Week 8

Living Your Faith Through Stewardship: Your Time, Talent and Treasure

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

In addition to our resources of time and talent, we have been entrusted with the stewardship of various treasures including our bodies (Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20), our minds (Rom. 12:2; 1 Pet. 1:13), and our opportunities (Col. 4:5). This week, we will focus on the treasure of our financial resources, since Scripture has so much to say about this basic concern that affects us all.

When it comes to governing our financial affairs, we must choose between two radically different approaches: the values of our society, or the values of the Bible. The first alternative tells us to find happiness and peace through money; the second tells us to find the desire of our hearts in the Lord and to be content with what He gives us. Money is a good servant but a bad master--if we follow the world's wisdom, money will dominate us, but if we submit to "the wisdom from above" (Jas. 3:17), money will serve us as we use it to serve God and others.

While the Bible has about 500 verses on prayer and approximately 500 verses on faith, there are over 2,300 biblical verses that deal with money and possessions. Over 10 percent of the New Testament relates directly to financial matters.

Why is there such an emphasis? One reason is that money has a profound effect on interpersonal relationships. Many people spend more than half their time thinking about money, and financial difficulties are a major cause of marital conflict and divorce. Another reason is that the way we use our money is a real measure of our commitment to Christ. Scripture relates how we use our money to the commitment we have in loving God: "But whoever has the world's goods, and beholds his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him?" (1 John 3:17). We can assume an appearance of spirituality in prayer, Christian service, and Bible knowledge, but we cannot fake the way we use our money and possessions. Our wallet reveals more about our character and walk with the Lord than we may think.

This week, let’s us as a church community ask ourselves the following questions:

- How do I spend my money? Am I a consistent and cheerful giver?
• Does the way I spend my money reflect my Catholic beliefs?
• Do I trust God’s promise of provision enough to tithe no matter what my financial situation looks like?
• Do I support my church by regularly tithing? Do I give to Catholic charities or other worthy causes?

Scripture for Reflection
Deuteronomy 8:18
Deuteronomy 28:8,11
Malachi 3:10
Luke 6:38

Week 9

Living Your Faith Through Stewardship: Your Time, Talent and Treasure

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE –Part II

Financial Freedom
Financial freedom should be a part of our new life in Christ, and the wise person seeks the timely practice of timeless principles in this vital area. We will look at the biblical guidelines concerning the proper attitudes toward money (ownership, priorities, contentment), and the proper actions with money (responsibilities, giving, borrowing, budgeting, saving, communicating).

Ownership
God is the owner of all things. "The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, the world, and those who dwell in it" (Ps. 24:1). We come into the world with nothing and leave it with nothing (Job 1:21; 1 Tim. 6:7), but God says, "every beast of the forest is Mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine" (Ps. 50:10-11). Everything we have, therefore, comes from Him (John 3:27; Jas. 1:17). There is no such thing as a "self-made man" -- "What do you have that you did not receive? But if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?" (1 Cor. 4:7).
We may believe this truth in theory but deny it in practice. When this happens, we slip into the rebellious attitude that "My power and the strength of my hand made me this wealth" (Deut. 8:17). Instead, we must come to grips with the fact that everything we have in this world belongs to God and is only "on loan" to us. This includes not only our money and possessions, but also our families, careers, and plans for the future. If we can get straight on the principle of 100% ownership, we will be ready for the principle of 100% stewardship.

As a St Thomas Aquinas church community, let us read these passages and then ask ourselves what people or things we are still clinging to as if they were our own rather than the Lord's.

Scripture for Reflection

1 Chronicles 29:11-14
Job 41:11
Psalm 89:11
Psalm 104:24
1 Corinthians 10:26.

Week 10

Living Your Faith Through Stewardship: Your Time, Talent and Treasure

STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE –Part III

Priorities

Some areas of our lives are harder to yield to God than others. For many Christians, the financial area is one of the hardest. To give this over, we must stop trusting in money and in our own ability to generate it, and recognize God alone as our Source and Sustainer. He may use various means to provide for our needs, but He is the Source behind it all. Each of us must learn to look to the Lord and
not to people for our security.

God is not only the Source, but also the Controller of all things (Dan. 2:20-21). He rules over our circumstances and accomplishes His purposes in and through them. When we are tempted to get angry at our "bad luck," we need to make an attitude shift and realize that there is a purpose behind everything that happens to God's children. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Scripture for Reflection

Dan. 2:20-21
1 Chronicles 29:11
Romans 8:28