

S.N. Jan 10, 1971 A.M.

THE PRIORITY OF STEWARDSHIP

Genesis 1:26-28

INTRODUCTION

A Pastor once invited the State (Stewardship Secretary) to speak in his church. He gave instructions as to what the messages will be. He suggested in the morning that he just preach and in the evening he could tell about his work. When the day arrived and he introduced him, he said, "Now the stewardship secretary is here to preach to us this morning; he is going to preach the gospel, and this evening he is going to talk to us about stewardship."

Many people are like that pastor. In their minds, the preaching of stewardship has nothing to do with the gospel. But that is far from the truth. The preaching of stewardship was not an (optional) matter. The stewardship response of each individual/and the church is not a "take it

or leave it" proposition.

Where Stewardship started Gen. 1:26-28

NOT a minor matter. When we use the term stewardship we mean a great deal more than money...this is the total response of man to God and the lordship of Christ..

We are talking about the purpose of the creation of man=reason why God made him in his own image.

XXXXXXXX I:26 and let us make man in our own image.

V.25 to do with the creation of universe-thus far nothing that had the capability or abilities to be responsible of caring for what God had created.

DECIDED TO MAKE MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE.....

V.28 man (charged), (commissioned) up until this time there is nothing new, be fruitful multiply and fill the waters, etc..

THE FIRST COMMAND OF GOD TO MAN WAS STEWARDSHIP, Stewardship responsibility...
For man had not yet fallen into sin....

Key word is subdue....-made a tenant--he asked him to take care of the world. and all
its resources.

✓ Granted we need a budget---
to enlist tithers....
secure pledges.....

First we need a conviction that every man is a trustee of the whole creation of God.
and the total resources of the earth...

World WAR II NEWSPAPER STORY GRN, MCARTHUR LEFT CORREGIDOR said I shall return..

remaining soldiers in charge of last min. details.. stacks of Amr. Money, could not
be taken along, carted out piled and burned, new 100.dollar bills burned well..one boy picked
up one and touched the fire to a cigarette, "I've all ways wanted to do this..==time
was running out. money did not mean much....IT will mean less when you stand before the J

judge.....

use of earth's resources.

Now we sometimes say that the church building is sacred, or a cemetery is sacred, or a historical museum, or shrine. Now God has not marked the earth off in areas some sacred and some profane. He has not marked money as sacred and some as profane. What a rich and abundant earth is this! And God has made us the keeper of all of it.

We are not to use this world and its resources merely to suit our fancies.

Earth is not just a giant playground, a place ~~for~~ to frolic, to indulge in appetites and desires. But the stewardship here means to have dominion or control.

Jesus tried to get this idea across to men however large or small the trusteeship, we're going to be ultimately accountable for it.

God's original plan was for man to work, and God blessed them. He put them in the garden, and work here had a double purpose: economic and therapeutic. The economic value of work provides for the necessities of life. If any would not work, neither should he eat.

But if any provide not for his own, ~~his~~ he is worse than an infidel.

Now the other angle and value of work is that the sweat of a laboring man is sweet, for we labor much. It helps a man in relationship to worry, depression, and restlessness. To have a job, to be working. They work with a sense of divine partnership with God as suggested here in Genesis, and also in I Cor. 3:9 in this work we work with God. A man will not be lazy if he is employed by others, they will work conscientiously. If they are employers, they will considerate of the ^{rights} ~~rights~~ of the others who work for them.

But they will be aimed to be productive and to be fruitful. This seems to be the idea.

As an inscription on a tombstone in a small village cemetery in England:
"Here lies the body of Thomas Cobb, who made shoes to the glory of God, in this village for fifty years."

Now that's where stewardship started. It started there with God.

II - How Stewardship Developed in History

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Deuteronomy 8:17-18.

Very early in the history of the Israelites, God's chosen people, they came to understand the relationship between what we call stewardship and what we call evangelism.

Now it was necessary that Moses remind them of this relationship:

"And thou ~~shalt~~ say in thine heart, ^{My} mine power of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth."

Now this sounds very modern, doesn't it? Often we hear modern man speak, "My wealth, my money, bank account, house, boat, or things". Now this is an echo of what these Israelites were saying in Moses day as well as ours. The ^{wealth} ~~work~~ referred to is that which issues from man subduing and having dominion over ~~work~~ world.

Verse 18, Moses goes on to remind the chosen people of God that "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth the power to get wealth." That is, it was God who endowed man with the qualities, and made it possible for him to have dominion.

Now remember, God created man to be a partner in continuing the creative activity.

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For illustration, the wooden pews upon which we sit in our church today did not grow out of the ground as a bench, but rather man used the God-given qualities conceived in his mind the idea of a bench, then he took the raw materials which God furnished. A tree to which God alone can give life, and fashioned it into a pew.

Now this is the result that comes ^{from} ~~between~~ partnership between God and Man.

God supplies the raw materials, and man uses his God-given image qualities. He works with the raw materials, and ^{produces} ~~between~~ not only a pew, but everything that man has.

Therefore, everything that man has comes from God. You cannot name anything that man possesses: any wealth, any form of ~~possession~~ material, any possession, that is not the result of this creative partnership between man and God. It all finds its origin with God.

So Moses said "Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is He that giveth the power to get wealth."

