

"What We Believe"

Session 13

Stewardship-- God Gives

I) INTRODUCTION

- A) God came into history as the Man Jesus Christ, leaving the riches of eternity to become poor and humble for the sake of serving others.
- B) Jesus' life was stewarded perfectly. He spent most of His life working an honest job as a carpenter. Even though He was poor, Jesus paid His taxes and gave generously to those who were in need. Jesus then served His Father's will, doing the works of the Father in ministry.
- C) On the Cross, Jesus became the most generous Man in history. But His generosity didn't stop there. He then gave the Holy Spirit to us, prays for us continually, is building a house for us, and is coming again.
- D) Christians today should follow the generosity of Christ both to God and to others for our entire lives here on earth, by stewarding our time, talents and treasures in a Godly fashion.

II) What Is A Steward?

- A) In life we can either be an owner or a steward. As an owner you see your life as your own; as a steward you see your life as belonging to God.
- B) Stewards are defined by three main things:
 - 1) Stewards gladly understand they belong to God.
 - (i) Everything we have, and have received, didn't start with us and won't end with us. It's all gifts.
 - 2) Stewards recognize that everything belongs to the Lord.
 - (i) God is the owner of all things because it comes from Him and He rules over it.
 - (ii) Even the abilities we have that help us generate wealth have come from Him.
 - (iii) Stewards understand they deserved hell, but have been given heaven instead.
 - 3) Stewards faithfully oversee what God has given to their oversight.
 - (i) Instead of keeping our time, treasures and talents, stewards seek God for how they can use those gifts for Him and for others. Stewards don't seek to see how little they can get away with, but how far God will let them go.

III) How Is Stewarding Actually Worship?

- A) Twenty-five percent of Jesus' words in the Gospels are connected to the resources that God has given us. And there are nearly 800 verses in the OT/NT that speak of budgeting, saving, investing, debt and tithing.

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- B) **Matthew 6:24** *"No one can serve two masters; for either you will hate the one and love the other, or else you will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."* (Mammon = Wealth regarded as an evil influence or false object of worship)
- C) Jesus is saying that we will either worship our money or worship God **with** our money.
- D) Here are some passages that speak about an improper love of money:
- 1) **Luke 18:18-30** Being torn about obeying God with your money
 - 2) **Matthew 6:1-4** Using your money to impress others so they praise you
 - 3) **Proverbs 22:7** Getting into the slavery of debt
 - 4) **Ecclesiastes 4:4** Envying the success and wealth of others instead of celebrating it
 - 5) **Proverbs 15:16** A diminished fear of the Lord
 - 6) **Proverbs 13:4** Laziness
 - 7) **1st Timothy 6:3-10** Becoming a heretic because it's profitable
- E) If you love money you will use people, but if you love God you will use money to serve both God and people. Christianity is a pay-it-forward relationship because somebody else paid for you to be here, so you pay for others that are both here and still yet coming.
- F) **Philippians 4:18** *"Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God."*
- 1) Paul is comparing this financial gift, to worship that ascends before God. Do you think about your financial gifts as incense that go before God or just before man?
- G) Here are some things that will help us worship God with our wealth.
- 1) Understanding that Jesus is your treasure.
 - (i) Above all, we must keep Jesus as the priority.
 - 2) Understanding that more stuff can't make you happier.
 - (i) Stuff lies at the end of the day, because we aren't happier, we only want more.
 - 3) Understanding it's more blessed to give than receive.
 - 4) Understanding that we should aspire to grow in giving.
 - (i) We talk about growing in other gifts; we should talk about growing in our giving.
 - 5) Understanding that are storing up treasures in heaven.
 - (i) We can't take our wealth with us, but we can send it on ahead of us.
- H) Often times the Church spends too much time talking about money, but that doesn't mean we should spend less time talking about it. We must find the middle of the road and stand there.
- I) If you are stuck and don't know where to start trusting Jesus with your life, start with your wealth. In short time your heart and your time will follow where your treasure is.

IV) What Does It Mean To Steward Our Time?

