

StewardSHIP

SERMON SERIES BY
STEPHEN HERROD

MESSAGE 1:

YOU ARE GOD'S TRUSTEE

PASSAGE: LUKE 16: 1-13 ESV

1 He also said to the disciples, "There was a rich man who had a manager, and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. 2 And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your management, for you can no longer be manager.' 3 And the manager said to himself, 'What shall I do, since my master is taking the management away from me? I am not strong enough to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. 4 I have decided what to do, so that when I am removed from management, people may receive me into their houses.' 5 So, summoning his master's debtors one by one, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe my master?' 6 He said, 'A hundred measures of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' 7 Then he said to another, 'And how much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred measures of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.' 8 The master commended the dishonest manager for his shrewdness. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own generation than the sons of light. 9 And I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.

10 "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. 11 If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? 12 And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? 13 No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

MESSAGE GOAL:

The goal of this sermon is to emphasize the foundational truth of stewardship in the context of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. It highlights that everything belongs to God, and the people of God are entrusted with the responsibility to manage every aspect of their lives for God's purposes. The sermon also draws insights from the parable in Luke 16, highlighting the importance of strategic stewardship even in the face of past irresponsibility. The goal is to encourage self-reflection, accountability, and a commitment to faithful stewardship aligned with God's purposes.

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INTRODUCTION

Most of you are aware that I have two toddlers: Honor, who is a little over 1 year old, and True, who is a little over 3 years old. Their close age proximity has led to the current situation where both of them are in the "mine" stage simultaneously. The "mine" stage is characterized by hearing "mine" from both of them at least 10 times a day. Developmentally, it is a normal part of toddlers' growth to believe, from their perspective, that everything is "mine." During this stage, they begin to test boundaries and seek independence.

In this stage, toddlers believe that almost everything they find meaningful belongs to them. From their viewpoint, everything is theirs. However, in the next phase of their development, they will come to realize that not everything belongs to them.

As we embark on this series on stewardship in the context of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, it is crucial to understand the foundational truth that nothing belongs to you; everything belongs to God. God owns everything.

The Psalmist put it like this: "The Earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in (Psalm 24:1)."

The foundational truth for understanding stewardship in the context of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ is that God owns everything, and we own nothing.

God possesses it all.

Everything belongs to Him.

The earth belongs to God.

The heavens belong to God.

The sun, moon, earth, and all other planets, both known and unknown to us, belong to God.

The seen and unseen belong to God.

The waters and all vegetation belong to God.

The angels belong to God.

And you, yes you, belong to God.

Furthermore, the money that is in your pockets right now, the money that is in your bank account belongs to God.

The time that you are spending right now belongs to God.

The gifts and abilities that you have been given belong to God.

The resources in which you are tapped into belong to God.

Everything belongs to God. Nothing belongs to us.

There is no shared ownership.

There are no partnerships.

There are no additional signatories.

Everything belongs to Him.

God owns all of creation, that includes you, and all that you have.

Now get this: God is the owner, and

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you and I are God's stewards;
you and I are God's managers;
you and I are God's trustees.

As stewards, managers, trustees, which in this sense are synonymous, the stewards work for the owner. The owner does not work for the stewards, but the stewards work for the owner. God is the owner, and we manage what God owns, which includes ourselves.

You and I as human beings have been given the task since our existence to manage God's creation. Genesis 1:26 reveals that we are made in God's image, after God's likeness, and God gave us dominion over the earth. God has entrusted us with the freedom, responsibility, and opportunity to manage everything that we have been given by God. Stewardship, in the context of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, can be defined as the God-given responsibility for true disciples to faithfully oversee the protection and expansion of the assets God has entrusted us to manage on his behalf. A steward, in the context of a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, is one who faithfully oversees the protection and expansion of the assets God has entrusted you to manage on his behalf. Now let it be known that given the free-will that God has given you, the responsibility of your stewardship rests entirely in your hands.

What you do with the time, money, talents, gifts, abilities, and is up to you. What you do with what God has entrusted you with is up

to you. The choices you make, the focus of your mind, the thoughts you think, are up to you. The decision on how you spend your day is up to you. The decision on how you spend the money that God gives you is up to you. And because all of this is up to you, you have a unique ability to directly influence the rate of your own spiritual progress. And also, because the responsibility of your stewardship rests entirely in your hands, you will have to answer to the master for how you have managed yourself, other people, and all that God has entrusted you with. Remember, what you have doesn't truly belong to you; it has been entrusted to you. It's not yours, but God's. Remember, you, yourself, are not even your own, and in Christ, you can clearly see that you belong to God.

Now let's transition to this teaching in a parable that Jesus Christ taught, but as we transition, I want you to conduct an audit of yourself as a steward. I want you to conduct an audit of yourself as one of God's trustees. I want you to conduct an audit of yourself as one of God's managers using at least these questions for your assessment:

1. How are you managing the money that God gives you? Note: This is a very important question when it comes to stewardship, but let it be known that it is not the only question to be asked when talking about stewardship in the context of

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2. following Jesus Christ. Many people only focus on stewarding money and assume that's all there is to living as a steward under God, but money is only one part of your role of managing all that God has given you. See, stewardship involves money, but it also encompasses more than money, so ask yourself with the current understanding of stewardship that you have: "how are you managing the money that God gives you?"

But also at least ask these questions as well:

3. How are you managing the time that God gives you?
4. How are you managing the relationship God gives you?
5. How are you managing the reasonable portion of life, health, and strength that God gives you?
6. How are you managing the gifts and abilities that God gives you?

