

Stewardship: Giving God Your Best | 1 Corinthians 4:1-2: Be Found Faithful Sermon

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[0:00] This morning, talking about stewardship, giving God your best, and Psalm 24 verse 1 tells us that God is the owner of all things.

! It tells us that the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, and they that dwell therein. God owns everything.

We just have temporary charge of some things for the meantime, don't we? And when you think about it in that way, it makes us have humility, hopefully. That's a good starting place for this issue of stewardship, that we'd have that humbleness to realise, hey, we're just passing through, and we've just got some things along the way that we've got care of.

And we recognise that really all that we have, everything, talents, wealth, opportunities, it's all from His hand. It's all from God. God's given us some things to take care of.

So we're going to talk about that. It's called stewardship. Stewardship. It's a position of trust. We've got a responsibility. And the reality is we're not owners.

[1:07] We are but stewards, caretakers. We've just got some things in our hands for a time. And a steward is one who's entrusted with the property of another.

So man is the property of another. And think of it, brother, sister, God's entrusted some things to our hand, some things for us to use, our gifts, His gifts that He's given to us.

And He wants us to manage them for His glory and for the benefit, the good of others. And it's really something that we're doing every single day, subconsciously.

You're a steward. You are a steward. Whether you're a good one or a bad one, that's another question. But you are a steward. We all are stewards. We've all got stewardship.

And we're doing it subconsciously without even realising it. And when you think about it, the stewardship that we exercise, it reflects our relationship with God. Because He owns it. He's given it to us.

[2:05] We ought to do a good job of our stewardship, to please our Lord with that that He's given to us for this time span, this limited span of our lifetime.

And we want to please our Lord. And 1 Corinthians 4 tells us about this stewardship from verse 1. 1 Corinthians 4. Paul says, Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, as servants of Christ.

And it says, And stewards, stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

Stewardship. Paul says, Be a faithful steward. A man found faithful. Think of it, brother, sister.

We're all really in the hands of God, aren't we?

Whether we glorify Him, faithfully handle His truth as ministers, as servants. He's given us mysteries. He's given us the Word of God, the Gospel, how we handle His truth.

[3:07] We want to be a good steward and to be found faithful. It's up to us to exercise that. The Lord wants us, God helping us to be wise and faithful stewards.

Managers, faithful managers of what? That He has entrusted in our hand. Our time, our talents, our treasures, our relationships. And the very truth of the Gospel.

We've got that responsibility. And think of all of these gifts, these treasures that we have. Even the Gospel. In particular, it's a divine treasure, isn't it?

That's why we love to be a Gospel testifying church. We want to make it Gospel-centered, what we're on about. Our fellowship. It's about the Gospel. It's about the cross.

It's about the saving grace of God, isn't it? The Gospel. It's a divine treasure. He's imparted it to us to share it, to pass it on. We're responsible with that Gospel that He's entrusted to us.

[4:07] And stewardship is the truth, really, that every resource, our money, time, abilities, relationships, they all belong to Him. How do we apply these truths to our lives then?

Can we develop that kind of perspective when we're thinking about our living? Is it that we have that perspective of God granting us temporary use of some things and how we live our lives that it belongs to God and trusted to our management?

In 1 Chronicles 29.14, David says, All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. So even what we give to God, He's given it to us in the first place.

All things come of thee, of our God. It follows on then that we're answerable to God for our stewardship. We're accountable for these things, to the one who gave them into our hands.

So stewardship. Let's consider, what does the Bible tell us about this truth, about stewardship? And you could think of some Bible examples. For example, Joseph.

[5:20] Joseph was a steward. He was given oversight of his master's house. As he was a servant to Potiphar, the master, it says, Joseph found grace in his sight, and he served him.

And he, Potiphar, made him, Joseph, overseer over his house, and all that he had, he put into his hands.

So we see Joseph was responsible for managing Potiphar's household. And we know, as the story tells, he was a faithful steward. He was an honest steward.

He had integrity as a steward. And the master could know that what he put in his hand, Joseph would take care of. Another Bible example is Daniel.

He was a steward. And the king said, Daniel, over Babylon's affairs. That's Daniel 6, from 1 to 3. It tells how Daniel was a steward.

[6:20] He had the oversight, even in that secular responsibility. And Joseph, Daniel, and you are a steward as well.

God has entrusted some things into your care that you have, entrusted to you from the master, entrusted with what is not ours, but it is his.

