

Occupation: Stewardship

Taught by: Mike Larsen

Text: Psalm 50:10-12

Date: December 26, 2010, 9:30am, Sunday School

Series: Living to Please Our Master

Scripture Reading

Psalm 50:10-12 God says, "Everything is mine"

Psalm 100:3 God says He made us. We did not make ourselves. We are His sheep.

Matthew 25:14-30 God expects us to use what he gives us effectively. We are to bear fruit.

Romans 14:8-12 We are to do all things to the Glory of God and we will give an account to Him

2 Corinthians 6:14-18 God says we are to separate from the World and unite to God

Colossians 1:9-14 Be filled with the Spirit and walk worthy. He has redeemed us!

The Bible describes two distinct worlds: a world of darkness, the domain of unbelievers, and a world of light, the domain of Christians. Because God redeemed us to himself, our lives - all that we have - are His. Therefore, we do not own what we possess. We are simply managers (or stewards) of what he has entrusted to us. God owns everything; we manage what He gives us. This was clear from the very beginning - Look at **Genesis 2:15 & 16**.

Question: What are values?

Principals or qualities esteemed by a person

Question: What is a value system?

person's value code.

The organization of an individual's values. A system becomes his or her moral

Question: Why are value systems important?
Our values determine our actions

Jesus said His Father had given Him followers "out" of the world. (**John 17:6**) who were still "in" the world (**v 11**) but no longer "of" the world (**v 16**) God has delivered the believer from the world of darkness to the world of light.

- I. Two Worlds - Every person on earth is a citizen of one of these two worlds. Unbelievers belong to the world of darkness. Believers belong to the world of light or the kingdom. Each kingdom has it's own system of truth and values.
 - a. The World of Darkness - **Eph 6:11-12**. The Bible uses the word darkness to describe the world of sin. This is a good description because as with physical darkness, Satan imposes on the lost a blindness. The lost can not see. They are blind to the truth. What is so obvious to the saved person is utter nonsense to the lost. That can be frustrating can't it? Living in

darkness the lost reject, ignore, and often appose Biblical morality and the Christian Worldview. Their view of the meaning of life is clouded by blindness. Since the lost do not understand what life as God intended is all about, their actions are unfruitful. (***Wrong values lead to wrong actions***)

- b. The World of Light - **Gen 1:2-3** Just as God created light when in the beginning the earth was without form and void, He caused the light of the gospel to shine on us when we were in darkness. **2 Cor 4:4** Now we walk in the light as Jesus is in the light.

God is light- there is no darkness in Him at all. (**1 John 1:5**) He sent His Son, the Light of the World (**John 1:5, 8:12, 12:46**) to deliver us all from this darkness and into His marvelous light (**1 Pet 2:9**) He makes us "Children of light, and the children of the day" (**1 Thes 5:5**)

Nevertheless, we may at times think dark thoughts and commit dark deeds if we fail to resist pressure from the world of darkness. We can all attest to that! (**Rom 12:2**) Why is that and thousands of other admonitions in the Bible? Because you have responsibility here! You will be conformed to this world even as a believer if you do not continually renew your mind by washing it in the scriptures. That is part of the put off and put on principal. We, "on purpose" shut off the worldly instructions and put on the Godly instructions. Then we act upon that Godly instruction in obedience.

God's word shapes our worldview. As we read it and meditate upon it with minds that are submissive to God, the Holy Spirit enlightens our minds. He gives us understanding of spiritual values and we can adopt them as our guidelines for living. The Truth produces in us right values, holy desires, godly interests, Christlike character, and virtuous living. Error flourishes all around us but does not engulf us, we know the truth and the truth has set us free. (**John 8:32**)

Read **Psalm 119:130** - It all starts with the entering of the Word of God!

As we work with unsaved people or talk to unsaved neighbors about moral or spiritual issues, we recognize how dark their minds and hearts are. Their values collide with ours because they exist in the world of darkness, whereas we live in the world of light.

- II. Building Values - To a great extent, whether or not we function as faithful stewards of what God has entrusted to us depends on our value system. Wrong values lead to poor stewardship, whereas wise values lead to faithful stewardship. In His Word God has provided all we need to know to make right choices. He has provided role models and examples (both positive and negative) from whom we

can learn. The life of Moses gives us a worthy model to follow as we learn to develop a godly value system.

- a. A foundation of faith - Moses had a foundation of faith in God and His revealed word (**Heb. 11:24-27**). He understood that God, though invisible, was at work in his life and in his world. Like a strong foundation that holds a structure's full weight, faith in the true, transcendent, personal God is foundational to a proper worldview.

