

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2014

The Meaning of Stewardship

2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Sunday, October 5, 2014

The Corinthian church had asked Paul what he could do for them. Paul scolds them in **2 Corinthians 11:8**, “*I robbed other churches, taking wages off them, to do your services.*” The Corinthians had not supported the ministry of the Apostle financially. They concerned themselves with themselves. They majored in what they could get out of Christianity, not what they could put into it.

Paul offers some advice about stewardship, such knowledge implies more than a casual acquaintance. Paul suggests a thorough knowledge of stewardship. What did he want the Corinthians to learn?

I. Christian stewardship grows out of grace.

- A. God has appointed you a steward of certain possessions. Stewardship means management. A salesman minds the store while the owner leaves for the warehouse. Just because the boss leaves does not suggest a change in ownership. The employer entrusts the employer with possessions. The worker owns nothing.
- B. How much can one bring to life from his own birth? How much can one take with his dream? Never lose the perspective that life is a gift. We are to be responsible stewards of that gift.

Sunday, October 12, 2014

II. Christian stewardship continues in spite of circumstances.

- A. The churches of Macedonia had suffered great hurt. Rome had impoverished these people. The churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea had been persecuted. Yet they trusted God’s grace and continued to be good stewards of God’s gifts. **Examine verse 2:** “out of the most severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity” (NIV). In hard times they persevered; they continued to share more than they were humanly able.
- B. God challenges us to give. Remember the story from Mark 12: A widow gave her last coins. Jesus commended her. Contrast that to the sad parable of Luke 12. The rich fool had so much and only wanted more. Jesus taught us to give in spite of circumstances.

Sunday, October 19, 2014

III. Christian Stewardship goes beyond a tithe.

- A. The Macedonian Christians was not affluent but they still gave. The NIV translates verse 3: “For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.” New Testament language indicates one must choose to give. One has the privilege of deciding for God’s Kingdom.
- B. Some Christians are unfamiliar with tithing. The practice of giving the first tenth of one’s income, back to God. Tithing is nothing new. The Old Testament supports the tithe. In Genesis 14:20 Abram gave a tithe. In Numbers 18:21; Aaron spoke of giving the Levite Priests one-tenth. Deuteronomy 14:22-27 records the festival of the tithe.
- C. One might argue that the tithe applied only during the time the people were under the law. Yet Jesus gave much deeper insight into the law. The laws of the Old Testament guided. Now the light of Christ reveals new insights. To tithe means to take a first step in giving. Today, under grace, our giving should go beyond a tithe. We must remember that God entrusts us with everything. We own nothing. Stewardship goes beyond a simple tithe.

Sunday, October 26, 2014

IV. Christian stewardship deals with your Spiritual life.

- A. Verse 7 teaches that stewardship influences one’s joy in Christian Ministry. The Macedonian believers had asked for the opportunity to give. Thank God for Christians who understand the spiritual nature of stewardship. Stinginess toward God suggests spiritual trouble. Failure to tithe is not a financial problem – it’s a spiritual problem. If one does not share the resources God has given, something is wrong spiritually.
- B. The NIV translation of verse 5 provides an answer: “They did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God’s will.” We must commit ourselves first to the Lord. Stewardship begins with commitment to Christ.

If Christians totally commit themselves to Jesus Christ, there would be little need for any special appeal for stewardship. Get a man right with God, and his stewardship will be right also. Giving is not just a matter of stewardship – it is a matter of salvation.

We give because Jesus Gave!!!