

Faithful Stewards of Kingdom Grace Part 2

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[0 : 00] And if you have your Bibles, I hope you have your Bibles.! Please have a Bible and open it to 1 Corinthians 4. We are grateful for every time we can sit under the Word of God.

And it's important for us as a people to have the Word of God with us. I'm thankful for the trust that you have in your leaders. But it is, as a student and as a Berean, it is important to have the Word of God in front of us as we learn to grow so we can see God's revelation through our own eyes, into our own hearts, and we grow together as a body.

So please open up your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 4. We are in a two-part series, last week being the first part of being stewards of God's grace, stewards of kingdom grace.

And Paul, last week, mentioned his stewardship to the Ephesians, and he mentions his stewardship here in the church of Corinth. 1 Corinthians 4, verse 1.

Let a man regard us in this manner, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. In this case, moreover, it is required of stewards that one be found trustworthy.

[1 : 19] trustworthy. Paul wanted his ministry to be one of trustworthiness, faithfulness. That's all he ultimately wanted. He was an apostle.

He had the blessings of having certain gifts to be used in the life of the church, one that none of us have because there's no more apostles. And he said, I want my ministry to be baked in, fashioned in faithfulness.

faithfulness. It was 7.51 a.m. when a violinist stepped to do a very busy subway in Washington, D.C.

The morning rush was on. 45 minutes have passed of this violinist playing. Roughly 1,000 people were coming and going, and as he was busking, made about 50 bucks.

Not too bad. For an hour's work, handful of people stopped. A couple people recognized actually what was going on, though. What was really happening.

[2 : 25] The night before, you would have had to pay nearly \$100 to see the same violinist play. Joshua Bell, one of the world's foremost violinists, did a thought experiment.

Went into the subway, played the same music people around the world give hundreds of dollars to. And yes, he was playing this on his \$3 million Stradivarius violin.

1,000 people coming and going. Potentially missing the opportunity to see the beauty, the artistry, and the joy of greatness on display.

The busyness of life, the need to move on, the next thing is happening. We get it. Life happens. We understand life comes and goes at a pace sometimes that is very difficult to get a handle on.

But as we think about stewardship of the grace of God, are we rushing in the details of life and missing opportunity that God is giving to you, not just simply to hear incredible music, but to serve an incredible God in the life of his body.

[3 : 38] What does faithful stewardship require of us? It requires us to be prepared, to be ready, to look for these opportunities.

It's not a lack of resources because that's what last week was about. Remember three magnificently eternal realities in understanding the stewardship of salvation. We went through Ephesians 1 through 3 where we have unimaginable wealth.

We have the wealth of heaven given to us in salvation. We have incomprehensible power. We have power from heaven and we have an irreplaceable relationship. We have a family from heaven. This is what God gives to us.

We have the inheritance of Christ. We have the power of Christ and we have the body of Christ given to us at the moment of salvation. So it's not of a lack of resources and it's not of a lack of opportunity because Ephesians chapter 2, Paul says that we are workmanship in Christ Jesus.

He has crafted, he has formed you as a master sculptor of who you are and your salvation and he has prepared good works for us to walk in. It's already ready for you.

[4 : 52] Are you missing them? So what might that be? It's a stewardship. Now let's turn to our text this morning in 1 Peter chapter 4.

I brought this in our introduction last week because this is kind of the north star of what we hope to be in the life of the church for our small group ministry. Where small groups will be that focused discipleship.

Opportunities for one-on-one, one-on-three, a smaller group to interact with, to be a part of. And so this is going to hopefully be the heartbeat of everything that we do within the life of our small groups and ultimately discipleship in general as we are called to make disciples of all the nations.

That is the purpose, the foundation of every ministry. 1 Peter chapter 4 starting in verse 7. 1 Peter chapter 5.

I'm reading from the NASB.

[6 : 42] NASB. I know many of you have ESV and there's a little bit of difference there, but sorry, I haven't made that switch yet. The context here in 1 Peter is that he's helping these scattered believers because of persecution who are all over the world essentially right now, these Jewish believers, and they have come to Christ and now they're suffering greatly and they might be thinking, this is weird. I give my life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I serve the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Well, why is it getting harder? Why is it getting more difficult? And he says, no, it's not abnormal, but normal. It follows the path of your Savior, Jesus Christ, who brought victory over sin and death, glory and exaltation through suffering.