Principle: Our view of all life must rest on the foundation of faith in God and His truth.

- b. Values based on faith - No doubt Moses' believing parents had taught their son God's truth, which caused Moses to value eternal things. He based his values on his foundation of faith in God. Consequently he values the things of God more than he values the treasures of Egypt.

Principal: Our values are shaped by our system of truth.

- c. Choices based on values - Moses rejected a life of ease in Pharaoh's palace, choosing instead to suffer alongside his fellow Israelites. He rejected a life of status, power, wealth, and worldly fame. He did this when he saw an Egyptian do wrong to a Hebrew and he killed the Egyptian. That forced him out of prominence and on the run. That was a choice the world says makes no sense. Why would he throw away his status for a slave being mistreated? But Moses did it out of principal. His values.

Question: On what basis did Moses choose to forsake Egypt? ***The basis of faith.***

Question: What values would have kept Moses from choosing to suffer with his people? ***The values of comfort, acceptance, riches, fame, and power.***

Principal: Our choices demonstrate our values.

- d. Character based on choices - Moses had a good reputation with God because of his choices, which were based on his values, which were grounded in God's truth. Likewise, truth shapes our values, proper values lead to right choices, and a pattern of right choices result in good character. As a result, our choices express our character.

Principal: A pattern of right choices results in good character.

- III. Developing Motivated Stewardship - Having been delivered from darkness to light, and having adopted God's values instead of the world's, our lives take on a unique significance. We become stewards, or managers, of the resources God has entrusted to us. **Read Mathew 25:14-30**

Question: What was the servants occupation? *Stewards of talents given to them to care for.*

Question: How did the "unprofitable" servant's management differ from the others? *He hid the talents instead of investing them.*

Question: What did the unprofitable servant value? *Security. Absence of risk. Perhaps not having to work.*

Question: What did the profitable servants value? *Being faithful. Being diligent. Pleasing the master.*

Being a faithful steward involves understanding 3 principles: ownership, responsibility, and accountability.

- a. Ownership - We can compare God to the master in the parable found in Mathew 25. God owns everything in the world; nevertheless He entrusts His servants (believers) with the responsibility of managing His resources for Him. He decides what resources He will place in the hands of each of His servants. **Read Psalm 50:10-12. And Psalms 100:3**

Question: What words clue us in to the truth that God has the right of ownership? *I, mine, his*

Question: What goods do we often perceive as our own rather than God's? *Time, Money,*

God owns everything! He is the creator! It is He that hath made us. He is the redeemer. We are His people. He is the controller. We are the people of His pasture.

- b. Responsibility - Each believer is like one of the servants in Mathew's narrative, whether faithful or unfaithful. The unfaithful servant dug a hole and squirreled away his masters talent, wasting it. The faithful servants put their master's talents to good use, investing them, making them count. Similarly a faithful Christian uses what God has given him or her in the wisest possible way, which brings glory to Him.

Question: Why do people choose to play it safe and not use what God has entrusted to them? *They don't believe they have much to offer. They are afraid of doing a poor job and hurting the cause of Christ. They believe only those in career ministry can make a difference for God. They don't believe God will bless them with more so they hoard their talents.*

- c. Accountability - When the master returned from his journey, he called each servant into his presence and required a face to face report from each one on how he had managed the master's possessions. We too will answer for how we've used our master's resources. At the judgement seat of Christ, God will judge us on how we managed the time, money, spiritual gifts, and possessions He entrusted to us. **2 Cor 5:10**

Question: Where will believers stand to give account of themselves?

Judgement seat of Christ

Question: Who will judge believers? **God**

Question: How often does considering the judgement seat of Christ affect your decisions?

Now I do not believe we should live under a constant guilt trip. God is our father and we are His children. We have freedom and joy in Christ. There is no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus but do we think about our stewardship at all? We need to live as a good steward always while we enjoy the freedom and liberty we have! It is all the same life!

Question: How can we increase our sense of accountability to God? ***Use accountability partners. We can daily ask God to search our hearts.***

The unprofitable servant in Jesus' story did not get away with being lazy and unproductive. He had to look his master in the face and explain his actions. Instead of owning up to his poor stewardship, he chose to make excuses. How easy is it for us to justify what we want to do and rationalize away what we do not want to do! How often do we refuse to change until it is too late. We lose friends, jobs, spouses, blessings, our good health, and the list goes on.

Success, joy, and lasting fulfillment can be ours if we acknowledge God's ownership of our lives and His resources and dedicate ourselves to being faithful stewards. **Read Luke 12:16-21 and discuss**