

Engaged in the Master's Business

Break Out Session

PASTOR'S ROLE IN PREACHING STEWARDSHIP

**Question: Why are we afraid to preach stewardship?
Why should we do it?
What are the benefits of preaching stewardship?**

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

Today as we discuss the “**Pastor's Role in Preaching Stewardship**”, I want to share with you some with you some thoughts and words of encouragement that will help you preach on the theme of Christian Stewardship. I am sharing with you a suggested series of sermons on Christian Stewardship.

Sermon I

What Is This Stewardship?

Something is wrong in our church life. There is much work to be done, but so few workers. Large amounts of dollars are needed in the work of the mission of the Church, but our offerings are down and the church finds itself deeply in debt.

Where is the fault? Who is to blame?

Many individuals and careful observers of church life tell us that we are remiss in not teaching Christian Stewardship. We need to study and learn to practice stewardship in order to grow the mission of the church.

Are these critics right?

The question is worthy of serious and prayerful consideration, as God's Word has many references to the subject of stewardship. One of those references is ...

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good Stewards of God's grace.” 1 Peter 4:10

I. Need to understand the meaning of the word: stewardship!

As Lutheran Christians, our approach to stewardship is from the “the grace of God in Jesus Christ.” We begin not with the sovereignty of God, but with the grace of God, as defining a our doctrine of stewardship. This emphasis on the grace God defines our approach to stewardship. God is defined not primarily as the owner, but as the *Giver*. David McConaughy put it this way almost One hundred years ago: “*God is the great Giver. He neither buys nor sells, but He gives unceasingly. It is the very essence of His nature to give.*”

The nature of our relationship with God also changes. We are no longer merely servants, stewards, or managers, but children of God and heirs of the Kingdom.

We are created in the image of God and set apart in our baptism to be participants in:

... Caring for creation.

“God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.” Genesis 1:27

... Advancing His mission according to our gifts.

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace: whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. 1 Peter 4:10, 11

... Following Jesus in the way of the cross: obedience, sacrifice, service.

“Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice insofar as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed. Therefore let those who suffer according to God’s will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.” 1 Peter 4:12, 13, 19

Such an emphasis on the grace of God changes the approach to stewardship:

... God is the gracious giver of all things.

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

... We are more than managers, stewards. We are His children, heirs, participants in His mission.

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” 1 Peter 2:9, 10

... Our participation in his mission is free and joyous, not simply a duty of a manager. (*If you do not want to give, then don't -- not law motivated!*)

“Each of us must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.”

2 Corinthians 9:7

“We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia, for in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.”

2 Corinthians 8:1, 2

... Participation in His mission involves a new way of looking at all of God's gifts and our use of them.

... That new way of living means following in the way of Jesus: The way of obedience, sacrifice, and service.

Stewardship is all about our life of sanctification, the life of service and fruit-bearing which flows from saving faith and being a new creation in Jesus Christ. Our emphasis is the grace of God as the motivation factor for our stewardship. (*God's love for us – I want to respond.*)

II. God's grace in Jesus Christ changes our relationship to God.

The Pastor's Role in Preaching Stewardship works best when the pastor uses a grace oriented approach to raising generous disciples of Christ. You are more concerned about raising people in their life of stewardship than raising money. God's grace is the motivation factor for stewardship. (*Budget not a motivation to give.*)

At our baptism we were created in the image of God and set apart to be participants in advancing his mission according to the gifts given to us. (*Not looking at what someone else has received. How does God want me to use the gifts he has given to me.*)

“As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.” 1 John 4:10, 11

Our participation in His mission is free and joyous. The Apostle Paul reminds us of these concepts in 2 Corinthians 5, 8 and 9 which are often cited in the section on stewardship by LCMS President Matthew Harrison:

A Theological Statement for Mission in the 21st Century

**IN FULFILLMENT OF 2013 RESOLUTION 1-031a AND ADOPTED BY THE BOARD
FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSION ON FEBRUARY 24, 2014**

21. Stewardship. The question of stewardship begins not with what I have but with what the Lord has given me. Therefore, stewardship begins with the gifts of the Triune God. This is reflective of the way that the apostle Paul deals with stewardship in 2 Corinthians 8. Paul does not start with an assessment of the resources of the congregation or with legalistic instructions about how much they should be doing to meet their quota. Rather, he begins with God's grace, with God's undeserved gift in Christ. Christians give not to win God's favor but on account of His prior gift, salvation in Christ Jesus. In 2 Corinthians, stewardship is connected with assisting those in need, in showing mercy.

