

Stewardship

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[0 : 0 0] Well, I'm glad that by the plan of God, Gretchen led us this morning to sing about the Father's love.

Because in a time, although she may have had Valentine's Day in mind, in a time of great sorrow, it's also a great blessing to remember the love of God.

And if any of you came in just a little bit late, the time of great sorrow would be that some members in our church family had death in the family this week.

So that's what I'm referring to. So, my sermon today, I don't see how it's related to any of these things. I'll guarantee you one thing it's not related to is the Super Bowl.

Although I've thought one of the best sermons I ever preached was on a Super Bowl Sunday, and that was the theme of the sermon. And one day I'll have to dig that one back up if I fall to preach on the same Sunday as the Super Bowl.

[1 : 0 5] Well, today I want to talk to you about stewardship. And let's go to the Lord in prayer first. Thank you, Lord.

You so loved the world. You gave your only son. And that when we believe and receive that great love, we have eternal life.

We do not perish. Thank you, Lord. Now, Father, we come. We've sung your praises. And now we come to look into the word of God. Open our hearts, O God, to understand and receive and live by the words of faith.

Bless everyone here, O God. Just really bless them. In Jesus' name. Amen. I don't know. I was just thinking how much, this has nothing to do with my sermon, how much I really love every one of you.

And especially when I'm here with you, it's like I really love Jesus in you. You know, I know Christ is in you, and that's beautiful. You're beautiful to me.

[2 : 1 0] And so anyway, thank God. Stewardship. Probably when you hear a preacher, if you've hung out in church much in your life, and they say, we're going to have a sermon on stewardship, your mind thinks, oh boy, he's going to tell us to give more money.

Well, that is a part of stewardship, but it is a, you know, mere money is a very small part of what the subject of stewardship is all about.

Stewardship is really about giving our all to God for his glory. And money is a very small part of that. This week I came across, I don't even know how I found this, but it kind of fit in a little bit with what I'm going to talk about.

And it was, here are some statements that you'll probably never hear in church. There's six of them. Number one, you'll never hear this in church. Hey, it's my turn to sit on the front pew.

Here's one that none of us who preach here will ever hear. I was so enthralled, I didn't even notice that your sermon went on for more than an hour. Personally, this is number three.

[3 : 29] Personally, I find witnessing much more enjoyable than golf. Nothing personal, Zach. I'm just coming right out. All right.

This was on the internet here. Number four. This is one for Gretchen and Phil Stone, if Brother Phil were here today.

You'll never hear this in church. I just love it when we sing hymns that I've never heard before. Here's one that John and I will never hear.

Pastor, we would love to send you to this Bible seminar that's down in the Bahamas. And then...

And your wife, yes. Oh, and your wife, yeah. Otherwise, Becky and Teresa won't let us go. And you want them to go to make sure we attend the meetings.

[4 : 36] And then the last one kind of leads into today's sermon. Nothing inspires and strengthens my faith more than a good sermon on giving to God.

Wow. So, I'm going to preach on stewardship today, but it's not because this church wants more of your money. In fact, I'm going to spend most of this sermon telling you how we gave away last year over half of all the offerings you gave.

So, we're not here this morning to beg for money. In fact, I'll tell you this. God does not need your money or want your money. He wants your heart.

And unfortunately, your money and your possessions are often a great distraction that keep your heart from reaching out to God.

And so, we need to be reminded. Now, let's talk about what is a steward. Next slide, please. Here you have the definition of a steward. A steward would be a person who manages another person's property, finances, or affairs.

[5 : 46] So, if you had something, a farm or whatever, and you asked me to be the, take care of that farm, then I would be your steward. It's not a word we use very often. But, who owns everything?

Well, that's right there in Psalm 24 and verse 1. The earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all of its people belong to him.

What does God own? Everything. Everything. Everything. So, stewardship then means God has given us the privilege to manage some of his stuff.

The very air you are breathing is his gift to you. All of your money. All of your possessions. All of your time. All of your, everything involving you.

Your family. Your hobbies. Your favorite thing. It all belongs to God. And he's letting you be a steward that helps to manage these things.

[6 : 54] And that calling is a calling to commit your life in service to God as a good steward. Now, if I really believe that I own my stuff, if I really believe that I own my car and I own my boat or my RV or whatever it is I've got, or if I really believe that I own that paycheck, then I am constantly, and here's my worst one, if I really believe I own all of my time, then I am constantly going to be in conflict with God himself.

Because God is struggling to say, let go of that. I gave that to you. Use it for me. Let me show you this is the path to be happy.

