

SERMON:

“What Kind Of Steward Are You?” by Pastor Ed Terry Delivered 11 10 19

Genesis 39:1-6; 39:20-23; 41:39-40; Ephesians 5:15 – 21; Colossians 3:12–25

Matthew 25:14- 30(Sermon)

First we need to understand the Biblical concept of a steward.

In The Bible we find many examples of wealthy people who had numerous servants.

The servants who were the most trustworthy servants were elevated to the position of “*a steward.*”

A steward is a servant that has been given the trusted responsibility of managing another person’s property.

Being a steward is a high honor.

When we talk about stewardship, many people often consider stewardship as merely as a matter of giving money to The Lord through the church.

While the giving of our tithes and offerings to The Lord is a very important aspect of stewardship, stewardship is much more than that.

Stewardship is a reflection of our relationship to our Lord and Savior.

Stewardship is the way I use what God has entrusted me with.

Stewardship is the proper management of the time, the talents and the possessions The Lord has entrusted to us.

We are to use what has been entrusted to us for the glory of God.

Stewardship is managing everything that God has entrusted to us for His glory.

The bottom line is “*Stewardship is a reflection of our Lordship!*”

Our lesson from Genesis gives us an example of a good and faithful steward.

Nothing that Joseph had belonged to Joseph but Joseph had control of all of his master’s property.

Only Joseph’s master had more control and more power.

We also saw that Joseph was called to account for his actions.

Because Joseph was a faithful steward God blessed everything that Joseph did.

As you will recall, a parable in the Bible is a short story that conveys a spiritual truth by comparison.

In Matthew 25 Jesus gives us a parable to help us understand the duties and responsibilities of a steward.

First, let's look at the characters and the analogies in this parable:

- The rich man is Jesus
- The servants are every one of us
- A talent was approximately 70 pounds of silver – which is a very large sum of money. However, this parable should be interpreted as applying to everything that God has entrusted to us. Notice in verse 14, the Master entrusted all of his property
- The journey that the Master took represents the time span from Jesus' resurrection and ascension to Jesus' Second Coming
- The return of the Master refers to the Second Coming of Christ when Jesus will establish His eternal kingdom on earth
- The settling of the accounts in verse 19 refers to the final judgment

From the very beginning we see that we are all Jesus' servants, we all belong to God and we all are accountable to God.

Whether we want to admit it or not we are God's stewards and we all will be called to give an account of our stewardship.

We need to make sure that we do not miss the Master's intent.

In verse 14 ***“he entrusted his property to the servants.”***

The master did not give the servants his property for their own use or personal enjoyment.

He entrusted his property to them.

It is also clear the money was to be invested to make a profit for the Master.

We know this from verse 27 when the Master said, ***“My money”*** and we know this was clear to the servants from their response when the Master returned to settle his accounts.

Most of the time we talk about the importance of us trusting in God.

But, here in this parable we see that the Master entrusted everything He had to His servants.

Think about that; Jesus has entrusted everything to us.

No only has The Lord entrusted us with the possessions we enjoy, God has entrusted us with all of His earthly creation and God has entrusted us to spread the Good News of the Gospel.

Now think about all the times we have betrayed that trust and yet God still loves us and forgives us.

But, make no mistake; there will be a day of accounting.

When we stand before the Throne of God we all will have to give an account just as the servants did in this parable.

2nd Corinthians 5:10 says, ***“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”***

Also from verse 15 we learn that God’s resources are given to us in accordance with our abilities.

In the last part of this parable we learn that The Lord will reward us or The Lord will punish us based on our faithfulness.

It is important for us to note that it was the effort of the servants, not the return on the master’s investment that was the basis of the master’s rewards.

The servant with two talents was given the same praise and reward as the servant with five talents.

The faithfulness of both the first and second servant was rewarded with trusting them with even greater resources.

Both servants were called ” *good and faithful*”

In verse 24 & 25 we see the attitude and the actions of the 3rd servant; the one who had been given one talent.

“Master I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your talent in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.”

So where did the third servant go wrong?

First we see the 3rd servant had a bad attitude. He thought of his master as a “*hard man*” because *he did not have a good relationship with his master.*

Next the 3rd servant was lazy.

He did not make any effort to do what his master expected which was a return on his investment. (Verse 26)

The 3rd servant had no motivation.

He was more interested in his own affairs than he was in his master’s affairs.

He did not even try.

The 3rd servant was afraid of failure. He didn't play to win; he played to 'not to lose'.
And lastly the 3rd servant exercised extremely poor judgment.

Verse 24 makes it clear that the servant knew his master had entrusted the money to him for the sole purpose of making a profit.
He knew he would be held accountable for the way he used the master's money and he knew the master expected a profit.

Had the 3rd servant tried to make a profit and failed this servant would have only risked his master's displeasure.

However, by not even trying to make a profit, this servant was certain to provoke the anger and wrath of his master.