He says, don't try to find your security and your satisfaction in things of the world. You've already spent your life as an unbeliever doing that. You've spent your time, your energy and your resources as an unbeliever seeking the world's fulfillment, deceiving yourselves as if that would be your true satisfaction. Now you're submitted to Christ. Now you belong to him. Now you fit all of your world under him.

Don't just try to come in, fit your life into the world, and then just make enough Christian and church stuff just to calm your conscience to make yourself feel better. He says, don't do that.

The suffering you're going through does not need a relief valve from the world. Where you seek comfort and security is in Christ and in his body as you learn to grow and serve.

[8 : 31] You know you were given more in salvation to be faithful to that very call. And Peter knows that. And he shepherds these believers and needs to help renew their mind in how to do that. Don't seek the world's fulfillment. Don't seek the world's relief. You've done that. You know how aimless and how worthless that is. We need a mind-renewing truth. And so here in 1 Peter 4 verses 7 to 11, faithful stewardship of our salvation. And remember last week, the management of God's resource that he gives to us should reflect his priorities in the use of them. So God gives gifts and salvation, resources for us to use. Faithful stewardship of our salvation should reflect his priorities in the use of them.

So Peter's going to walk us through five mind-renewing truths and faithful stewardship of God's grace. The manifold grace of God that is given to us in verse 10, he's going to help us think of these five mind-renewing truths and faithful stewardship of God's grace. First principle, first mind-renewing truth is you don't have much time as you think. You don't have as much time as you think. Look at verse 7.

Look down at the text here. The end of all things is near. Therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. All things are at hand. I know your version, if you have the ESV, says self-controlled, sober-minded. The end of all things. This mind-renewing truth to be a faithful steward means that you are stewarding your time well. This is kind of Peter's way, kind of like what James said, your life is a vapor. Here today and gone tomorrow. You kind of look at your life and going, oh how time has passed. Where did it go? It kind of slipped through my hands. My kids are this old now. Now I have grandkids. Now things are moving at a pace that I haven't quite understood yet.

Here today and gone tomorrow. And we have the joy of the revelation of God. We have the promises and we also have the future. We have the book of Revelation. The word end here means the completion of a plan. A mature state. A fulfillment of something that is yet to come. Paul uses the same word in Romans chapter 10 where he says, Christ is the end of the law for righteousness. For everyone who believes.

It's not that the law was terminated. It's not that the law now ends and it doesn't matter. No, Christ fulfills it on your behalf as a believer. He completes the law so that you can stand before God innocent. Because now you have Christ's account. He fulfilled it. He completed it. He is our righteousness. So Peter says here, all of God's plan for the entire world is next on the calendar.

[11 : 44] Peter. Christ is going to come back. He's going to rule and reign on his throne on the earth. Peter says in Acts that this is the latter days. These are the last days of the church age. We are close. This isn't a prophecy. This isn't doomsday. This is just what Peter is saying. The end of all things are near. God's plan is going to be completed soon. So don't be waiting to fulfill all of your wildest dreams on earth before you start taking spiritual matters seriously.

Peter is saying get your heart, your soul, your mind, and life in order because time is short. Maybe you've heard or been in the same office or have had to say when you get some sort of medical diagnosis, it's time to get your affairs in order. That's what Peter is saying here. It's time to get your affairs in order because this is what eschatology does. Remember eschatology is that big theological term for the last things. What happens at the end of time, how God is going to complete his entirety of his plan.

We can get distracted. People get tied up in knots about the when and the how and all the little details. Peter is telling us here that what eschatology actually does is sobers you and asks you hard questions about your life.

That's the purpose of eschatology. What happens at the end should help you understand and ask the questions. Am I living faithful to the call of God? Am I walking in a manner worthy of my salvation?

So that's what the rest of this text is actually helping us think through. Am I being disciplined? Am I being self-controlled? Am I dependent on prayer? Do I love the church as Christ calls me to love the church?

[13 : 30] Do I allow people in my life and my resources to bless people without grumbling and complaining? Do I serve faithfully in the manner which he gives me this manifold grace of God?