You can develop a sermon series from 2 Corinthians.

This is the pattern of Christian stewardship. Just as in Romans 12, Paul makes his appeal to Christians that they present their bodies as living sacrifices by the mercies of God, so here Paul wants his hearers to know first of all about God's grace. Anchored in the unmerited riches of God's mercy for sinners in Christ, the Macedonians are eager – yes, begging – for the opportunity to take part in the offering. They exceed the apostle's imagination or expectation. What do they do? They give themselves first to the Lord and then, Paul says by the will of God, they give themselves to us.

Thus in our preaching of stewardship the goal is that the commitment of the individual takes a step forward in discipleship maturity. Remember a grace oriented preaching focus is never legalistic, never demanding, never demeaning, but always a free response to God grace in Christ Jesus.

(Why has God given me these gifts? How am I to use them to his glory?)

Sermon II

Faithfulness in Stewardship!

**“Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.”
1 Corinthians 4:2**

God’s grace in Jesus Christ defines our relationship to God. Stewardship is our life of sanctification, entered upon at our Baptism when we became a child of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

“For by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourself, it is the gift of God not of works, so that no one can boast. For we are God workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:8, 9, 10

God had a plan: First to save us from our sins, but God’s grace for you and me doesn’t stop with forgiving our sins, but God’s grace has a plan to use us, **“For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.”** There is a reason why God has poured out his grace upon us. In order that you and I could become what he planned for us to be ...

“God’s Workmanship” God has showered his grace on us for a purpose: to serve him. Now you understand, we serve him not because we have to ... no, because of what we have received through his grace, we want to show our appreciation and willingly do the good works He has planned for us to do. What we are going to do is not our decision, we do not have to figure it out. He has already chosen in eternity (in advance before creation of the world) the works we are to do.

The primary factor in our doing the good works he has created us to is faithfulness.

I. We need to understand the meaning of the term “faithfulness”.

Faithfulness defines our character; it describes our moral attitude, which shows itself in connection with promises made, obligations assumed, all of our activities undertaken in relationship to God and one another.

(Worship – Bible Reading and Study – Lord’s Supper – Prayer – Using God’s gifts to serve others.)

One who is faithful is trustworthy, reliable, devoted; he keeps his promises, carries out his responsibility all the time, overcomes obstacles and can always be counted on to be there.

We seek faithfulness in choosing a wife, husband, and friends, and leaders, It may also be applied to certain activities: preaching, teaching, governing, and administration, It may also include sincerity, honesty, diligence, ready to make sacrifices. Such as Joseph in Egypt, Jesus, Apostle Paul and other examples of faithfulness.

Faithfulness is a high virtue in any walk of life.

II. Let us now apply all this to Christian Stewardship.

As a child of God, you desire to walk humbly in the sight of God.

**“He has told you O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice; and to love kindness, to walk humbly with your God.”
Micah 6:8**

“love kindness” -- Old Testament word for grace. Where God directs each person through his word what he expects of them.

The Lord has clearly revealed in His Word what He requires of us. Our problem is not a failure to know but a failure to do. (Sins of Omission)

**“We have all fallen short of the glory of God.”
Romans 3:23**

God showed His steadfast love for us by the sacrifice of his Son on the cross.

“We are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” Romans 3:24

The Holy Spirit leads redeemed sinners to walk in justice, kindness, and humility. Giving God all credit, and praising God for all He has done in our life.

A good steward of the Lord is a diligent worker in the kingdom of God, keeping first things first in his life. He always has time for church work, using his talents for carrying out God mission of bring salvation to the whole world, and other congregational activities. As a leader in the congregation he faithfully does all his responsibilities, and knows the value of setting a good example to others in the church.

He puts the principles of stewardship into practice also in secular relations. He is a good citizen and obeys all the laws for the Lord's sake. In his business he is fair and honest. As an employer he is just and fair with his employees. In his home he is a good husband, wife and father or mother.

Finally, for inspiration and encouragement of our stewardship life let us turn to the cross of Jesus Christ. Be faithful in worship, attendance at the Lord's Table, reading our Bibles and prayer. For this is what brings us spiritual growth, strength, and fervor to live the life of sanctification. We realize that it God who works in us both the will and the ability to do the works he has planned for us to do.

