

“Stewardship of Creation”

November 19, 2017

**Our Savior’s Way
Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM
Pastor Tyson Labuhn**

Grace, mercy and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Stewardship is often defined as how we use our time, talents, and treasures. Last week, as part of our sermon series on Stewardship, Pastor Mann talked with us about financial stewardship and its relationship to the work that God has given to us and the work of managing the resources that God has entrusted to us.

We see this in the parable of the talents, which is our Gospel reading for today. A man who is going on a journey calls his servants and entrusts his property to their care. Those hearing the parable would’ve instantly recognized the immense value the man entrusted to his servants because one day’s wage would equal a denarius. It took 7,300 denarii to equal one silver talent and a gold talent was worth 30 times more than a silver talent. And so, as the parable shares, some received 5 talents, another 1 talent, each according to their ability to care for and multiply his property. Because “everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” And according to the parable, the worthless servant will be thrown out, “into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Faithful stewardship has to do with our relationship to God as well as the level of care of the things that He has entrusted to us. From the beginning, made in His image, God has entrusted us to care for His creation. Genesis 2:15 says, “The Lord God took man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and care for it.” But as you know, all did not go well when they began to care more for themselves, rather than caring for God’s instructions. Sin entered the world as they desired to be more like God, knowing good and evil. Because of sin, Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden. The serpent was cursed above all the livestock, there was an increase of great pain during childbirth, and the ground was cursed so that man would toil and sweat to make a living from it. All of creation suffered and has continued to suffer because of sinful men.

Yet even today, we continue to see how creation has suffered because of our lack of faithful stewardship. While some may want to debate this, it’s been reported that in 2013 the United States generated 254 tons of garbage, followed by China with 190 tons of garbage (with a population 4 times the size of ours). Air and water pollution – especially in places like Mexico, China, and India – has gotten worse. Our oceans suffer – especially in the North Pacific – because of plastic debris and garbage. Our forests continue to diminish – especially in the Amazon – which has been identified as the cause of many species becoming extinct rather than multiplying. It seems that we simply haven’t been faithful stewards of creation.

Deserving to be cast out into the darkness, St. Paul shares with us that there is one who is faithful. Jesus, Son of God and Son of Man, is the firstborn over all creation. In Him, we have forgiveness and hope. He was there in the beginning and is the image of the invisible God. All things were created by Him and for Him. And God was pleased to have His fullness dwell in and through Him,

because whether on the earth or in heaven, through Him all things are held together. Jesus is the one who reconciles all things to Himself, so that there is peace between God and man as well as all creation by His blood that was shed on the cross.

Jesus is the first born of all creation and from the dead because of His glorious resurrection. In Him, the old has passed away and the new has come to us. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, re-created as a person of faith in Jesus, who desires to live in and for Him alone. Through this deeper fellowship with God, not only do we have peace with Him, but we also have peace with ourselves and our neighbor. And so, we care for those who are in need or who have been marginalized in our world, such as those who are identified on our Angel Tree in the Narthex. If you haven't already done so, take the time this morning to pick up a name on the tree so that a child in need might be blessed this Christmas by the care and resources entrusted to you by God.

We also care about His creation as good stewards so that our lives might glorify Him. Here are some ways that you might do this –

1. Purchase quality items as much as possible so that they might last longer and consume less energy.
2. Carefully plan your purchases so that they packaging waste is reduced and products are more environmentally friendly.
3. Repurpose items you no longer need and recycle when possible.
4. Consider reusable options like cloth napkins or use old kitchen towels instead of paper towels.
5. Try removing your name from junk mail catalogues so they don't fill your mailbox and your trash bin.

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul wrote, "...the creation eagerly waits for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was

subjected to futility—not willingly but because of God who subjected it—in hope that the creation itself will also be set free from the bondage of decay into the glorious freedom of God’s children.”

It’s in this freedom, that each of us has given a certain amount of time, unique set of talents, and enough resources to carry out His will in our lifetime. It’s our task as good and faithful stewards, to care for everything in creation – our world, ourselves, and even our own bodies. In doing so, we are giving Him glory in all that we say and do as good stewards of His Creation, enabling the children of God in this generation as well as the generation to come so that they too might experience His masterpiece of Creation.

And now may that peace which surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in that same Christ Jesus until He comes again to take us all home to be with Him forever. In Jesus’ Name. Amen.