Let me show you how to use these things. And if I will go ahead and believe and accept that my truck, my mountain house or beach house or condo membership or share, whatever, my stock market investments, whatever it is, if I'll decide these are really God's, then I'll have a much more peaceful path through this life, realizing he's lent these things to me.

He wants me to enjoy them. He's given them to me so I can enjoy them. But it's also his, and I'm using it for his good. Well, that means then that your health is also in God's hands.

Your family, everything about you, it's in God's hands. that's hard for us to deal with in some ways, especially this morning as we think about that members of our church have lost loved ones.

[8 : 52] And that's happened to most of us at some time in our lives. And if it hasn't happened to you yet, it will. You will lose members of your family.

That's life. And you have to even realize that those members of your family belonged to God and they were yours for a season to enjoy, to love, to be with, to train, to learn from.

And it's up to him to decide when that season has ended and to be able to accept that and to say, God, this is yours too. Let's look at a verse of scripture on this one.

Next slide, please. Romans 12, one and two. Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, I'm urging you, I'm begging you, in view of God's mercy, offer your bodies to God as a living sacrifice that'll be holy, that'll be pleasing to God.

This is your true and proper worship. And don't conform to the pattern of this world. Be transformed by the renewing of your mind. This is God's call to every believer that we give our bodies and all that we have to God.

[10 : 08] That's true worship. Our problem is the second part of this where it says, don't be conformed to the pattern of this world. The world is pulling at us.

It's constantly saying, you need this, you want this, you want... What can you know if you want to watch anything? On any social media platform or YouTube or television or whatever, you're going to be bombarded with products.

And now, they've come up with all these algorithms, whatever an algorithm is. I think an algorithm is a little monster that lives in your computer or your cell phone, okay?

And these algorithms know what you like and they know how to feed you. Don't you need some of this? Don't you want some of this?

Wouldn't you like to buy this? Constantly. I don't want to get off in that direction. My mind wanted to run in a different direction. But the fact is that it's trying to make us conform to this world.

[11 : 15] So here's what happens to us. Look at this slide. We kind of have a choice. Yeah, the next slide there. I have one right there. We kind of have a choice. The world's way to follow the pattern of the world is to say, I need lots of stuff.

I need more stuff. And so, good land. How many storage buildings have been built in America? How many are being built right now?

Storage buildings. Why? And even heated and air conditioned storage buildings. We keep stuff we don't need that we never look at.

We keep it in a better building than people in other parts of the world get to live in. This is insanity. And yet, that's the American pattern.

Man, I've got to have more stuff. This car I've got, it's not good enough. I need that one. This whatever I've got, it's not good enough. I need that one. Whatever I've got, I need the better one.

[12 : 22] I need to step it up. I need to, because that's the pattern of the world. And unfortunately, instead of making us happy, we're chained to all those things.

And instead of owning things, things own us. It happens to me all the time. I say, Becky, good land. We don't have time to do anything because we've got to spend all of our time maintaining our stuff.

You know what I'm talking about. That's the pattern of the world. And the Bible said, don't be conformed to that. Instead, realize, everything is God's.

He's lent it to you for a while. If he's given you the most beautiful Lamborghini or whatever, enjoy it. But also keep it in mind.

He must have given it to you for a reason. So what does he want you to use it for? Or if he's giving you, if it's a bicycle, enjoy it. But what other purposes would he have in that?

[13 : 24] And always be open to realizing in everything we have, we're also serving God with it. That's the path that leads to happiness. happiness. The other path leads to a certain level of misery and dissatisfaction.

The secret in life is not to get the stuff you want. It's to want the stuff you've already got. That's the secret in life. Enjoy and love what you've got.

Don't always lust after what you don't have. You'll be a much happier person. That's God's way. Well, let's talk then about how did Jesus do it?

Next slide, please. Jesus had a mission and he explained it when he started preaching in Luke 4 and he was quoting Isaiah 61.

So here's Luke 4, 18 and 19. The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has chosen me. Do you know the spirit of the Lord is on you if you're a believer?

[14 : 28] And do you know he's chosen you? What Jesus is going to say, Jesus is saying here, also applies to you as a believer. It applies to our church.

He says he has commissioned me to encourage the poor. Are we encouraging the poor? He has commissioned or called me to help the brokenhearted.

Are we doing it? Are we issuing a decree to release captives? Are we proclaiming the good news of Jesus? Are we helping the people who are spiritually blind to recover their sight?

Are we announcing the year of the Lord? This is the year of the Lord right now. Today is the best day to get saved you'll ever have if you don't know Christ. Today is the best day to say, God, I'm going to surrender all to you.

