



Be a Faithful Steward

(Matthew 25:14-30)

In Matthew 25:14-30, we see how Jesus used the parable of the bags of gold (also called parable of the talents) to teach us a valuable lesson on stewardship. We are like the servants who are entrusted by the master with several bags of gold - time, money, abilities, information, wisdom, relationships, opportunities and authority. And when the master returns, we are made to account for how we manage what he has given us. We are stewards of God's riches.

What does it mean to be stewards? The Bible has this to say about Stewardship:

1. God owns everything and has given us the privilege and responsibility of managing His resources. We are simply managers or administrators acting on His behalf. Psalm 24:1: *The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it.*
2. God desires us to be faithful managers of His resources, and *it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.* 1 Corinthians 4:2
3. God holds us accountable for the resources entrusted to us. *"Now after a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them.* Matthew 5:19
4. Wise managers receive rewards from God for good management. *"His master replied, '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 happiness!'"* Matthew 25:23

From Matthew 25:14-30 we see that:

1. God is the one who knows our abilities and has given them to us, and we should not compare nor complain (v. 15) if we see that our neighbors get more than we do.
2. God does not look at the numbers (how much we produce)but at our faithfulness (v. 21, 23)
3. God will hold each one of us into account (v. 19, 24). Do not let fear stop us from doing what is right. God has asked us not to be afraid because He promised that He is with us.

As God's stewards (Psalm 8:6), we must be faithful with what God has given us – whether it is a little or a lot (Matthew 25:15), or He will take it away *for whoever has will be given more and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them* (v 29).

Being a faithful steward means being faithful in our stewardship of:

Time - *Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, making the most of your time, because the days are evil.* Ephesians 5:15-16

Talent - *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.* 1 Peter 4:10

Treasures - the responsible allocation of financial resources (in the areas of earning, giving, saving, investing, spending

Be a Faithful Steward (continued)

and debt relief), in recognition of God's ownership over all things. This is important because:

1. Treasure (money) is the primary competitor with Christ for the Lordship of our lives. *No one can serve two masters. 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 both God and money. (Matthew 6:24)*
2. GOD wants to protect us from financial bondage. Financial Bondage is being held captive or obsessed not only from the lack of money or overspending but also from an abundance of money. In other words, being controlled by money, and these can be in the form of overdue bills, debts unpaid, investment worries, unmet family needs, overextended credit cards, deceitfulness, greediness, covetousness, "G.R.Q." Attitude (Get Rich Quick!), lack of commitment to God's work.

How can we be good stewards of our treasure? We need to be confident of God's Sovereignty and Providence that He will do "His part." *The earth is the LORD'S, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it. (Psalm 24:1)*

The Lord owns everything that we possess - 100%. But then, he asks us to set aside a tenth of what he owns. In other words, he lets us keep the 90% but calls us to give back to him just the 10%. If we say: "Well, no way, I want to keep everything for myself." What in effect are we doing? We are robbing God!

These were God's words to the Israelites when they were not giving their tithes and offerings: *"Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How are we robbing you?' "In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. (Malachi 3:8-9, NIV). So because the Israelites at that time were not tithing, they were under a curse.*

But God also asks us to test Him. *Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. (Malachi 3:10, NIV)*

Are we faithful in giving back to God the first fruits of His blessing? Are we faithful in giving our tithes and offerings? Let us be faithful stewards by not withholding from God what belongs to Him. Always remember that God's perspective of success is having spiritual riches, not worldly riches.

Review (Knowledge)

Please take a few minutes to read the summary above. What is the highlight of last Sunday's sermon for you and why?

B. Sharing (Practical Wisdom)

1. Please read Psalm 89:11, 24:1, and Romans 11:36. If everything belongs to the Lord, what then is our role? What does it mean to be a steward or manager? As stewards or managers, do we have any ownership rights? What are our responsibilities as stewards or managers?
2. Read Malachi 3:8. Do you fall into the temptation of giving back to God some "loose change" or "tip" each month? How would remembering that God owns everything shape our giving of tithes and offerings? Even if we are faithful in giving our tithes, how should we handle the remaining 90% of our income? How can we be faithful stewards of money and possessions?

C. Prayer

Take time to pray for one another.