Thus it is our prayer ...

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

God's grace in His Son Jesus Christ assures of our victory over sin, death, the devil and the hope of eternal life with God forever in heaven. The joy of our stewardship is responding to this grace of God by using all the gifts he has given to us.

It is easier to talk about stewardship than to be a good steward. We need much encouragement to be and remain a faithful child of God.

In today's message, I want to encourage you to be a good steward of the Lord. The Psalmist instructs us ...

**“Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!
Psalm 100:2**

The Joy of Christian Stewardship

I. Learning to experience joy in our stewardship!

The Psalmist is calling us to “Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!” In this Psalm “enter God's presence” typically refers to coming into the Lord's house for worship. As we come to worship remembering ...

“For by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourself, it is the gift of God not of works, so that no one can boast. For we are God workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God has prepared in advance for us to do.” Ephesians 2:8, 9, 10

Our joy is remembering God's grace, his only Son came into this world and fulfilled all righteousness, willing became the Lamb of God and went to the cross, suffered, died and three days later rose from the grave assuring us that our sins are all forgiven. And now as his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, we can now do the good works God has prepared for us to do.

Because of our relationship to God through his Son, Jesus, we respond to his grace, with a desire is to use the gifts God has given us, to serve him. Our service is not something we have to do, but something we want to do in response to his grace give to us.

Being a forgiven child of God has a profound effect upon our relationship to God and our desire to serve Him.. With King David we say ...

“Create in me a clean heart O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from you presence, and take not you Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.” Psalm 51:10,

God looks into our hearts and sees our willingness to serve him. There is a joy in our stewardship. It makes us feel good, as a child of God, to use the gifts He has given to us and bring him praise, honor and glory.

II. “Yes, there is joy in serving our Lord!

Remember the song you sang in Vacation Bible School ...

**I’ve got the joy, joy, joy of the Lord,
down in my heart, down in my heart.**

This joy consists in believing that God has created me and all creatures, has forgiven me all my sins through His Son Jesus Christ, and by the power of His Holy Spirit, I am his workmanship prepared to do the works God has planned for me to do. God has given me so many gifts to use for the mission of his church and welfare of my neighbor. My willingness to serve is motivated by faith, love, and thankfulness. It’s the model of Jesus Christ, the perfect Steward. Its objectives are the glorification of God, the extension of His kingdom and serving my neighbor.

The more deeply we feel thankfulness and love toward God and our Savior, the greater will be our joy in serving.

**“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self control; against such things there is no law.”
Galatians 5:22, 23**

Faith guided by the Holy Spirit must be the source of works that are truly good and well pleasing to God. The Spirit of God is the source as well as the guide of our stewardship life.

This encourages us to understand that God is allowing us to be his workmanship, doing the good things he has planned for us to do. As God’s steward you will be doing good things.

bringing blessings, and building a structure, helping to heal the world's problems, and sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.

To build that life of stewardship, and find great joy, may we each day remind ourselves of our own unworthiness; daily view the cross on which the Good Steward, the Lamb of God, gave his life for us, and realize how richly our lives have been blessed by this grace of God. Let our daily prayer be: "Here I am Lord, use me to your glory."

Resources for this presentation:

The Concordia Pulpit for 1931, St. Louis, Missouri; Concordia Publishing House, 1930, Christian Stewardship, pages 328-339, The Rev. Karl Kretzschmar.

Consecrated Stewards, Guest Leader Guide to Revised Edition, Lutheran Church Extension Fund, The Rev. Dr. Art Scherer, Author and Editor

Other Resources

Consecrated Stewards
Lutheran Church Extension Fund
10733 Sunset Office Drive
Suite 300
St. Louis, MO. 63127-1020
314-885-6444
lcef.org

Florida-Georgia District
Lutheran Church Extension Fund (Consecrated Stewards)
5850 T.G. Lee Blvd. Suite 500
Orlando, Florida 32822
407-847-5556
877-457-5556 (toll free)

The Rev. Dennis L. Bartels (Consecrated Stewards)
Holy Cross Lutheran Church
650 NE 139th St.
North Miami, Florida 33161
305-893-0371

JohnMaxwellCompany/stewardshipsermons

The Blessings of Tithing, Daily Devotions about Christian Giving,

Rev. Donald O. Neuendorf

Ronald J. Chewning

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