Most of us have heard these words before and are aware that that is followed by a purpose. IT IS GOD THAT GIVETH THEE ~~POWER~~ POWER to get wealth==
IN ORDER THAT HIS COVENANT BE ESTABLISHED...+
WHAT IS THAT COVENANT? Abrahamic covenant and in thee shall all the familises of the earth be blessed. Gen.22:18

Whwether in the O.T. OR N.T. gGod is not willing ~~the~~ any should perish==
PENECOST christians came to believe that everything was held in trust adn to be used to cary out the graet commission.....

How good and successful have we been as good stewards of this globe? ARE we responsible managers, producers, consumers?

Medical research has lengthened life==

Agriculture made soil produce-improved methods, flood control, pest control===

HAVE BEEN GOOD STEWARDS OF OUR DOLLARE? MATERIAL RESOURCES...

SOME INADEQUATE ANSWERS... F. If we are looking for (excuses) for not facing the financial needs in our churches, they are easy to find.....

first-Our people are already doing all they can.

For our failure in soulwinning, visitation,, missions,, ILL. Foreign misssions offerings--how much did you give????

What this really means is that some people may already be doing all they can

MOST MEMBERS MAY HAVE JUST STARTED....

Second--Our church does not have any wealth.....

Who ~~said~~ said it didi.. Wealth is not essential to Faithfulness....

Most churches are supported by regular gifts, modest givers....

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✓ Third heard "let us hold the line on spending". We hit the panic button and this is just to say that if we would practice caution, there will be enough resources to meet every need.

Now, there is no doubt that every congregation should budget and spend wisely.

✓ Fourth, let us take another special offer. This is a cure-all, but the catch is that the same people are asked to give again in a special offering for the ones who give systematically.

✓ Fifth, let's major on spiritual and let money matters take care of themselves. Well-meaning people sometimes discourage talking about tithing or giving to the church as though it is something undesirable that we shouldn't talk about the matter of stewardship. And some people even apologize for public offerings. Now, giving is a part of Christian worship as singing, praying, reading the scriptures.

Of course, all sorts of things have developed in the history of stewardship. A rich man once said: "I owned \$50,000.00 and I was a happy man. Now my \$500,000.00 owns me. It says 'Run here' and I run, it says 'Trust in me' and I trust in riches. I am rich and unhappy, and I hanker for more."

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A prospect said, "I am sorry that my engagement prevents my attending your charity ball or concert, but I shall be with you in spirit." The solicitor replied, "Splendid, and where would you like your spirit to sit? I have tickets for two, three, and five dollars."

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In the development of the history of stewardship, man has missed the mark. During the Japanese war in China, before World War II, a missionary and a business man were talking. The business man had had previous business dealings with the Chinese, and now he was selling fuel oil to the Japanese.

Miss asked him - How is it that you spend most of your life with the Chinese, winning their friendship for ~~business reasons~~

business reasons, and now you are selling oil to a nation that is dropping bombs on the women and children."

The business man's answer betrayed his desire to make money at any cost. "Jim, you know how it is." We'd do business with the devil himself if he paid in cash."

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I read a most interesting illustration on this. An old and beloved doctor who served the town people well was about to retire. He lived in a little French village, and one of the men had been unable to pay him regularly, but he treated them nonetheless.

At retirement, the village presented him with a barrel of wine, each family having been asked to bring one pitcher from ~~the wine~~ their own wine cellar. Amid profuse speeches, the wine was presented by the Mayor. That night, the doctor set by the fire to enjoy a drink of the wine. To his surprise, it tasted like water. He drew another glass. It was water. When he reported it to the town officials, it was discovered that each family had indeed brought a pitcher of water thinking it would go unnoticed ^{when} in mixed with a barrel of real wine.

So our gifts to Christ may be small and we may feel they won't be missed or needed. But the smallest gifts of sincerity ~~of~~ are needed if the greater gifts are to have meaning.

III. ~~Romans~~ The Priority of Stewardship

Rom 14:12

In many places in the Bible, we will find that God holds man responsible as far as performing his responsibilities. Man is to use the resources that God has given him and man is accountable to God as his steward. So then, every one of us shall give an account of himself to God.

Daniel Webster - Sec. of State under President Fillmore

dinner - 20 men - Mr. Webster what is the most imp. thought that you ever had/?
 "That of my individual responsibility to God"

Man has the responsible use of the world Money is a servant. money should be managed and earned honestly

Altars are all around-hands reach out for our gifts-community chest, cancer, heart fund, christmas, easter seals, we usually give where there is the greatest pressure, some give to get on the honor roll., some scolded, preached at etc...

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What motivates us to give////? Fear-- duty--habit--reward---propitiation for the miss deeds done the week before.

Some Never give beyond the tip level in their giving as a porter or waitress, some graduated to th entertainment level =give when they come..others on the promise level and neglect to follow it up, oythers on the christian level.tithes and odferings.

Harry Lauder scottish comedian liked to recall the old lamp lighter wo used to come down the street of his home town each night to light the gas lamps. He wuld often sit on the curb when a boy,watching the lamplighter as he made his way down the street in the deepening twilight.

He would zigzag from one side of the street to the other,lighting the lamps as he went.

After the lamplighter was lost in the darkness, Lauder said he still could tell where he wasand on which side of the street he was working, by the trail of light heef left behind him.

When a steward of christ remembers the cause of christ in his will, tithes his income those who are left behing can determine the cause in which he was truly interested by the gifts he left behind.

Left a pathway of beauty —