SERMON POINTS

1. *STEWARDSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF A TRUE DISCIPLE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST MEANS USING MONEY AS A TOOL FOR GOD'S PURPOSES, NOT AS AN IDOL TO BE WORSHIPPED.*

Interestingly enough, in Luke 16, Jesus shares a story about an irresponsible and dishonest steward with his followers, embedding a lesson about stewardship. I wonder why Jesus opted for a dishonest steward as the character in this story. On one end, the truth is we can extract valuable lessons from bad examples. Additionally, I contemplate how, at that time, we had deviated so far from God's vision of stewardship that there were no faithful stewards available to serve as examples when illustrating a point.

In this same narrative, the Pharisees, who were the religious leaders, are identified as lovers of money in verse 14, so the reality is when Jesus told a parable to communicate his teaching on stewardship, he couldn't even use the religious leaders of that time as a good example, because they were not good stewards. They were, in fact, lovers of money. They were religious, yet their stewardship revealed that they were money's trustees rather than God's trustees. You see, there is no way you can be a lover of money and a good steward of God, because to be a lover of money is to elevate money to a position that is reserved only for God.

Money is not the root of all evil. Money is not the root of all evil. The love of money is the root of all evil. To be a lover of money is to serve money. To serve money is to disregard God. Jesus says in verse 13 that a person cannot serve both God and money. Money is a tool, but it is a tool that often

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becomes an idol, and when we make it an idol, we make it our master, and when we make it our master, we forsake God, because you cannot serve God and money at the same time because to serve one master is to abandon the other. To serve one is to pull you away from the other. Money will have you chasing it, and while you're chasing it, you're simultaneously running away from God, oftentimes before you truly realize it. You are not to allow money to control you, your time, your energy, and your efforts, for to do so is to be a trustee of money rather than a trustee of God. I say to you this morning, don't serve money. Don't let the money that that job pays or the big goal or dream you have, to chase you away from God. But I say to you this morning, serve God. God gives us money. And as we look through the lens of stewardships with our identities as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, we are to see that God gives us money to serve His purposes. Remember, you are a trustee and God is the owner. The money that God gives you does not belong to you, but it actually belongs to Him, but He gives you some money, just like he gives you other things, to serve His purposes! For a disciple of Jesus Christ, money is a tool, not to be used to advance yourself, but it is a tool to be used to advance the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ! That being said, if you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then the money that you are given is not to be self-serving, but to be God-glorifying so yes, use

it, but don't let it use you. Beloved, it is impossible to truly serve God and organize your life around the acquisition of wealth! Now this is not to say that believers cannot have wealth, but it is to say "seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and his righteousness, and all these things will be added unto you! (Matthew 6:33)"

2. *STEWARDSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF A DISCIPLE OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST MEANS MANAGING ALL THAT GOD HAS GIVEN TO YOU FOR GOD'S PURPOSES AND GOD'S GLORY.*

Now in this parable, there was a rich man who had a manager. In Jesus' day, managers were often hired by wealthy people to care for the finances of their estates. Such a manager would be comparable to a financial planner or trustee who manages the finances of an estate or organization. You are a trustee. You are God's trustee.

And in this parable, this steward was fired for being irresponsible. Verse 2 reveals that the owner perceived his manager as irresponsible, so he gave him a notice of termination. After receiving this notice and knowing that his dismissal was imminent, he approached the debtors who owed the owner, aiming to befriend them for potential

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future job opportunities. He reduced their bills, using a financial tactic known as transmutation, easing the business's financial strain while fostering relationships. The plot twist is that instead of punishing the steward, the owner commended him for his strategic shrewdness. Despite acknowledging the steward's unrighteousness, the owner praised him for utilizing his last opportunity and resources to plan for a brighter future. The owner did not endorse the irresponsibility or dishonesty of the steward, but he did commend him for planning a bright future after his irresponsible and dishonest past. And Jesus shows us there is something to be learned from this steward. In fact, as we lean in to this parable today, we can see ourselves in this steward. If you reflect on your life prior to truly embracing the teachings of Jesus Christ which very well may be now in this season of your life, you may recognize instances of squandering the time, the money, the health, the gifts, the abilities, the resources that God has given you to manage and oversee. But today I encourage you to learn from the irresponsible stewardship of your past and recognize there is a God-given strategy for responsible stewardship! There is a plan for you to become a faithful steward of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is not done by copying the unjust steward's action, but it is to make a decision after your failure to manage your time, manage your resources, manage your money, manage

your life, manage your gifts in a way that honors and glorifies God alone!

Let me conclude by telling you a story about my favorite trustee. He didn't do anything on his own accord, but only what the owner sent him to do. The owner sent him to reveal the father to us. The owner sent him to destroy the power of the works of the devil. The owner sent him to provide an example of a holy life! The owner sent him to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself so that all creation can be redeemed! My favorite trustee is Jesus the Christ! Jesus paid it all, all to him I owe! Jesus paid it all, all to him you owe! Jesus paid it all, all to him we owe! We owe him our praise! We owe him our worship! We owe him our service! We owe him our gifts! We owe him our abilities! We owe him our time! We owe him our talent! We owe him our treasures! We owe him our life! Honor God with your wealth! Honor God with your time! Honor God with your resources! Honor God with your praise! Honor God with your service! Honor God with your gifts! Honor God with your worship! He is worthy of all the praise, honor, and glory.

QUOTES BY STEPHEN HERROD

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