According to the master's will, may we use it so. I know some people, I've had a friend of mine, he says of his car, it's not my car, it's the Lord's car.

And so if someone needs a lift, then I'll have that attitude. Well, it's the Lord's car, I'm going to use it for his glory. You know, rather than being selfish to think, that's my car and I'm going to use it just for myself.

You know, having that kind of mindset, it's a mind shift, isn't it? Think, hey, everything that we have is his. We've just got temporary use of it. So what kind of a steward will we be? It's a good question.

[7:18] It's important to note that faithfulness is the standard. As we read, moreover, it is required. This is a requirement for the steward, for our stewardship. It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.

Faithfulness is the standard, God's standard. And ask yourself, am I faithful with what God has given to me? How can I be more consistent?

And it's not about what amount you have as well. It's about your attitude with what you do, with what you have. We know the example, Mark 12 from verse 41, tells us about the widow.

Two mites, when the offering came around, two little, tiny little coins, as it were, into the treasure house.

And two mites, they were small in value. And yet the Lord recognised the immense value unto him, the immensity of value, because it showed the widow's devotion.

[8:24] It showed her heart. And God honoured her for her sacrificial faithfulness. It's not about the amount. It's about give what you have, what you have.

We will all have to give account. And it tells us that in Luke 16 of a parable that there, our Lord uses that to say, we will give an account.

We will give an account of our stewardship. So there's a time coming, a time of reckoning coming, a future time of reckoning, and Romans 14, 12 says, so then every one of us shall give account of

himself to God.

There's going to be an accounting time. In the parable of the talents in Matthew 25, our Lord tells of two servants who invested their master's talents. And these faithful servants, they doubled them. They were wise, and they earned the reward of greater responsibility and joy. But there was one servant who was fearful, and he buried his talent.

[9:26] And there was a judgment there of missing that, missing that. Our stewardship is going to be reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ.

It's not for our salvation because we're already saved. Our sin has been judged. We're not going to the great white throne judgment, where everyone goes to judgment.

But we have already been judged because we trusted Christ's judgment of our sin in his own body on our part at the cross. But the judgment seat of Christ is that kind of time of evaluation, that time of recognition, of rewards.

And when we think about it, brother, sister, our stewardship will be reviewed at the judgment seat of Christ. That should make us especially mindful and thoughtful where every dollar is spent, every hour used, every gift employed.

It will be laid bare before our Lord. And it tells us 2 Corinthians 5 verse 10, for we, the believers, we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body.

[10:39] According to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. It's telling us here, it's a somber thought really, isn't it? That every one of us will face this examination, this evaluation of our stewardship.

How then will we live in the light of this evaluation of our stewardship? Do we care? Do we care at what we do in our body?

Do we care? I'd urge you, brother, sister, friends, to focus on pleasing your Lord. That's what matters, isn't it? To please our Lord. That's what's good. What pleases our Master.

And to live for God's approval. Not focus on pleasing man, but pleasing God. Not focus on pleasing ourself even. And I pray, may you be that wise and faithful steward with your stewardship.

And we know in the Word of God, it promises to us a promise of praise for the faithful. It says that we'll receive praise of God. And God commends diligence for the meantime.

[11:44] When you think of the word diligent, diligence, you see, in the Word of God, it commends diligence over and over again in His Word. Diligence rather than the opposite.

And we know what the opposite is, don't we? The opposite of being diligent. Rather, let's aspire to that diligence, to that faithfulness. God sees that and He acknowledges that.

So whether we have much or little, even the two little mites, our task is to manage God's gifts with wisdom, with diligence and reverence, knowing that your stewardship will be recognized one day. He will recognize your stewardship. And we can know that our faithfulness now prepares us for eternal rewards. Consider then the marks of a faithful steward.

A faithful steward. What does it look like? A faithful steward, there's some distinct marks that reflect God's priorities, if you like. And one we could see is God calls us to faithfulness in small things.

[12:44] Faithfulness in small things. Luke 16, 10, our Lord says, He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much. He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.

You could see that where someone might be given a responsibility responsibility and they're careless with the little that they have. If they might have much one day they'll be careless with that too.

And our faithfulness in small matters qualifies us for greater trust. Think of that. So in other words, when you think about this thought that faithfulness in the least, our faithfulness in small matters matters.

And so do your bit. In that little corner that you're serving, in that little responsibility, you might think, oh I've only got a little responsibility. Well be faithful in that little responsibility.