The things I've been struggling with and trying to hang on to, I'm going to give them to you. This, I'm announcing, this is the year of the Lord's favor. So you take that mission statement Jesus had and you add to it that extra mission statement he gave us where he said, go into all the world, tell everybody about me, make disciples, baptize them, get out of here and go and do it.

[15 : 44] You put all that together and you got some really good action statements for a church and some years ago our church tried to put all that together into a simple mission statement and the next slide shows you our mission statements.

Real simple. Working together to make disciples and share Christ's love. That seems pretty easy. Let's work together. Let's make disciples.

It means train people to live like Jesus. And then let's share Christ's love every way we can. Well, how well are we doing that?

Next slide. If we're going to talk about how we're fulfilling our mission, you might remember I've been preaching a sermon like this long about February or so every year where I like to review how we spend our money because show me the money and I'll tell you what's important to you.

I mean, you can tell me that you're crazy about whatever, but I can say, well, let me see your credit card statements. Let me see your checkbook. Let me see your bank balance.

[16 : 52] And whatever you're putting your money on, that's what you're really crazy about. You can say whatever, you're excited about whatever, but it's where you're spending your money. That's the thing that has your heart.

And so that would be true for a church too. So now, the next slide, what I want to do here for about 10 minutes is review with you how did we use your offerings last year to try to fulfill this mission statement.

How did we use your offerings to try to work together to make disciples and share the love of Christ? So, here we go. First of all, we started to monitor. Next slide.

Right in our community, we tried to invest some money back. And so, what we did was we spent \$7,893 helping people.

We helped people with medical bills. We helped people who pay their rent. We helped people to fix and repair things that were essential for them to get to work or whatever. We helped with college expenses.

[17 : 55] We helped with dental bills. We helped, we drove, I mean, we couldn't even count here all the folks here who helped drive somebody somewhere they needed to be. But that was also a contribution.

But the money that came out of your offering was \$7,000, almost \$900 to do that. Then at Easter and Christmas, we spent \$579 taking food to people that we knew might be in want during the holidays.

And at Thanksgiving, we did a really neat thing. I was not personally involved. I was out of town. But some of you went over to Mountaineer Chicken Production Place in Siler City and helped pack 10,000 boxes of chicken dinners for a family.

It had vegetables in there and some dessert and breads and chicken and whatever. And then some of you brought a hundred of those boxes back to Moncure and helped to distribute them here.

God bless you for donating your time to do that. We came into some sweet potatoes right before Christmas. Somebody blessed us with about five or six bushels of magnificent sweet potatoes.

[19 : 08] So what did we do? We put them in bags and we went all around this neighborhood and across the street and all around here and we gave away about 45 bags of sweet potatoes. It was fun doing it.

We just walked up to houses and said, from Moncure Baptist Church, Merry Christmas. God bless you. We love you. Gave them sweet potatoes. They were beautiful sweet potatoes.

I wish I'd taken a bag home with me. What else did we do? We're still doing this. Every month, we get a list of people who have just recently moved in to within three or four miles of our church and we have a service that we pay for that sends them a card, welcome to our community.

We'd love to have you come and visit our church and, you know, sort of a God bless you card. And then, we haven't done this enough, but we've got bags back there on the back seat and we keep a list of who these new people moving in out there on that bulletin board or if somebody new, you see them move into your neighborhood, just take one of those bags there.

It's got some little gifts and stuff in it. Just take it to them and say, this is from our church. Welcome to the community. And so, we're doing that. We spent about \$550 on that last year.

[20 : 27] Let's look at the next slide. So, we say that we are against abortion because life is sacred and we want to protect human life. What do we do? We try to put our money where our mouth is.

So, we gave \$3,281 last year to support the Reach Out Crisis Pregnancy Center. That is a center that takes care of the mothers. We want to not only love the babies, but love the mama.

And so, we've done a lot there to try to support that. We help out the Sprott Youth Center, which is right across the street over here. It's like a local gymnasium. It's totally a volunteer kind of place.

They've got expenses and we just decided it would be good for our church to help support the community in that way. So, we send, whatever that says, \$1,200 a year we gave away last year to the Sprott Center to help them keep their doors open.

We are in a Baptist association with about 50 other churches called the Sandy Creek Association. They offer seminars. They help start new churches. They help pastors. We gave them \$3,281.

[21 : 36] Our local school. We got to bless our local school, right? So, we go over there right the week before school starts with about \$700 of paper, pencils, crayons, stuff kids need, and we set up a table and we just give away stuff.

