tsar and sovereign, any other reward but fifty lashes on the back."
The tsar took pity on him and ordered that he be given fifty lashes lightly. And the peasant began to count; when they had given twenty-five, he cried out:
"Enough, that's enough for me; the other half was promised to the one who led me to your tsar's majesty."
Well, that one was called and the half of the reward was counted out to him in full, as it should be; only he was not glad of such a reward!
The tsar thanked the peasant and gave him a full three thousand.