

Love God Love People: Stewardship

(Matthew 25:14-40, Luke 19:12-28, Psalm 24:1, Haggai 2:8, Ephesians 5:15-17, Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 4:12, 2 Timothy 3:16-17)

I. Intro

A. God owns everything, you are a manager –

- i. Steward: A person employed to manage another's property. A person whose responsibility it is to take care of something.
- ii. **Psalm 24:1** *The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; (NIV)*
- iii. *Ex. from the kids – God owns everything.*
- iv. Practical examples of areas that we have stewardship over: Relationships, Spouse, Kids, Possessions (Money, Cars, Houses, boats, etc), thoughts, what I look at, listen to, eat, drink, our prayer life, the image of God, Dads – The image of God as Father, Leaders – the people we're leading, Me – this sermon, Our neighbors
- v. Consider: Time, Money, and God's Word – Consider the impact that each of these things has on your life. What do these things tell others about you? What do they say about your beliefs? The gospel?

B. Biblical Overview

- i. **Hebrews 3:13** *But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.*

C. Focuses for this sermon – Time, Money, God's Word

II. Time – Ephesians 5:15-17

A. **Eph 5:15-17** *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.*

- i. Look, Behold, Beware of how you walk. Not as unwise, but as wise.
- ii. Unwise – NOT making the best use of time. Just floating along; BUT – contrast! Wise – Making the best use of the time
- iii. Evil, Toilsome, Painful
- iv. 'Do not be foolish' – How can I not be foolish? By understanding God's will! If I don't understand His will I will waste my life on trivial things.
- v. I have a certain amount of time on this earth. The Bible speaks often of God knowing the number of our days, how I spend it is important.
- vi. Practically, how do I do this? Does this mean I can't watch TV? Have leisures?
- vii. Husbands – deny yourselves, spend time pursuing Christ, your wife, your children, serving with passion at the church; At work (or school etc.) – be intentional (gospel focus). Others

- viii. What can others tell about the gospel by the way you manage the time God has given you?
- ix. Warning – Working yourself too much. God gives rest; Sabbath (Did God need a break? Why did he Sabbath?) **Psalm 127:2** *It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

III. **Money – 1 Timothy 6:6-11**

- A. **1 Timothy 6:6-11** *Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.*
- B. Money is not the most popular topic of preaching. This is the time when you expect me to stand up here and tell you what I think you should do with your money. Not going to do it.
- C. You know your priorities. Checkbook. Be honest in here today, I challenge you to evaluate your spending habits. How much do you give to missions, the church, the single mom that you know is struggling, the friends that can't pay their electric bill, or the compassion program to feed the hungry overseas?
- D. The obvious interpretation of the verse we read in the prepare time is that Jesus is actually talking about money. Don't get me wrong, He was. But stewardship of God's "talents" doesn't stop there, otherwise, this passage only speaks to monetary investing. Everything God has given you must be used wisely.
- E. What can others see about the gospel by the way you spend your money?

IV. **God's Word – Hebrews 4:12**

- A. **Hebrews 4:12** *For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the divisions of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.*
- B. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent for every good work.*
- C. We have the very Word of God.
- D. Did you know that I have probably 10+ bibles at my house in several translations and different languages. We have bible scattered about in this room on the chairs. We have at least 3 Christian radio stations that I know of in this town. Seminaries, Christian Bookstores, the internet, iPhone applications, podcasts, blogs, the list goes on and on. We are fat on the word of God. **Or at least on the presence and availability of the word of God.**

- E. Did you know that in other countries they have 1 bible for an entire church? They will part it up and families will share portions of the bible and pass them around until they are finished. There are testimonies of native missionaries memorizing entire books of the bible. One Chinese man I know of memorized the book of Matthew in 28 days. It took me a semester to memorize Matthew 5. Why? Time, commitment, value.
- F. Why do I tell you this? My intention is not not to make you try to replicate what some people have done for Christ and certainly not to make you feel bad or condemn you. Christ will do the condemning of those who do not respond to the gospel in faith. Look inward, why is it that you don't read your bible daily or even desire to? Do you believe this is really God's speaking to us? Does your life reflect that?
- G. I would challenge each and every one of you to have a personal time with God daily, in the morning, before anything else. No time = no relationship. The stewardship of God's word is, I believe, the area that we will be held most accountable by God. We're not going to be able to say, well, I didn't know that I was to help the poor, or serve in the church, or forgive my offenders. God has made his Word available to all and we should see it as valuable as it is.

V. Conclusion

- A. We, by our very lives show people the Gospel. **St. Francis of Assisi** said *"Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words."* He was right in that we at all times in all areas of our lives in all ways we need to preach the Gospel. We know however that **Romans 10:17** says *So faith comes from hearing, and hearing the Word of Christ.* Words are essential, we need to preach the Gospel with our lips, the Bible couldn't be more clear. But how am I contradicting my so-called beliefs, namely, the Gospel by the way I'm living?