And then every month or almost every month, somebody, Susan or John typically, takes over for the school staff some goodies.

Their favorite is Sandra's Donuts. And, you know, just a way to say we love you, we appreciate you, we're your local church. And so last year, we spent \$1,193 trying to bless our local school.

We hosted the National Day of Prayer, we hosted a couple of community worship services, we've had a couple of cookouts last year out here in our picnic shelter.

I don't know the cost of those things, but the things that we can add at the cost too, we spent \$18,000, about 17% of our offering, right here in our own community trying to do the work of the Lord.

[22 : 46] Now, we didn't just look at Moncure, we reached out beyond that. Let's see the next slide. We also wanted to help out in the state of North Carolina. So, the Baptist Children's Home, they run orphanages, foster care homes.

We sent \$914 to help children. The Baptist State Convention is really big on disaster relief. There isn't hardly a place in the world if there's a hurricane or a tornado or an earthquake.

Usually within a few days, if it's in the United States, they get there the next day. North Carolina Baptist there to do relief work. If it's in another country, it might take a week to get there.

But, I mean, a lot of money and resources go that way. And, of course, the convention helps support churches in our state. We gave them \$1,225. Then we reached out beyond North Carolina, next slide, to all across North America.

the whole Southern Baptist Convention, thousands of churches across America and the world. We support seminaries for training ministers.

[23 : 55] We support hospitals for people. We support feeding the hungry, etc. We gave \$2,461 to that. Coming up real soon, every Easter, we have an offering called Annie Armstrong.

If you're not a Baptist, you've never heard of that. But it's a lady that gave her life to trying to help missions in North America. So we named it after her. Last year, we gave \$550 to that.

Last year, we sent 25 shoeboxes full of gifts to children in the schools in Kentucky. We're getting ready to do that. The last Sunday of this month is the last time to bring in your gifts to put in the shoeboxes.

And there's a list on the wall out there if there's anything not taken already. Or if you want help with that and you haven't, talked to Susan Douglas or Mike, they're helping us with that. The children up in the mountains of Virginia in a very poor community, we were able to donate 150 pairs of shoes last year and 200 pairs of socks.

And some of you went up there and helped put those shoes and socks on those children's feet right before school started. God bless you. to New York City.

[25 : 12] We, our little church, somehow donated 225 coats. And some of you went to New York City and helped hand those coats to the people that could use them.

God bless you for that. And then, to help pay the expenses of those of you who were willing to go do that stuff, the church came up with \$3,275 to help cover your expenses.

Of course, you spent more than that, but at least we were able to help and encourage a bit. But we don't want our outreach just to stop with North America, so what do we do worldwide is the next slide.

A Christmas offering we do every year named after Lottie Moon who was a missionary to China. We gave \$1,700. The Baptists have 4,800 missionaries all around the world.

That money goes to support them. We've got four and now five special pastors that we support in Columbia. Last year, we sent them \$7,217 to help them buy groceries or gas or whatever they need for their ministry.

[26 : 18] Our special Colombian friend, Demas, we sent him \$2,200 last year. He's also very much a missionary. I heard from him just this week he was going to be going to some new community of some new tribe and be sharing Bible stories and stuff.

He's got the heart of a missionary. Then on our own Columbia trips last year, the church spent \$10,888 helping our people go to Columbia to serve.

We have a missionary friend named Bibiana who's a missionary in Venezuela. We sent her \$2,000. Julio and Emily Peña who happens to be my daughter Emily and her husband.

They are missionaries kind of all over the world but they live in Sanford and minister. We gave them \$2,751. Rehoboth Ministries, the Adams family that works in Haiti and that's the poorest country in the western hemisphere and they minister there.

We gave them \$1,600. Our own Courtney Mathis. I was thinking about Courtney this week. We've known her since she was about two or three.

[27 : 35] She grew up in this church. She was four. She looked like she was three. She's kind of short. That was a little short kid. We've seen her grow up and she went through our Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools and youth group and Glenn dragged her off to winter jam and youth camps and Mark dragged her off to deep impact.

Everything. Well, she's a full-time missionary now in Bolivia and if we don't take care of our own, what are we doing? So we sent her \$4,470 last year.

God bless you. We also helped with the Gideons distributing Bibles. \$350. Next slide. So, all together our church on everything spent \$108,000 last year and we only took in \$109,000.

Now some people would say that's very poor planning. I say hallelujah praise God we took every penny almost 99% of it that you gave and put it to work.