It matters to God. And be reliable, be consistent, have that servant heart. Hey I'm going to be faithful in that which is the least thing, the least thing that I can do. I'll be faithful in that.

[13:48] Because faithfulness in the small things is an important truth. How do we manage the small things in our lives? Determines our capacity

for greater responsibilities. You know, while we were at this conference, you know, there's lots of preachers there and pastors and there was people preaching and people on the stage and the musicians and such.

But what struck me after the meetings was there was a man there and he grabbed the vacuum cleaner. And he actually didn't belong to that church. I found out later he was a visitor of sorts and he grabbed the vacuum cleaner.

And he didn't just kind of do a little bit here and a little bit there. No, he was going like this. Like, he was very thorough. He was very thorough with his vacuuming. I thought, wow, that's amazing. What's he vacuuming? There's nothing there to vacuum. I know when I grab the vacuum cleaner I just do spot cleaning and a little bit of droppings here and there. You know, it's like, no, he was thorough.

He was thorough. He was faithful in the least. Faithful in the least. The lowest. And so we could think of that. The one who sweeps the floor with care is as vital to God's kingdom as the preacher in the pulpit.

[15:02] We've all got responsibilities. Every act of obedience, no matter how small, it shapes our character and our testimony, doesn't it? And a faithful steward exercises wisdom.

What does wisdom look like? It makes a determination. It aligns our choices with eternal values, not with fleeting desires. You know, we won't fritter things away and before we know it it's another day gone with not much to show.

But a wise steward plans carefully. How can I use my life? How can I steward my resources? How can I prioritise God's purposes?

When I make the decisions of my life they're going to be wise because it's going to have God's purposes in mind. What about us? May we seize those opportunities to serve, to give, to share the gospel?

It's the least little thing but let's be faithful in that and not out of obligation but out of love. It's like the generosity of our Lord, isn't it? He gave himself for us and we see 2 Corinthians 9 has got that kind of spirit and we can incline our heart to God's way of what he's given to us.

[16:12] His forgiveness as we've heard of his grace, of Calvary. He's given us so much and we can incline our heart to be like our God, can't we?

To savour the things of God as well that they're the things that we relish. I know I heard tell of the next NBF this talk, this is beyond this year of savouring the things of God.

Do we savour them? And the illustration of it that we heard was the lamb chops or whatever.

I don't know what you've got on what you're planning for lunch today but I think, oh yeah, I shouldn't make you have that carnality to think of what you're going to eat but I think we can relish what we want to eat but what about relishing?

What about savouring the things of God? Oh yes Lord, I just want that. I just want to be more in your will. I want to be doing your will. I want to be where you want me to be, doing what you want me to be doing and we're savouring the things of God and think of that, that we can align our choices with what would please our Lord.

[17:22] That's what we relish, that's what we savour, that's what we hunger and thirst for, righteousness. A wise steward prioritises God's purposes and makes wise decisions about their resources.

What about us? Can we seize those opportunities and so we read here every man give, it says, according as he purposeth in his heart. So let him give, not grudgingly or of necessity, not because there's some guilt trip or some obligation that's some burdensome thing, not grudgingly, not because there's a burden upon you but cheerfully.

That's the giving God delights in. He loves that. God loves a cheerful giver, that your heart would be just gladly to give, cheerfully to give. And think about ways that you can be a faithful steward, whether it be time, money, encouragement, think of all of those ways.

And when you think about it too, when you think about this concept, this truth of stewardship, really, your life, your very life, you have stewardship of.

So when you think of that, well, can I make healthy choices then that my body is going to go the distance, I'm going to choose wisely what I, talking about eating, what I partake of, my fitness, my

exercise, my looking after myself, my not partaking of things which are clearly going to damage my health, because you've got stewardship of your body.

[18:57] You want to look after that. I know I've been exercised lately to think about fasting for one thing. How can our life, our body, how can we be a good steward of that for the glory of God, that our body will go the distance?

We're going to look after it, because we've got meantime, a caretaking of it. We want it to go the distance. So our grandchildren, our great-grandchildren will see us, God helping us, one day. And so think of that, of a stewardship of your health. It's an important truth, I think. And so think, brothers and sisters, that you've got a stewardship of your own life. And think of how you can have that generous heart.

Consider your own unique calling, what God wants for you. Hey, it's different for every one of us, isn't it? To seek and to find the will of God, to find His direction, work it out between you and Him. Hey, what's God tugging my heartstrings to do, to be? To surrender our worries in prayer, to trust Him more, to find His leading and pursue it, His provision, to trust.

