

Friday, March 12

Readings: Psalm 32; Joshua 4:14-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-15

Prayer: *Gracious God, you give us all that we need and much more. Open our hearts to be generous to those around us as you have filled us with all good gifts. May our response show your love and draw both givers and receivers closer to you. In Jesus name. Amen.*

Focal Verse: “Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,” and you forgave the guilt of my sin.” Psalm 32:5

Reflection: Stewardship ... must from now on find its rationale at the heart of the faith, as an essential aspect of belief: part of the end-purpose, and not merely a means to some ill-defined and nebulous spiritual goal. Scripture’s steward metaphor is both a major theme and one which has direct application to the question of human identity and vocation.

In these Scriptures, human identity is bound up with God on the one hand, and all the rest of creation on the other. For the biblical way of defining human being is from the first to last relational.

The steward in the literature of the Old Testament is a servant, ... a rather superior sort of supervisor or foreman, who must make decisions, give orders, and take charge. The steward is one who has been given the responsibility for the management and service of something belonging to another, and his office presupposes a particular kind of trust on the part of the owner or master.

This rather lofty conception of the stewardly office is balanced by another dimension that becomes visible in ... Isaiah 22:15-21. In this passage, we learn that however important the steward may be in the scheme of things, he is neither ultimately authoritative nor irreplaceable. He may indeed be a superior servant, but he is still a servant; and if he forgets this and begins to behave as though he were himself unambiguously in charge (ie., not accountable) he shall be dealt with most severely.

The steward concept is here elevated to accommodate the idea that the ruler of God’s people is a steward, responsible to the master. But the passage also tells us a good deal about the qualities that are implied, generally, in the stewardly office. They are such attributes as humbleness of spirit, lack of pretention and ostentation, and parental behavior towards those for whose welfare the steward has responsibility.<sup>41</sup>

## Stewardship Principle

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### Respond gratefully

to what God has first given us. All that we do is a response to God’s grace. Everything we are, have, and use comes from God. Best of all, God gives the gift of Jesus Christ and the community of believers. It all begins with God. Our confession of faith in Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior is not of our doing. Grateful stewards put God first.

“... but they gave themselves first to the Lord.”  
2 Corinthians 8:5

What do you hear?

How does it make you feel?

Toward what are you being drawn?

What do you sense you should do?

<sup>41</sup> Hall, Douglas John, the steward: a Biblical symbol come of age, Wipf and Stock Publishing, p. 16, 25, 32-34.