



Stewardship

Matthew 7:1-6
Week of February 20, 2022

Before Connect Group

- Matthew 7:1-6
 - Watch the sermon by going to <http://switzerlandcommunitychurch.org>
-

Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. "Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.

Matthew 7:1-6

Sermon Notes

We need to have wisdom and discernment to be good stewards. Remember, we will all answer to God who knows our hearts.

- My sermon will attempt to illustrate the importance of being a good Steward and its Biblical principles that endeavor to clarify what that means to the Christian. I will attempt to raise your awareness of what it means to be a good steward, why, how, and over what it should be applied. Obviously, what comes to mind immediately is your time, your money, your possessions, your resources. But it goes much deeper than that. It requires an understanding of discernment instead of judgement; stewardship instead of ownership; generosity instead of possessiveness; being intentional instead of idleness; carefulness instead of carelessness.
- Jesus came not to be served, but to serve. He did that. His faithful disciples also assume the role of servant. They serve God, one another, those who are lost, those who are in need, and those who are in distress. In this materialistic society where self-centeredness is the rule of the day, the Christian is taught to be gracious and compassionate.
- In Matthew 7: versus 1 through 6, we read six versus that on the surface seem to give a simple warning of judging others without regard to our own matters of fault. Indeed, a warning against hypocrisy, as we read in verse 5. In fact, one can be so blinded to their own faults and issues that to confront or accuse another could be fatal in today's world of "let me do whatever I want because I have the right to do so." We have gone beyond the "don't tread on me" to "don't try to correct me regardless of who I am affecting." But, if you look closely at these 6 versus, I offer that there is a contrast between versus 1 and 2; versus 3 through 5; and verse 6. In fact, verse 6 stands alone and is a warning to be a good steward.
- In Romans 1:14 and Galatians 6:10, the Apostle Paul writes that Christians have God-given obligations to preach and teach the truth and to help those in need. We are told to be good neighbors, and this is further illustrated in the parable of "The Good Samaritan" in Luke 10:25-37, by a willingness to become involved. We must not take these responsibilities lightly. But, as is usually the case, there is another side to our responsibilities as servants. Sometimes Christians, in their eagerness to be compassionate and Christ-like, fail to recognize that God does put limitations on this aspect of our discipleship.
- Is it good stewardship to blindly expend time and energy or to render assistance to those apparently in need of such assistance without discernment? In fact, sometimes to do so is poor stewardship and betrays our Lord's trust in us. While we do not want this fact to be used as an excuse to ignore our responsibilities to act, neither do we want to waste the things the Lord has entrusted to us, including our lives and ourselves.
- *Matthew 7:6 "Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces."*
- I offer to you that these words of Jesus are allegorical. I doubt that any were literally casting pearls before swine. But the meaning is pretty simple to figure out; "Do not persist in offering what is sacred or of value to those who have no appreciation for it, because your gift will not only become contaminated and be despised, but your generous efforts could also be rebuffed and perhaps you even openly assaulted.
- The "dogs" and "swine" here stand for the unappreciative and worldly; unappreciative and uncaring men and women who belittle the value of what is offered to them. "That which is holy or sacred" would be the meat offered in sacrifice to God. A dog could care less whether it came from the altar or the garbage. The swine have no appreciation for neither the beauty nor the value of the pearls under their feet. Your life, time, energy,

opportunities, and abilities are God's pearls. They are His!

- *1 Corinthians 6:19-20; "you and I are merely stewards overseeing God's possessions, that being ourselves."*
- We must show discernment as to what use we make of God's possessions. It is possible to waste them by using them when we should not, as well as not using them when we should. This includes taking care of God's possessions, to include ourselves, our bodies, minds, and souls.
- *John 6:15 "Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain to be by himself"*
- Jesus was very popular at this stage of His ministry. The main reason for this is that He had just miraculously fed five thousand plus people. The purpose was twofold; the people were hungry, and Jesus wanted to illustrate the more important spiritual bread, the bread of life, that He was offering them in His teachings.
- But the people did not want the bread of life. They wanted more of the physical bread to eat. They began following Him for the wrong reason. Jesus offered them spiritual bread, but they did not want that. When Jesus refuses to duplicate the earlier miracle, continuing instead to redirect their attention to the words of life, the people finally lose interest and leave. We see this in verse 66. They were unappreciative of the pearls Jesus was offering them. Jesus simply refused to allow His efforts to be wasted on those who had little interest in His purpose and mission.
- *Matthew 25:14-30 "For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth..'"*
- The message here concerns wasting what has been provided to you for the Glory of the Master. It concerns stepping forward in faith, or cowering in fear or angst of losing what was provided. Our possessions and what we steward are not ours but belong to the Master. Will we honor and glorify Him by investing these possessions, our talents, His resources entrusted to our care, for His purposes? Will we double the return for His Glory?