[20:00] Life these days can be so filled with busyness and cares, distractions, the pull of entertainment, of vain things. How easily time gets snuffed out, vain things.

It's like the name of that game, Trivial Pursuit, isn't it? Trivial Pursuits. Amen. I was kind of joking because at the time when we were in Queensland last week, they were going on and on about the rugby and they were getting pretty, you know, stoked up because there was New South Welshmen and Queenslanders there and they were all kind of larking around about the big game. And for me, I just thought, vain things. Vain things. I didn't say that so much I didn't want to look like I was picking on anyone but honestly, isn't it vain?

Isn't it pointless? Worthless? Sorry if you're a footy fan here this morning. But I just think, there's some things you could think, that's a trivial pursuit, that's vanity, it's worthless, it's useless.

Now, can I balance that with saying, hey, it's okay to have a bit of fun now and again. Alright, it's okay to have some entertainment now and again. Don't get me wrong, I'm not condemning you here but I'm just thinking, hey, if you've got to evaluate what you've got to put your time into, hey, we should make some judgements that, hey, is that a good use of my time?

[21:31] And think of it, brothers and sisters, the pull of entertainment of vain things and we can drop the ball with our stewardship such that, hey, we don't care, I'm just going to do what I want and we can miss out on that truth of stewardship.

Let's think about some areas that we can exercise stewardship then. So we think about, for one, the stewardship of time, the stewardship of time. Paul writes to the Ephesians redeeming the time, redeeming the time, in other words, making the best use of that time, making that wise use of that time.

Why? Because the days are evil. And it's obvious that time is a finite gift. I don't know how long your span is, but it's probably not much more or less than my span. We've only got a limited amount of time and we can take our life for granted, can't we?

We can take it for granted and before we know it, we've missed some things because we've wasted time. Time is fleeting, it's precious. We don't have control about how much that we have.

If we knew this is the last day that we were to live, how would we use that time? Maybe we should have that thought. Maybe it could be my last day. We don't control how much time we have, but how we use that time.

[22:43] We can control how we use the time. So let's think intentionally. How can I use my time intentionally for God's glory? And we could think, how can I audit my time?

Every one of us has an allocation of 24 hours every day. There's no more or less for any one of us per day and it's a great exercise to review that 168 hours per week that we have to live, 168 hours every week.

It's easy to fritter away our time, isn't it? And we can miss God's best. Brother, sister, I'm not wanting to condemn here or be heavy on you, but I'm asking it for myself.

How can I be a better steward? To identify the time wasters of my life, to redirect those hours to prayer, to family, to service, to make space in my calendar for worship, for relationships. And as I mentioned before, one thing that jolted me at the recent conference was a message from Pastor Wayne Samish who said, His will is your best life. His will is your best life.

[23:56] It's not like you have to go and do something of your own pleasure or affection, but His will, finding that. That is your best. That is the best life for you to know and do His will.

When we use our time, do we really think carefully about, are we obeying God with our use of time? May the Lord guide us to be a better steward. And I'm preaching to myself to set some clear goals, some boundaries, limit screen time, say no to non-essential commitment, start small with consistent steps towards faithfulness.

Ask yourself, what is a wise use of time? And we could schedule spiritual priorities as well, commit time for fellowship, don't miss out on a blessing for your spiritual life, your walk with God, your opportunities to strengthen your church, to be a blessing, to encourage others while you fellowship, make time for prayer, Bible reading, give of your time, volunteer in some ministry, even our Lord Jesus when He was sometimes pressed by the crowds, He always made time for prayer.

We see, for example, here, He made time for prayer for people, for purposeful ministry. It tells there, Mark 1, 35, and in the morning, rising up a great while before the day, He went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed.

If our Lord could have put His time in such a way, what a model for us. It's great if we can prioritize our time for spiritual things, to grow our faith.

[25:29] You know, do a Bible course, read a good Bible book, a Christian biography, get some good material in your soul and feed the soul, to be a better steward of God's gifts with purpose and joy and steward your time.

How about the stewardship of treasure? Now, when we say treasure, we could say finance, but also possessions, what you have. We live in a world of debt, of greed, of excess.

God calls us to be different. We see Proverbs 3, verse 9, honour the Lord with thy substance and with the firstfruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty.