So what does this parable teach us? How do we apply the concepts of stewardship?

Everything that we have, everything that we are, and everything that we accomplish belong to God.

Everything that has been given to us is entrusted to us and is to be invested for God's service.

This changes completely how we look at our life, because as a steward we are going to have to give an account for how we have managed God's property.

While this concept of stewardship should radically change us once we grasp onto it, it brings us great comfort since we do not have to worry about the outcome.

We just need to focus on our faithfulness.

If we are a steward that means that we are a manager as opposed to an owner.

The difference between an owner and an employee is that at the end of the day the employees can go home, put their head on a pillow and say *tomorrow*.

Whereas an owner of a business goes home and has to evaluate what has been accomplished each day, decide what needs to be accomplished tomorrow, and must make all the arrangements so that things will be in place before the employees come to work the next day.

Once we grasp the concept that we are stewards of this life that God has given, we begin to realize that God is there making the tough decisions and making provisions for each of us to succeed.

God has not chosen to give everybody the same amount of time to live, equal talents, or the same amount of possessions.

We have what we have because that is what God chose to give us.

Each of us have what we have because that is what God decided to allow us to manage.

We should never be jealous of what others have because we know God created us just like we are to do the job He planned for us to do.

Neither should we be proud of what we have because all that we are and all that we have was given to us by God to do the job He planned for us to do.

God only expects us to manage what he has given us within the boundaries of ability that He has programmed into us.

Remember the rewards are based upon our faithfulness, not on the return.

Stewardship involves allowing God to work in us.

Life is one adventure after another.

If we want to make a difference in this world we must allow God to use us to and we must be responsible stewards with everything God has entrusted to us.

Stewardship involves taking a risk.

You can take the risk or not; but if you do not take a risk you will loose!

The 3rd servant was punished because he was lazy and afraid.

He did not trust his master enough to take a small risk and he was not a faithful steward.

Fear is stewardship's worst enemy.

The servant had not been a good steward, because he was afraid of failure.

This morning we need to ask ourselves: *"What are the fears that prevent me from being a good and faithful steward?"*

"... If I invite my neighbors to come to church with me I am afraid they will quit liking me"

"... If I tell people that Jesus is important to me, I am afraid people will laugh at me"

"... If I tithe one tenth of the money I earn, I am afraid I will not be able to pay all of my bills"

"... If I go to Sunday School, I am afraid people will find out how little I know about the Bible"

"... If I commit to reading my Bible every day I am afraid I won't have time to keep up with the news"

"... If I volunteer at Church I am afraid I won't have enough time for my self"

Our stewardship is truly a reflection of our Lordship!

You see if we have a proper relationship with our Lord we will **want** to do the jobs our Lord has given us to do.

If we have a proper relationship with our Lord we **will** make time to spend time with Him in prayer and Bible study every day.

If we have a proper relationship with our Lord we would all want to tithe.

If we have a proper relationship with our Lord we will realize that everything we say and do can be an act of worship.

If we have a proper relationship with our Lord we **would** be a part of one of the Bible study groups we offer at Mt Paran.

If we have a proper relationship with our Lord we **would** tell our family and friends about Jesus.

We **would** volunteer to do jobs around the church and we **will** look for other opportunities to serve Jesus!

The last thing that Jesus did before He ascended into heaven was to charge His disciples with the task of carrying on the ministry that Jesus had started when He was on earth!

Preaching the Good News of Salvation to the lost souls; ministering to the needs of the people suffering around us, and bringing hope and encouragement to the downcast.
That is the job Jesus has given to each one of His disciples.

That is the job Jesus has given to you and me.

We all need to take an honest look at ourselves this morning.

If we are not doing the job that Jesus gave to His disciples to do, then either we are not one of Jesus' disciples or we are an unfaithful servant just like the unfaithful servant in this parable.

And if we are like the unfaithful servant we should expect the same kind of punishment that the third servant received.

The first and second servants invested what had been entrusted to them to advance the master's holdings.

This morning we each need to ask ourselves how are we investing God's resources to further God's Kingdom.

You see investing in God's Kingdom requires trust and commitment.

The bottom line is this, to be a good steward we must accept the fact that God is our creator and we were created for His pleasure.

We must accept the fact that God has uniquely equipped each one of us with talents and possessions to do the specific jobs He created us to do a job within the allotted time He has given us.

We must accept the fact that everything we have belongs to God and He is trusting us to manage His property.

If we are to succeed at being a good steward and advancing God's Kingdom then we have to live our lives with an eternal perspective and we must continually make personal choices that are pleasing to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Remember every one of us will have to give an accounting to Jesus Christ for our stewardship of the time, the talents, and the money He has entrusted to us.

God's Word to us today challenges all of us to reevaluate our stewardship.

On that accounting day, will Jesus say to you and me; ***“Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's joy!”*** or will Jesus say; ***“You wicked lazy servant”*** AMEN