

Let us pray: Lord God, heavenly Father, we want to take a moment and thank and praise you for all that we have: family, friends, faith, Lord all things. We thank You that You have smiled down upon us and that You continue to bless us to this very day. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

I'd like to start today with a brief survey to get a better handle on this congregation. Just raise your hand if these apply to you. How many of you own a house? How many of you own a vehicle (car, van, truck)? How many of you own land? How many of you own a computer? And finally, how many of you own a pet?

Bearing all of this ownership in mind, we now turn our attention to the Word of God as it is found in the book of First Chronicles the twenty-ninth chapter beginning at the tenth verse:

Therefore David blessed the LORD before all the assembly; and David said: "Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever. ¹¹ Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, The power and the glory, The victory and the majesty; For all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, And You are exalted as head over all. ¹² Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all. ¹³ "Now therefore, our God, We thank You And praise Your glorious name. ¹⁴ But who am I, and who are my people, That we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from You, And of Your own we have given You.

Heavenly Father, these are Your words and therefore they are the truth. We pray, Lord, that You would increase our faith through them. Amen.

Dear Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb,

I pray that you now know why we took our survey and are better able to understand one key concept that escapes us far too often, ***All Things Come From God.***

Not a single person here is an owner, not one. For when it comes to “owning” something the dictionary defines it thus, “to have or hold as one’s own; possess.” And some of you might be thinking, right, I own my home, I own my car, I own my land, I own what is mine. And now I must inform you that NOTHING is yours.

According to King David in Psalm 24, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.” Thus, there is nothing that is yours, everything is owned God, not you. And if God owns

everything, why did we have so many hands up at the beginning of the sermon?

You see, our problem lies in the fact that we like to think that we own things. We have a little piece of paper that says we own our house... well, once it is paid in full; but even then it is not ours, it is a gift of God who has allowed you to live in it for a time. We have a piece of paper that says we own a car, once the bank no longer owns it; but it is not ours, it is a gift of God who allows you to use it to get back and forth from work and travel.

My personal favorite is when we think we own the land... if that is not a direct spitting in the face of God I do not know what is. God made the world, and the world is God’s, but I own this piece. You do not own it. You did not create it, you did not form it, you did nothing... all you did was get a piece of paper that you feel gives you more of a right to that land than God has.

We spend our lives trying to accumulate on this side of heaven, and why? So that way we can die with more toys that are “ours”? So we can show off to our neighbors just how successful and worthwhile we are? So we can look at all the rooms in our houses full of stuff and think, “This is all MINE, I OWN IT”? We spend our lives trying to accumulate and get as much stuff... and yet we end up doing it for all the wrong reasons.

So often in our pursuit of gathering and hoarding, we end up forgetting who gave us the ability and power to gather and hold such things. In our text David reminds the Israelites and us, ***“Both riches and honor come from You, And You reign over all. In Your hand is power and might; In Your hand it is to make great And to give strength to all.”*** God has given us the ability to gather and hold on to things... but we think it is us, we think they are ours. We

have the piece of paper that has our name on it and thus it is mine... No, it is God’s. We own nothing.

However, what we do have is a very important role nonetheless, we are stewards of God. For a steward is defined as, “a person who manages another’s property or financial affairs; one who administers anything as the agent of another or others.” You are a steward, but even at this we have our faults. Instead of being a true and faithful steward, we often offer our worship and our admiration to banks and bellies more than to God.

I remember a video about stewardship I watched once and it showed a man who had a ‘pie’ that he was giving out to people. He gave large portions to those with the name tag ‘mortgage’ and ‘cars.’ He gave some to ‘toys’ and ‘hobbies.’ He kept handing out the pie until he finally got to the last person at

the table, God. When he got to God he had so little left and had given nothing to himself that he took the last piece and ate it while trying to ignore God; and that pie, well that pie came from “God’s Bakery”... I wonder how often we do similar things. We give God’s resources into hobbies and mortgages, and cars, and toys... but we often neglect to give it to God.

God has given us everything that we have, God has given us the ability to acquire all that we are stewards over, and still we can neglect Him and act as if He is not even there. Through the Prophet Malachi God warned Israel, and us, ***“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘In what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings.”*** For there is always enough money to go around when it comes to sports and concerts and eating out; but when it comes to God so often there just isn’t enough.