Or...will we squander what is His out of fear or idleness?

- Are you simply “Hoteling it” or are you stepping up and actively cultivating what is the Lords, what has been provided to you, caring for the needs of your family, His church, your community? Or are you just a Hotel consumer expecting the hot pot of coffee and donut to be waiting for you upon arrival?
- So, how do you know when to step up or when to not waist what has been provided to you?

The Need For Discernment

- *Matthew 10:16 “Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise (or shrewd) as serpents, and innocent as doves.”*
- We need to have wisdom and discernment to be good stewards. Remember, we will all answer to God who knows our hearts. I will stand before Him having made some mistakes in judgment because I cannot read hearts. He knows that. But do not let me stand before Him having selfishly or lazily shirked my duty. He will hold me accountable.
- But it may not be as difficult to determine when to offer the pearls of God and when not to do so. Jesus said that even those in the world are capable of making such judgments, as we see in Luke 16:8-13, in The Parable of the Shrewd Manager. In fact, The Lord says that they sometimes do a better job of it than the sons of light.
- Jesus told us how, “we can know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7:20). We are urged to ask God for wisdom in these and other matters (James 1:5-8). We must seek discernment as to the right thing to do. A good steward learns when those times are, and it is the Holy Spirit that provides the wisdom to understand.
- *John 16:12-15. “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the Father has is mine; therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*
- The Rev R.A. Torrey writes in his 1910 edition of “The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit” that we “shall never truly know the truth until we are thus taught directly by the Holy Spirit. No amount of human teaching, no matter who our teachers may be, will ever give us a correct and exact and full apprehension of the truth.”
- He goes on to say that the most educated and learned in the Greek and Hebrew languages cannot become more aware of the truth in the absence of the Holy Spirit, than the one who has never read or learned the ancient languages but is bathed and taught by the Holy Spirit as to the whole sphere of God’s truth and wisdom.
- It is the ability to discern, by the help of the Holy Spirit, that provides the wisdom for Christians to know when to step up or when to be still. This is the difference between wisdom and foolishness.
- Both are examples of discernment, the need to understand the greater good, the big picture, to see more than what is in front of you. Unfortunately, not all are capable of doing so. Yet, in James 1:5, we are instructed to ask God for such wisdom, but once doing so to not doubt, in order to not be thrown and tossed like a wave on the sea...to avoid being double minded.
- *Ephesians 5:15-17 “Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”*
- It is by the works of the Holy Spirit that the will of the Lord is revealed to us.

Understand the Difference between “Ownership” and “Stewardship”

- As I have already mentioned, in 1 Corinthians, we are told that we are God's possessions. If we are His, then we do not have ownership of ourselves. What a Glorious feeling to know you belong to the Living God! And, if I am a Steward of his possessions, then I should take ever more carefulness to maintain and care for what is not mine. But am I also applying this same attitude to other areas of my life? What of my spouse? What of my children? What of my time, my money?
- We also must be careful of us claiming ownership so tightly that we tend to become possessive of the very item we wish to steward well. As in “Lord of the Rings”, this possessiveness brings covetousness, we take on the “My Precious” approach to our possessions.
- Why, anything we may have can be taken away from us in an instance, our homes, our money, even our own lives. I am so keenly aware of that fact knowing that Cancer is looming over the greatest thing that I love, that being my dear bride. (Pause)
- So, what are you stewarding that you need to seek the Holy Spirit's discernment as to how you should treat it? Are you seeking His discernment for your life? For your marriage? For your tithing? For your serving in His church?
- Maybe you've been holding on too tightly and taking possession of what belongs to God? Maybe you need to kneel before His throne and return to God what is His? His greatest and rightful possession is you!

Connect Group Discussion Questions

- What does Stewardship mean? What are the things we are called to be good stewards of?
- What role does discernment place in our stewardship? Why do we need to be discerning with how we invest our time, talents, and treasures?
- What is the difference between ownership and stewardship? How does our approach change when we understand we are merely stewards of what God has given us.
- How does the way we use our time, talents, and treasure reveal how we view God and how much we trust Him?
- Describe what happens in our lives when we learn to trust God with all we have and be good stewards of our gifts?

Challenge For The Week

We need one another in the body of Christ. God has made each one of us different but we come together in one body of Christ for the glory of God in the world.

- One of the first steps to stewardship is spending time in honest self reflection. Where are you holding too tightly to something in your life? Where are you not holding tightly enough?
- Being a good steward is not just about how we spend our finances but how we spend the opportunities that God has given us. What opportunities to share the Gospel has God given you? How will you respond?