In other words, give God the first. Give God first place, first consideration. It demonstrates faith, doesn't it? And then 1 Timothy 6 tells us that we should be rich in good works, ready to distribute. Hey, think about how you can bless others, willing to communicate to share. Honour God with your budget, with your giving, and let God's priorities guide your use of money.

[26:33] And it's a wise biblical principle to manage debt, of course, avoid unnecessary debt, save for those major purchases, seek God's guidance in prayer, steward your treasure, your treasure, your giving, and your possessions, all that you have.

May your possessions be used for the glory of God as well. Steward your treasure. Also, another area is steward your talents. We could think, 1 Peter 4, Peter says, as every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Think of your talents, whether you are able to teach, to serve, to encourage, use them, engage yourself, and use your talents for the glory of God.

It's good if you can discover your gifts too. I know we've got a questionnaire, I think we've still got some stocks of them, that Pastor Adam Gibbs developed on a spiritual gifts inventory.

And you can do this questionnaire, it kind of helps you figure out where are your strengths, and where could it be that God's gifting you, and enabling you, and use those gifts for the glory of God.

[27:46] And ask other mature believers around too, for them to help you identify your strengths. Reflect on what brings you joy in serving others too. That could be your gifting.

That's what you're good at. And I know there's some amongst our number, you could say they've got the gift of helps. Really I think that we all should have the gift of helps. So think of it, serve actively, use your talent, look for ways, opportunities to serve, volunteer in your church.

Think about how can you develop your gifts too. Maybe there's a course you can do. There's a good Bible school we recommend. There's opportunities to learn, practice your gifts to grow their impact.

And think about how can you mentor others too, maybe younger believers that, and there's numbers of younger believers. You can help them to grow. You can help disciple them. So you discover your spiritual gifts by serving. Consider, am I using my talents for God's glory? Am I developing my gifts for the kingdom of God?

[28:51] Can I plug into some ministries where my gifts can bless others? And brother, sister, don't bury your talent. That's one of the truths of the parable our Lord told of a man burying his talent.

Don't do that. Don't bury it, develop it, steward your talents. Another area of stewardship you could say is the stewardship of relationships.

We see that, for example, in the church fellowship context. It says, let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works, not forsaking assembling.

We can show our love for our Lord as we gather, as we intentionally want to build the church. We make it intentional to commit, to reach out to others. And we can think this is where really it's a great place, not the building, but when the gathering happens, it's a great place to minister to others, isn't it?

How can we do that unless we're together? It's a place we can develop godly friendships, where we can love one another. And really, there's all the other one another's we could think. Love one another, serve one another, submit yourselves to one another in the fear of God, forbear with one another, forgive one another, receive one another.

[30:07] Admonish one another, teach one another, be kind to one another. Kindness, there was a sermon at the conference on that. I think sometimes kindness is lacking in church.

Kindness, be kind, be kind, be intentionally kind, intentionally show kindness, be kind to one another, edify one another, greet one another, have fellowship, be perfectly joined together in the same mind, the same judgment, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord.

We do that when we're together. That's where it happens. So don't miss that. So take time to care, to listen, and with one another, relationships. You could say, you know, go out of your comfort zone and say, how can I pray for you?

Meet a practical need, practice hospitality, open your home, and I know some of you are good at that, open your home to have that fostering of fellowship. That's a blessing. That's a ministry of itself.

Hospitality, disciple other believers and find ways to help others to grow. And think of it, of course, in the context of closer relationships. Are we nurturing godly marriages and families?

[31:25] Are we building up others? Invest in the spiritual growth of others. So the stewardship of relationships. Another area is the stewardship of truth. You could think of the gospel of God's word.

Paul tells Timothy of the stewardship of truth. He says, the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses the same. Commit thou to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. You've got a sense where you've got a responsibility.

You know the truth. You know the saviour. You know the gospel. Paul says to Timothy, hey, commit this to others. Pass it on. You've got to commission a call to share the gospel.

Every one of us should have at least the kernel of what the gospel is and want to share it with other souls. We've got that divine truth. We're custodians of it and we're commanded to pass it on.

Paul poured his life into Timothy and then he charged Timothy to do the same, teach others. And God's given every one of us the gospel call.

[32:28] gospel message for us to share. So stand firm for the truth. Share the gospel. Find every opportunity. And hey, you may not be able to make the Saturday morning organised outreach, but make gospel sharing a priority because you're a steward of sharing the gospel.