I don't think God's ever honored because a church somewhere is hoarding his money. I'm never impressed by a church that says we've got a \$3,000,000 trust fund just waiting.

[28 : 55] Waiting for what? The end of the world? You know? Put it to work? So anyway I praise God for that. And the next slide then would mean or show that out of \$108,000 that we spent if you add up all the money I just told you about it came to \$59,346 that's 55% of your offerings last year out of every dollar we took 55 cents of it over half of it and gave it away outside of this church to help with ministry projects.

We sang a song earlier something in there about we will boast in Christ we will boast in God I wouldn't boast in God I've never heard of another church that was that generous with its offerings there probably have been probably been better and more but I've never heard of it and I just want to praise God that he gave us the ability to do it it was his resources and that he gave us the desire to do it and I pray that he'll help us to keep doing that next year I'd love for that to say 58% I like to think that every year in Becky's and my giving that every year the percent we give has grown a little bit I like to think that we're growing in this grace of trusting God more and more and giving and trying to be a blessing I think it's the call of God on our lives we boast in God for that it's for his glory well my last slide and I'll start wrapping it up here back to where we started the earth is the

Lord's everything in it the world and all of its people belong to him it's all God's it's all God's because of that we're never going to question we are never going to question anything about your offerings pastor John and I have never looked at any person's offerings in this church that's between you and God but though we're not going to question it now I'm going to put a guilt trip on you does God question your stewardship are you pleasing him that's the question we need to answer and I'm in with a story I love stories don't I yeah I bet you're seeing this happen if you're a parent it probably happened to you this guy takes his little four year old kid into a restaurant they sit down what do you want no it's french fries okay so you order some french fries and they get brought they're hot and sizzling and so when they're sitting on the table daddy wants to taste one of them so daddy reaches over you know that's called the daddy tax right so he reaches over and picks up a french fry and his little four year old says don't take my french fries well if you think about it those french fries belong to the daddy he bought them the kid belongs to the daddy if you ask anybody in there whose kid is that oh he belongs to him and now we've got this kid saying this is mine you've seen this we've lived we've lived we've lived we are lived and you know at Halloween you've got a daddy tax the Halloween case oh yeah that's right the daddy tax okay well you know

I think about how could that father react he could try what we usually begin with the counseling approach sort of the Andy Griffith wise father approach you know so he he tries to counsel with him like well now son remember that we share and this is we try all that and I think maybe that God as we hang on to what he's given us and say God you can't touch my car you can't touch my time how did you let me get sick when I wanted to go do such and such this is mine yeah and I think at first God tries the counseling approach he speaks to us in sermons and scripture and people who will talk to us and says here's a better way here's a better way but the father could also choose to do this he could say give me those fries take them all away from the kid throw them in the trash

I'm going to teach you a lesson well I think that's never God's first step he's not that kind of God however there have been times that you or me will let an idol come between us and God and don't be surprised if God lets that idol start to fall apart he loves you too much to let you be carried away this approach he could say to the waiters bring me ten more orders of french fries eat fries eat fries eat fries isn't that kind of like when you were sneaking off trying to smoke them and your parents catch it they say okay smoke another one smoke another we're trying to make you sick of them well God even works in that way sometimes the thing that we so greatly lust after and desire and think we want sometimes he will give it to us so much that we're sick of it we can get sick of it like oh

[35 : 08] God if only I could have that job if only you just never stop begging and he finally says okay take this job you're going to hate it I was trying to protect you but here you insist and then a year or two later oh God this is the worst job ever some of that's some personal experience wow well the earth is the Lord's you belong to the Lord my closing question will you surrender all to him or will you hold on to it and struggle is it is or is yours that's the stewardship sermon his are yours so we're going to sing a song together this one I did request I surrender all we sing but today as you sing it think about do you do you surrender all what are you all with that today can be a good day for sake of

God Lord I give it to you I'll be down front John's down in this area too if anybody needs but let's stand and sing together all to Jesus I surrender all to him I freely give I will ever love and trust him in his presence daily live I surrender all I surrender all all to thee my blessed

Savior I surrender all all all to Jesus I surrender make me Savior holy divine let me feel the Holy Spirit truly know that thou art mine I surrender I surrender all I surrender all I surrender all all to thee my blessed Savior I surrender all all to Jesus I surrender I surrender

Lord I give myself to thee fill me with thy love and power let thy blessing fall on me I surrender all I surrender all all all to thee my blessed Savior I surrender all all all all all all all all all all all all all all our current strategy with the french fries is we try to take it for giving so we give to God a person you're you're you're you're you're you