

Tuesday, March 30

Stewardship Principle

Readings: Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 71:1-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; John 12:20-36

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Give proportionately

is our way of giving in relation to our abundance. We are to give according to our "means," not according to an income or a budget.

"If the eagerness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has – not according to what one does not have."
2 Corinthians 8:12

Prayer: *Lord, guide me to use my assets, as You would have me do. May I wisely share Your blessings, living by the Golden Rule.*

Teach me wisdom that is wealth: a Way of Life to live; that helping others help themselves. is a Blessed way to give.

Help me listen for Your Guidance, and let Your Blessings through me flow, passing on with Faith's reliance, for as we share, You will restore.

With every seed the faithful sows, God's Blessing is released. When sown in fertile ground, it grows; God's Blessings will increase. Amen

Focal Verse: "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." 1 Corinthians 1:18

Reflection:

It is a contradiction, a paradox: most of us know that having money does not guarantee happiness and yet we think that *our* lives would be better, more fulfilling and more satisfying, if only *we* had more money. We think that even though money does not usually buy happiness, it might in our case.

"Why is the church so interested in money?" Someone else replied, "Maybe it is because *we* are so interested in money!" I think that's it. Our daily lives are very much concerned with finances: earning money, investing money, saving money, and spending money. Faith that is relevant for our daily lives must be concerned with these things as well.

Theologians often speak of interpreting Scripture in terms of law and gospel. T. A. Kantonen, for instance, taught that when people give to the church in order to fulfill obligations of church membership or to be obedient to their church's teaching, they are responding to the *law*. When they give out of gratitude for God's undeserved grace, out of a joyous and spontaneous willingness to sacrifice, they are responding to the *gospel*. Kantonen clearly thought the latter type of giving was better and he was probably right. But I don't think we need to choose between them: it is not a matter of law *or* gospel but, rather, law *and* gospel. Giving to God can be our response to both law and gospel and as such it can become both our duty and our delight.⁷³

What do you hear?
How does it make you feel?
Toward what are you being drawn?
What do you sense you should do?

⁷³ Powell, Mark Allan, Giving to God: The Bible's Good News about Living a Generous Life, © 2006, Errdmans Publishing, p.70-72.