Do I really believe that God's glory is the focus on everything I do? A lot of questions here that Peter is going to ask us. This is what the thought of Jesus returning ought to cultivate.

What does Peter say looking down at the text? Be of sound judgment. Sound judgment, self-control, sober-minded. What you believe and how you think about your inner life matters.

Remember last week, your incomprehensible power, Ephesians 3.16. According to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with power through the spirit in the inner man.

Inside of you, you have this incomprehensible power to think God's thoughts after him. That the truth would rule your thoughts and your opinions and your decision-making processes.

[14 : 32] That in everything you do, not just did I go to church on Sunday morning and just settle at that. But how I function every day when my eyes open, when my feet hit the floor.

Sound judgment is the word for sensible. And if you go to Titus 2, don't go there for the sake of time. Every single category, older man, younger man, older woman, younger woman.

They're all called to be sensible. It's a serious mind. Sober-minded is the word for self-restraint.

So here's what Peter's saying. Because God is completing his plan towards the end, we need to be disciplined, self-restraining in our inner life that seeks wisdom in the truth in all that we do.

That's what eschatology ultimately should produce. People can lose their minds when they hear about the end of the world. Motivated by fear, uncertainty, desire to gain as much control as possible.

[15 : 36] Sober-mindedness, self-restraint in the inner man is motivated by all of God's plans are going to be completed and I am ready for it. This day-to-day mind renewal.

Because none of it is mine. None of this is mine. Look at what he says. Why do you do all this? For the purpose of prayer. Do be dependent upon God.

To grow in my personal intimacy with God. That is my motivation. Renew my mind. I don't have the time that I think. Time is passing quickly.

The sun comes up. We got the same 24 hours every single day. So the more self-restraint we have, the more discipline of life, the more dependent upon God, the more that you are able to take these truths and be a faithful steward of God's graces.

If your life is filled with clutter, anxiousness, uncertainty, fearfulness, live by the seat of your pants, thoughtless, go with the flow, unorganized, scattered, then time is going to slip through your fingers and opportunities to be a steward of the manifold graces of God are going to slip through your fingers as well.

[17 : 00] Well, the dynamic of these small groups is that these 12 to 15 people are ready at a moment's notice to serve one another.

Ready for a phone call. Ready for a text. Ready to show up. Ready to pray. But you might not be able to if we're mismanaging our time.

Haven't been in our Bibles. Haven't been praying. We need to prepare ourselves for faithfulness. How do we get out of this cycle?

How do we renew our mind? Remind ourselves that Christ is coming back. That God's plan for the world is coming to a completion. And what he gives to us in the resources of salvation and the manifold graces of God, we get to use.

And we get to use today and we get to use now. That's the first mind renewing truth. Second mind renewing truth to faithful stewardship is your love is supremely expressed when sin occurs.

[18 : 03] Your love is supremely expressed when sin occurs. Look down at verse 8. Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins.

If you want to know how to make the greatest impact in discipleship and growing the body of Christ in maturity, this is it. Above all, supreme priority in the gifts you've been given, in the resources.

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly. Being a faithful steward of your salvation is that you are treating others the way that God treated you, especially in your sin.

Love is a stewardship. Love for the body of Christ is a pillar and it's a mark of your salvation that distinguishes you from the rest of the world.

That's what 1 John says. What's a test for a believer? Do you love the church? Not just in word, but in deed and truth.

[19 : 12] Paul says it in a familiar way, right? We know this in 1 Corinthians 13. Faith, hope, love. Abide in these three, but the greatest of these is love. We know the greatest commandment. To love God.

And the second which is like it. To love others. This is the fuel for the great commission. Those are the great commandments. This is the great commission to make disciples.

A love for soul fuels discipleship. A love for soul and bringing them closer to Christ fuels discipleship, which I hope, which we hope, fuels small groups.

To love for one another's souls and what God has done for you. So a faithful steward in salvation loves that Christ loves others in their sin. And has saved them from their sin in the same way he did for me.

So be fervent. Be earnest. Because you're going to be the most tested in your love when sin occurs.

[20 : 13] When it hits close to home. Maybe against you. Maybe against someone you know. Maybe against the entire church.