Of deepening your understanding of God's word. Join a Bible study. It's a good thing. Start a Bible study if you have to. study the scriptures, that we've got a stewardship of the truth.

And mentor new believers. And teach children too, biblical truths as well. It's about that concept of relationships, the stewardship of relationships. And also, just to be mindful with stewardship, that we keep an eternal perspective on our daily choices.

Think of it, brother, sister, we've got this time span called life, but eternity is a bigger context, isn't it? And as stewards, we answer to God, not to man.

So let's exercise wisdom. How can I be a wise steward? How can I be a faithful steward? It brings glory to my Lord. And so it's important to realise the eternal perspective of our actions that are motives.

[33:39] We think of priorities, we think of a perspective that is eternal. And for every decision, no matter how small that we make, there's an eternal ripple effect, doesn't it? Do our actions line up with God's will?

And every act of stewardship, it matters to God. Every dollar given, every hour spent, every talent used, every relationship nurtured, every truth shared.

It's a building up of treasures in heaven. Our Lord tells of that. He contrasts the heaping up of treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt, where thieves break through and steal. But he says lay up rather, lay up rather for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

So stewardship reflects our heart. It reflects our heart, doesn't it? Friends, our Lord tells the parable of the talents. He contrasts the seriousness of using your talent or burying it, neglecting it.

[34:44] Are we using what God has given to us or are we neglecting it? What God has given for us to take care of. And the intent of this stewardship principle is that we ought to be faithful stewards and we're going to get greater responsibilities and the joy of our master's approval too.

Faithfulness in this life prepares us for eternity. Our stewardship now shapes our eternal reward. There'll be a recognition. There'll be a recognition. Hey, the joy of heaven is just our master's smile but there's opportunity for reward.

There's recognition as well. And it's about those treasures in heaven, having that eternal dimension. That's one day we will stand before our Lord and every choice will be weighed.

May we long to hear the words of our master, well done, thou good, and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of thy Lord. In conclusion, let's think about what's stopping me from faithful stewardship and what can be some of the things that can hinder faithful stewardship.

Some of the excuses I can make. I don't have enough. The widow's mite shows God values the heart, not the amount. start with what you have and trust God to multiply it.

[36:13] And there's a blessing that comes from being big-hearted. It tells, he which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.

It's not about the amount. Just give from that glad-heartedness. Give from that overflowing heart. Another excuse we can make, we can say, I'm too busy, I'm too busy to do what you're saying, preacher.

Redeem the small moments, even those little moments, those minutes, maybe some minutes of prayer you can make. To take the opportunity to share something, a kind word.

God honours every effort. Don't say you're too busy. Prioritise the eternal dimension over temporary things. you might say, my gifts aren't significant.

Every gift matters in God's economy. Every believer has a gift. And the gifts are given for the benefit of the body. Think of the boy's five loaves and two fishes.

[37:22] Five loaves and two fishes. That boy fed thousands. That's John 6. Don't think that what you have is insignificant or who you are.

Just offer what you have. Offer what you have and let God use it. You might say as another excuse, I'll start later. I'll start later. I've got some things that I'm a bit too busy about just now.

One day I'll get to doing more what God wants me to do. I'll start later. It's been said that procrastination is a thief, isn't it? Just putting things off.

You're getting robbed. It says, he that observeth the wind shall not sow. He that regardeth the clouds shall not reap. We could all think, the weather's not right for me, so it's too hot, too cold, too rainy, too dry, whatever it be.

We can blame this or that and make excuses. Start where you are and use what you have. Don't think, I'll start later. Make a decision now and serve the one who you love.

[38:29] We think of the woman with an alabaster box of ointment. She poured it out on Jesus and some called what she did a waste. What a waste. She's given all this, what that money could have been used for.

But she poured it out upon her Lord. Our Lord commended her her worship. She had done what she could. She's come beforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

She could have thought of some better things to do. Some would think. But no, what was the best thing? Was to worship. Was to pour herself out.

Do what you can. She had done what she could. You might say, what can I do? Just do what you can. Do what you can do. And it's your relationship with the Lord. Begin today.

Take those small steps. Think about the stewardship of things, of your life, of your body, of your lifetime. And faithfulness is simply taking a step.

[39:29] A step after another step after another step. It's faithfulness. It's plugging away. It's plugging away. It's that dogged determination. Hey, I'm going to be faithful today.