- A) God has special things for every person to do while on earth and we must seek to make sure we do those things, while making sure we have times of rest also.
- B) Our life is divided up into work and rest.'
- C) **WORK**
 - 1) The father in the office, the mom at home and the child at school are called by God to labor unto Him by worshipping God with their work.
 - 2) Even though much of work is labor some, we are called by God to enjoy it and do it with a happy heart. When we work hard, we should also be resting hard. If we can't rest well we might ask ourselves who is our God?
- D) **SABBATH** (Rest)
 - 1) Taking a Sabbath is the fourth commandment given to us. It includes the animals, the rich and the poor, and it is a statement of faith to God.
 - 2) If we don't take a Sabbath, one will be forced upon us by health, illness or something else.
 - 3) The Sabbath was celebrated by the Hebrews on Saturday until the early Church wanted to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus which moved the Sabbath to Sunday. Because the conflict between them became so great, we observe both Saturday and Sunday.
 - 4) Some religious groups have made the Sabbath into an idol by saying you can only do this or that on that Sabbath. Jesus broke all those rules by healing, teaching, promoting evangelism and helping people all on the Sabbath.
 - 5) For many, instead of enjoying the Sabbath, by reading, fellowshiping, having fun and resting, it is wasted by watching TV and surfing the internet.
 - 6) Retirement has become an idol in our culture. It's not wrong after working hard your entire life to enjoy your grandkids, volunteer your time at the church and serve others, but spending it on yourself, traveling the world, golfing, shopping and playing is wasting the best years of your life.
 - 7) Christianity is filled with an army of older saints with much life experience, who rather than investing it in the lives of new converts, lost people and students, their time is spent pulling the slots at the world's largest and smallest casinos.

V) What Does It Mean To Serve With Our Talents?

- A) **John 14:12** *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father."*
- B) The promise of greater works is both literal and numerical. Literally, the Church at the end of this age will do greater miracles, and numerically it will do greater miracles because of the millions of Christians on the earth doing greater works.

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- C) Our talents are both natural gifts and spiritual gifts.
- D) Natural skills include relational skills, communication skills, writing, conversation, public speaking, teaching, poetry, advertising, song writing, playwriting, acting, singing, playing an instrument, giving presentations, teaching, artistic ability, culinary arts, graphic design, video production, athletic ability, problem solving skills, computer skills, researching capabilities, intuition and many more.
- E) Spiritual gifts include wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miracles, prophecy, discerning of spirits, tongues, and the interpretation of tongues. Other places they are listed as prophecy, apostle, teaching, performing miracles, healing, helping, administrative gifts, speaking in tongues and several others.
- F) There are several groups within Christianity that believe differently about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and here are the main four.
 - 1) **Cessationist** (ceased)
 - (i) Supernatural gifts (tongues, miracles, prophecy) functioned only in the early Church and are not practiced today. God speaks, but only in scripture.
 - 2) **Continuationist** (continues)
 - (i) Supernatural gifts are given to every generation and should be practiced today, but always tested according to the guidelines of scripture.
 - 3) **Charismatic**
 - (i) Supernatural gifts are given in every generation. Contemporary revelations are valued but always secondary to scripture and are based in the scripture. Supernatural manifestations are sought, but must show the fruit of the Holy Spirit.
 - 4) **Charismaniac**
 - (i) Supernatural gifts are given to every generation. Contemporary revelations are in effect more valued than scripture. Dramatic supernatural manifestations evidence God's presence.
- G) In 1928 there was a gathering of the wealthiest men at the Edgewater Hotel in Chicago, Illinois. These men were made up of the president of the largest utility company, the greatest wheat speculator, the president of the New York Stock Exchange, a member of the president's cabinet, the greatest "bear" in Wall Street, the president of the bank of international settlements, and the heads of the world's greatest monopolies. These were men who used their talents to get wealth without Christ, and we were told to watch them closely.
 - 1) 25 years later here's where they ended up.
 - (i) Charles Schwab, president of the largest steel company lived on borrowed money and died broke.
 - (ii) Arthur Cutten went from being the world's largest wheat speculator to losing 40 million and dying broke.

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- (iii) Richard Whitney, the president of the NY Stock Exchange, served a term in Sing Sing prison.
- (iv) Albert Fall, who served as one of the President’s Cabinet, was imprisoned for fraud.
- (v) Jessie Livermore, who had been Wall Street’s greatest “bear” committed suicide.
- (vi) Leon Fraser, who was president of the Bank for International Settlements committed suicide.
- (vii) Ivar Drueger, head of the world’s greatest monopoly, committed suicide.