So I think that pretty much handles everybody, right? You've been sinned against. Someone you know has been sinned against. And you've probably been in a church body where someone's sin has affected everybody.

This will be the greatest test of your love. So a very direct question might be, if you are not in the process of discipleship.

Or when someone offends you or sins in the body. The question is, do you have a misplaced love? So let's define these terms real quick. Love is self-sacrificial giving at your own expense.

For the sake of others. And fervent or your earnestness is a constant desire or unflinching intensity. This word is really interesting because you could even think of it this way.

[21 : 16] In the Greco-Roman world, it was used of horses that fully extend in their gallop. It's a full stretch. It was used of athletes who are straining their bodies to win the race.

So Peter is saying, stretch your love. Because it stretches your faith. Earnestly desire to be in someone's life in the same manner when they haven't sinned against you.

That's hard. You don't think when 12 or 13 people get in the same room and talk that sin is not going to occur? The pursuit of the body of Christ together will inevitably bring areas where each one of us are not yet like Jesus Christ.

So discipleship, life-on-life connection, exposes sin. Man was born to sin, Job says. The sparks fly upwards. Iron sharpens iron.

What happens? Sparks fly. Sparks fly. Because it directly reflects the Lord's love for you. It is your duty to love others in the midst of their sin.

[22 : 32] There's no greater love, Jesus said, than to lay down your life for your friends. Giving up. Sacrificially. That's what fervent love looks like. He forgave.

He doesn't keep a record of your wrongs. He doesn't bring it up against you. He bears your burden of weakness and strengthens you. He disciplines you so that you can share in his holiness.

He gives encouragement when you're downcast. He gives clarity when you're anxious. He gives hope when you're despairing. That's why Paul in Ephesians 5 says, be imitators of God.

Be imitators of God. What does he mean? As beloved children and walk in love just as Christ also loved you, he gave himself up. Because in verse 32 of chapter 4, it says, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other just as God in Christ had also forgiven you.

That kind of love. That stretches. Strains. You've heard it said before, when you're working out or going into a hike or any tough physical exercise, that pain is weakness leaving the body.

[23 : 49] Stretching your fitness. In the church, fervent love covering sin is selfishness leaving the body. Stretching your faith. Again, this is not a verse condoning sin or excusing sin.

On the contrary, this is about fervent love extinguishing the pain and the consequences of the experience of sin. You get to reconcile.

You get to draw near. You get to comfort. You get to encourage in the same way that God has done for you in your sin. Are you quick to forgive or do you hold in bitter offenses?

Do you believe the best or presume the worst? Do you draw people in who have hurt you or quickly put up walls and distance yourselves from them?

Do you provide hope or are you constantly skeptical? These are tests of our affections and our love that stretches us to love supremely when evident when sin occurs.

[25 : 04] It's not a matter of if, beloved, it's when. People in the body will sin against you. Leadership will sin against you.

Everyone in this church is capable of sinning against you. It's not a matter of if, but when. Discipleship will cultivate a love for Christ and a love for that soul.

Even when sin is exposed, your love is a stewardship from God to care for the body. Sacrificial stretching of faith towards others.

Third mind renewing truth. You don't have as much time as you think. Your love is supremely expressed when someone sins against you. Third, your physical resources reflect your heart.

Your physical resources reflect your heart. Look down at verse 9. Be hospitable to one another without complaint. Show hospitality.

[26 : 07] Maybe your translation says without grumbling. When God gives you something, there's a purpose to it. Which is ultimately our next point with the gifts as well.

But be hospitable. Show hospitality. This is making up of two words here. Philo, which you may have heard before. Brotherly love. And then a second word, you're a foreigner or something strange in your life.

The love of a stranger. It fits the context here, right? Love covers a multitude of sin. Be fervent in your love. Be loving to one another.

Be brotherly loving to each other. Even if you don't know them to the degree that you would like to. God is not stingy with his stuff. God doesn't hoard what he has to himself.

Remember what he gave. The riches of forgiveness. The riches of grace. The riches of mercy. Loving the stranger is embracing sacrificial love for others in the use of our possessions. Hospitality isn't just being nice.

[27 : 20] Hospitality is serving at an expense. It is a welcoming into your life. It is loving others in their needs with what you have in your life and your possessions.