And then tomorrow, I'm going to be faithful today. And it keeps taking one day at a time, isn't it? Bit by bit. It's faithfulness. And this is the idea of stewardship.

It's not a burden. It's a privilege unto our Lord, isn't it? And we've got his help. We're not alone in this. He's going to enable you to manage those gifts that he's given to you wisely, with faithfulness and joy.

The world will tempt us to hoard and waste or neglect what we have. We have to be wise to that. We're not to conform to this world. It doesn't matter what the world's doing, watching, or going on about.

It doesn't matter what the world's raving on about. We want something that's of eternal value. To not conform to this world and all of its trashy thinking, which cares little for the things of God, but rather to be a faithful steward, advancing the kingdom of God.

[40:35] That's my priority. That's my perspective, to determine to be a faithful steward. God helping you, you can be that brother, sister today. Here's some practical steps. Examine your heart.

Maybe make a bit of an audit of your time, of your talents, of your treasures, of your relationships, of your truth. Ask God for his guidance. How can I be that faithful steward to commit my resources, my time, for the honour and glory of my Lord, to seek first, first, first, the kingdom of God, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, to commit to that first, to use your time for prayer, for the word, for worship, for fellowship, for spiritual growth, so you can be that useful Christian, God helping you. Be available, be ready to serve, and think about what are the time wasters? Oh, yeah, come to think of it, I could think of a few. Time wasters, you need to let go of them, let go of them.

Think of your stewardship of talents, identify a gift God has given you, and use it, be a volunteer, say, I'm available, identify the gift, relationships, reach out to others, step out of your comfort zone, get up off of your seat and go and talk to people, tell people you're praying for them, encourage one another, edify one another, that's why we're here, to make the effort, to do our part, make a conversation, God can help you overcome, I've had to overcome it, I still am, my inclination is to be an introvert, you've got to step out of that shell that you are and be what God wants you to be, it's not who I am, it's who he's making me to be, and be a part of building the faith of others, caring for others, helping grow the church, think of the truth that you have, it's committed to your charge, the Bible, find time for Bible study, join the

Bible study, study the Bible at home, mentor others, younger believers, hey it's not about you, impart like Paul's imparted to Timothy, and brother, sister, keep on going, keep on growing, increase that stewardship, increase that heart, that heart of giving, of serving, find new ways to reach out, let's ask ourselves honestly today as we come to wrap it up, am I faithful and wise steward, am I managing my time to honour my Lord, am I developing and using my gifts like I know he wants me to, am I generous and God honouring, am I faithful with the gospel, think of it brother, sister, how can we faithfully discharge our stewardship, may the Lord enable you, as God is speaking to hearts here today, how can I find, yeah that's something I can put into action in my life, that's something I can change,

[43:38] God helping me, to use my gifts to honour my Lord in all things, preparing with the urgency of Christ coming in mind, knowing that his reward is with him and as faithful stewards one day, one day we'll hear our Lord, one day we'll hear his voice and those blessed words, well done, thou good, and faithful servant, well done, let us pray, our Lord we thank you that you've given us everything, even our very breath, the bodies that breathe, the feet that walk, the mouth that talks, the brain that thinks Lord, of our treasures, of our possessions, of our living, of our substance, Lord, of our gifts, of our talents, of the relationships, of the people in our lives, Lord, help us to be a steward, a faithful steward, that bit by bit, day by day, moment by moment, we'll have that eye to eternity, to set our affection on things above, to savor the things of God, to seek first the kingdom of

God and your righteousness, Lord, to think of that. Dear God, we pray that you would burden our hearts, Lord. Lord, guide, we pray, our decisions to have that mind to make the more God-glorifying decisions in all of these dimensions of our life.

Lord, we pray if there's any here present that they've yet to really trust you for time and for eternity to know you're saving, that they'll say, Lord Jesus, you died on the cross for my sin.

You've risen from the dead. I trust you as my ever-living saviour to walk in your ways, to do your will, to know your saving grace, to know your forgiveness of my sin.

And Lord, we pray help us to walk in the light of that, our saved people, to know we've been redeemed, we've been bought with a price. You value us, Lord, you value every soul.

[45:45] Lord, we thank you for that. Guide our steps, Lord, help us as we might meditate on these truths to put something into action, we pray.

Point out to us, Lord, the time wasters, point out to us the vain things that you want us to drop off, Lord, help us, we pray, that we might have our affection reset for the things of God.

We praise you, Lord, in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen.