

WEEK 3 – STEWARDSHIP AND SACRIFICIAL GIVING

MONDAY – My responsibility



Psalm 24: 1-2 *The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for He founded it on the seas and established it on the waters.*

Many Christians today only associate the idea of stewardship with sermons they have heard about church budgets and building programmes. The idea of biblical stewardship is about something much more expansive. It is where the concepts of faith, environment, work and economics intersect.

In the beginning of Genesis, God creates everything and puts Adam in the Garden to work it and to take care of it. It is clear that man was created to work and that work *is* the stewardship *of* all of the creation that God has given him.

This is the fundamental principle of biblical stewardship. God owns everything, we are simply managers or administrators acting on His behalf.

Therefore, stewardship expresses our obedience regarding the administration of everything God has placed under our control, which is all encompassing. Stewardship is the commitment of one's self and possessions to God's service, recognizing that we do not have the right of control over our property or ourselves.

We are called as God's stewards to manage that which belongs to God. While God has graciously entrusted us with the care, development, and enjoyment of everything He owns, as His stewards, we are responsible for managing His holdings well and according to His desires and purposes.



Prayer: Dear Jesus. Thank you for everything You gave us in order to sustain life here on Earth. Please help me to be a responsible contributor to looking after my neighbours, this magnificent planet and all its other inhabitants on land, in the sea and sky. AMEN

TUESDAY – The principal of accountability



Matthew 25: 21 *“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’*”

A steward is one who manages the possessions of another. We are all stewards of the resources, abilities and opportunities that God has entrusted to our care, and one day each one of us will be called to give an account of how we have managed what the Master has given us.

This is the maxim taught by the Parable of the Talents. God has entrusted authority over the creation to us and we are not allowed to rule over it as we see fit. We are called to exercise our dominion under the watchful eye of the Creator managing His creation in accord with the principles He has established.

Like the servants in the Parable of the Talents, we will be called to give an account of how we have administered everything we have been given, including our time,

money, abilities, information, wisdom, relationships and authority. We will all give account to the rightful owner as to how well we managed the things He has entrusted to us.

We all should long to hear the Master say what He exclaims in our reading for today. As Christians in the 21st Century, we need to embrace this larger biblical view of stewardship, which goes beyond church budgets or building projects, though important; it connects everything we do with what God is doing in the world.

We need to be faithful stewards of all God has given us within the opportunities presented through His providence to glorify Him, serve the common good and further His Kingdom.



Prayer: Dear Lord. Thank you for trusting me to look after Your glorious works of wonder that allow me to live comfortably. Grant me the ability to contribute to keeping them safe and pure as You intended. Should I falter in my duties, please forgive me Lord, and help me to change my ways to become more accountable and faithful. AMEN

WEDNESDAY – Stewardship demands loyalty



Matthew 6: 24 *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth”*

Note that God isn't saying money or wealth is evil. But *servicing* it as the priority of your life is where the danger lies.

God wants us to be faithful, trustworthy, loyal subjects of the Kingdom of Christ. He wants Christians to be a true representation of the goodness, joy, mercy, love and courtesy of the kingdom of God. As loyal stewards, we use God's gifts for His purposes and to His glory.

How is loyalty demonstrated? It starts with trusting God and choosing His way over other ways. It requires a level of strength and self-control when things aren't easy. We must put our trust in God and His plans

even when we can't see how He will work things through.

God has called you to make a commitment to His plans—to His kingdom. Even though this means putting Him and His ways above your own, we can trust that His plans are for our best interest. His plans are *“for your well-being, not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope”* (Jeremiah 29: 11).

The good news is that the faith and love required to make this level of commitment are given to us by God Himself. All you have to do is seek a relationship with Him, and He promises that everything else you need will be *“provided to you”* (Matthew 6 :33).



Prayer: Lord, thank you for Your many promises to us. Thank you for making us part of Your kingdom and trusting us to contribute towards Your Kingdom. Grant us the wisdom to be loyal to You and serve only You as our Master and Saviour. AMEN

THURSDAY – Stewardship demands generosity



2 Corinthians 8: 2-3 *In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.*

When we give, not just out of our wealth, but as a sacrifice it counts as a credit with God, a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God, that opens up God's riches to meet our needs. If you really think about it, we have nothing of our own to give to God. He owns it all.

The Bible is full of examples of sacrificial giving. In 1 Kings 17:13, the widow at Zarephath first made Elijah, the prophet, a cake with everything she had left. As a result, God provided enough oil and flour for Elijah, the widow woman, and her son to survive throughout the drought. In Matthew 26:7, a woman poured her very expensive perfume from the alabaster jar over Jesus' head.

In Luke 21, Jesus recognized the poor widow woman's tiny gift as more than the large gifts from the rich. In Acts 2:44, the early church members sold their property and possessions to give to anyone in need. In Acts 4:32, again the early church shared everything they had.

We all have needs in our life from time to time. Sometimes, it might be a monetary need, but at other times it is a physical healing, a spiritual healing, or just the need for peace in our lives. God loves to give to you. God loves to meet all of your needs. However, as believers in Christ, we must follow Christ's example and give sacrificially.



Prayer: Lord. Guide me to not be selfish. Teach me to be generous and loving to anybody who needs my help and understanding. AMEN

FRIDAY – Sacrificial giving



Luke 21: 1- 4 *As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. “Truly I tell you,” He said, “this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.”*

What does it mean to give beyond our ability? It means to push our giving past the point where the figures add up. It means to give when the bottom line says we shouldn't. It means living with the faith of the poor widow. For most of us, giving according to our means would stretch us. Giving beyond our means would appear to break us. But it won't—because we know God is faithful.

Giving sacrificially also means giving the best. If we have two blankets and someone needs one of them, sacrificial giving hands over the better of the two. The giving of the first Christians was spontaneous, unguarded, and uncalculated...

A disciple does not ask, “How much can I keep?” but, “How much more can I give?” Whenever we start to get comfortable with our level of giving, it's time to raise it again.”

Sacrificial gifts are gifts that are inspired by the promises of God's continual care and the totality of Christ's sacrifice for us. A Christian never “gives 'til it hurts.” Instead, the Christian eagerly looks for opportunities to grow in the grace of giving—sometimes even beyond our ability.

How is that possible? Simple, we give with the mind of Christ—not according to the ways of the world!



Prayer: Dear Lord, help me to be able to give without over-analysing the request too much. Help me to trust You instead.
AMEN