



### Glorifying God Through Our Giving

Our stewardship theme for this coming year is “Glorifying God through Our Giving.” This theme comes from St. Paul’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Letter to the Corinthians the 9<sup>th</sup> chapter. In this chapter he is talking with the Corinthian Christians about stewardship and giving. In the course of the conversation he tells them that they can do an incredible thing through their giving—they can glorify God. And so can we!

A pastor was giving a report to his parishioners on the results of their stewardship program. He started by saying, “Well, there is some good news and some bad news.” His parishioners responded, “Give us the good news first.” “The good news is that all the indications are that we will have enough money to carry out the ministry and mission of Christ in the upcoming year.” “That is good news! So what is the bad news?” “Well,” said the pastor, “the bad news is that the money is still in your pockets.”

Contrary to popular opinion it is not my job to try and pry money out of your pockets for the ministry and mission of Christ. However, it is my job to share with you what God’s Word has to say about our stewardship and our giving.

The title of today’s sermon is “Glorifying God through Mature Stewardship.” So today I want to talk about three characteristics of a mature steward.

#1. A mature steward is one who allows Jesus Christ to be both Lord and Savior of their lives. Now we have no problem with Christ as Savior. We like it that he has saved us from sin, death and eternal damnation. The problem is Christ as Lord. Lord means master. And the problem is that we want to be masters of our own lives. Every day we live we are presented with the existential question; who is going to control us? Are we going to control ourselves or are we going to allow the Lord to control us?

Now add to this the power of sin and things really get complicated. The power of sin causes us to turn in on ourselves and to become self-centered and selfish. When this happens we are lead down a road that leads to difficulty, heartbreak, hopelessness and premature spiritual death. However, if we choose to resist sin, self-centeredness and selfishness and even more importantly, when we fall into sin, self-centeredness and selfishness and repent; then we then find ourselves walking down a path that leads ultimately to joy, hope, peace and eternal life.

We have been called to allow Christ to be both Lord and Savior. We have been called to allow Christ to be Lord of our lives and our pocketbooks so that we might glorify him through our giving.

#2. A mature steward is one who has a financial plan. Why do we need a financial plan? We need a financial plan in order to put into action what God’s Word teaches us about money and possessions. Psalm 24: “The earth is the Lord’s the fullness thereof, the world and all those who dwell therein.” The hymn, “We Give thee but Thine Own” is based on Psalm 24. “We give thee but thine own, Whatever the gift may be; All that we have is thine alone, A trust O Lord from thee.” (LBW #410)

God has made everything in the world. All our money and possessions belong to him. In turn, he calls us to manage his assets for him and his kingdom. In order to do that you will need a financial plan.

Furthermore, without a financial plan you will not be in control of your money, your money will be in control of you. And you will end up mixed up, confused and living from pay check to pay check, which is no way to live.

Here is the plan that you need. It is called the 10-10-80 plan; 10% tithe; 10% saving; 80% spend on your current needs. If you live this way you will probably prosper. Why? It is because you will be living on a budget. You will not over spend or over borrow. You will also have money when an opportunity comes along. But more importantly in using this financial plan you will not be worried about money. (85% of people don't even have a month's income saved) If you follow this financial plan will you prosper? Probably. If you follow this plan will you be content? Definitely. And you will be able to glorify God through your giving.

#3. A mature Christian steward is one who is able to discover and follow God's purpose for every material possession in their life. Why does God give us any good thing? This is the best part of the sermon. Why does God give us any good thing? It is because he loves us. He wants us to be able to provide for ourselves and our families. He wants us to have a roof over our heads. He wants us to have a decent life. But He also wants you to use His possessions for something greater than ourselves. He wants you to use His money and possessions for His mission mandate; to make disciples and to love and serve Him by loving and serving our neighbor. And it takes financial resources to accomplish this. By discovering and following God's purpose for every material possession in our lives we will be empowered to glorify Him through our giving,

This week all confirmed members will be receiving their stewardship materials in the mail. So this week we are asking all confirmed member to do three things. Count your blessings and count up all the ways that God has blessed you in the past year. Listen to God's promise like the one in Malachi 3:10 where he promises to bless us by "poring down on you an overflowing blessing." (here, God promises to bless our giving), and then respond accordingly. Oh yes, and #4, make sure you return your stewardship materials next week or if you can't be here, please return them by mail.

I am also asking all parents who have kids that are confirmed to sit down with them and help them fill out their stewardship materials. I have already paved the way for this. Every year in confirmation class we spend a session talking about what God's Word teaches us about stewardship and giving. Then we actually fill out a Faith Promise and Time and Talent sheet.

It is our duty to help our kids become sharing, caring and giving. What a tragedy it would be if your child never learned this lesson. And they won't learn this lesson unless you and I teach it to them.

Let's review. A mature steward #1, is one who allows Jesus Christ to be both Lord and Savior of their lives, #2, is one who follows the 10-10-80 financial plan and #3, is one who is able to discover and follow God's purpose for every material possession in their life. And finally, a mature steward is one who understands that through their giving they can do something quite incredible: They can glorify God through their giving! AMEN.

**+Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam+**