But please, let us not focus on the money aspect, let us look at all aspects of stewardship. For built in to stewardship are the concepts of time, talents, and treasures. Sure we could harp on and argue about treasures all day... but how much time are you giving to God on a weekly basis? Are you giving God ten percent of your week? (About 17 hours.) Are you reading His Word and doing His Will for those 17 hours? And then ask yourself, is 10 percent enough?

And what about your talents, how are you using those for God? You have a talent to write; yet, you use your words to tear others down and not lift them up. You have a talent to sing; yet, you decide that using your voice to praise God is not a good thing. You have a talent to teach; yet, sitting at home and letting others seems more your style. You have a talent to build; yet, you’re tired

of always being the one chosen to do such things.

God has given you time, talents, and treasures and still we use them very sparingly when it comes to God. If we want a raise, a promotion, a new something, we will put our time, talents, and treasures into that.... but when it comes to God, we will not always invest time, talent, or treasures. These must be saved for the important things in life and God doesn't always stack up, does He?

Yet, thanks be to God that He has decided that we are worth much more than we hold Him to be. While we give, at times, as little as possible to God; He has given us everything. In fact, God's love for us was so immense that He gave His one and only Son, Jesus Christ to be our Savior.

Jesus Christ came into this world to live a perfect life for us. He never stopped using His time, talents, and treasures to further the kingdom of God... for being God all things were His and He made sure to use them all for the benefit of advancing the truth about Him. Using His time to be found amongst the poor, the sick, those whom society had hated and put on the outskirts; Jesus was sure to use His time and His talents to bring the Word of God to all people. Preaching, healing, praying, working miracles... He used His time and talents to further God's Kingdom.

Jesus also used His treasure, His treasure of His perfect life, to bring salvation to all people. He lived the perfect life to the glory of God the Father and to the betterment of each and every one of us. In fact, Jesus loved us so much, and constantly put our needs first, that Jesus gave up His very life to ensure salvation for us.

Yes, Jesus died for each and every one of us. He gave up His time, talents, and treasures in order that you would have eternal salvation. Jesus lived and died so that you would know heaven is now waiting for you. And through faith in our Savior and in all that He has done for us, we know heaven is ours, we know that heaven is waiting, we know that our sins have been atoned for and that salvation is ours.

And for you, Jesus rose from the dead. He rose to bring you the assurance that God has accepted His sacrifice for each and every one of us. He rose to show you that just as He rose, you too will rise, through faith in Him. He rose to announce to you that sin, death, and hell are defeated. Jesus lived, died, and rose again to show you what perfect stewardship and devotion to God looks like.

And now He asks us to be good stewards, not perfect stewards. For Jesus knows that we still carry with us our sinful flesh and it will constantly be pulling us away from God. However, through faith in our Savior, we now have the ability to focus on Him, on all that He has done, and to be ‘good stewards’ towards Christ.

Through faith we can use our time, talents, and treasures to continue in our effort to bring the Word of God to everyone. We can continue to give our treasures to the church which will use them to advance the kingdom in our own little way. We can continue to give our time to the church, constantly striving to spend more time in His Word and supporting His church through the use of our time for God. And we can continue to give our talents to the church, using our talents to ‘brighten’ worship and to further the cause of Christ.

Using our time, talents, and treasures we can continue to be 'good stewards' of God's resources, realizing that nothing is ours for our keeping but it is all God's to be used for His glory and His will.

Dear friends in Christ, so often people think about stewardship and reckon that all the church wants is their money, I promise that it not what we are seeking. Yes, we would love if you had the desire to give more to the church, but we need to also remember that our time and talents are God's also. He has given us our time on this earth, limited as it is, to glorify Him... and He has given us our talents to show forth His love for us.

Thanks be to God that He has loved us and has given us our time, talents, and treasures to use for Him. Thanks be to God that He loves us and gave us His Son, His greatest treasure, for our salvation. And thanks be to

God that all things come from Him and He has allowed me to be His steward.

Dear friends, thanks be to God. Amen.