It's seeing your physical resources as gifts from the Lord to serve others in their need. Here's that mind renewing truth. Because my time is short, the end of all things are near.

And I'm not taking any of this to heaven. It's going to perish. It's all fleeting. And if I can use it to be an encouragement to you because I love your soul, I want to see you strengthened in Christ, I'll make it available.

I'll make myself available. Because think of the context here. People are fleeing because of persecution. They don't have anything. They followed Christ and now they have nothing.

Just like their savior, foxes have holes, birds have nests. These people don't have a place to lay their head. So you get a knock on your door from a believer who's fleeing persecution.

[28 : 30] There's a test. There's a test of your love. There's a test of your heart with your physical resources. There's various ways to accomplish this.

And only you know ultimately what that looks like. What you have and what you don't have. How you can use it. There's various ways to accomplish this.

But it's the same intentionality. And small groups are going to put us in a position to intentionally serve with what we have. People are going to be opening up in our homes. People are going to be making food. People are going to have resources.

People are going to have needs. Something happens. Our car just broke down. Hey group, what can we do? Intentionally serve a focused group of people with my stuff.

You can make a list. Schedule into your life opportunities. Bring people into your home. A coffee shop, restaurant, go for a walk. Your home is where life is lived.

[29 : 32] I understand it brings certain anxieties for some and certain struggles for some. We all do. Maybe your home wasn't an open door policy growing up and it's new to you.

Maybe you're a little bit insular in your personality. Maybe you're a little bit introverted. We all have various struggles and stumbling blocks, various ways to grow. But our possessions, what we've been given, is essential in discipleship and stewarding the grace of God.

Being hospitable. Just think about all what is happening in the early church in Acts 2. They had all things in common. They were sharing as anyone might have needed.

Acts chapter 4, there was not a needy person selling possessions, bringing the proceeds of the sale, laying at the apostles' feet, distributing each as one had need. That's what I hope small groups look like.

You have a need? I've got the resource. It's yours. Romans 12, 13. Contributing to the needs of the saints. Practicing hospitality.

[30 : 35] Hebrews 13, verse 2. Do not neglect the show of hospitality to strangers. For by this, some have even entertained angels without knowing it. It's because you're ready.

It's because you're prepared. Your physical resources as a steward of God's grace. And I just want to take a moment here and say that men, we need to step up in this.

We need to lead in this. I understand that Titus 2 tells women that they are keepers of the home and the primary nurturing factors and focus in the home is based on the female realities in the home.

And that's wonderful. God-given and sweet. But when we're talking about organizing priorities, scheduling life in, what happens in Titus 1 and 1 Timothy 3, that the qualifications of an elder, and don't get stuck on elder, qualifications of a man who's growing in Christ, who wants to serve faithfully.

Do you know what one of those qualifications? You guessed it. Hospitality. A feature of a godly man in the home. Schedules, discipleship, opportunities to steward the grace of God in their life.

[32 : 04] Men, we lead in that. We lead in discipleship in our homes. We lead in opportunities. So we ought to lead in this next point as well, without grumbling or without complaint.

Grumbling is described as what's happening behind the scenes, even though something else is happening out front. Grumbling is behind the curtain speaking against what's happening on the stage.

You smile on the outside, but you're a little hardened on the inside. The positive would be with joy, with freedom, without restraint.

But the negative is complaining about having to serve someone. And Peter knows this well. He was taught well by his Savior that complaining and grumbling had grave consequences to Israel.

God provided everything they needed. They had all of the food they ever needed. They have all the homes they ever needed. Even out in the wilderness. God even made their clothes to not wear out.

[33 : 11] How many parents would love to have jeans that didn't wear out the holes in it? They did. Yet they complained because they wanted something else.

They thought they needed more. They thought they deserved something else and deserved something more. So let's get honest with ourselves. People can be hard.

As we've already known from this text, people can sin. Personalities, opinions, preferences can clash. People can overstay their welcome. People can give too much information and conversations.

They could have no one else to talk to. So they just dump their life on you. And you've got places to go. They always want to take from you and they never want to give.

They expect more to you than they expect from themselves. They're an inconvenience to you at the most inopportune time. You might say to yourself, every time this person calls, I'm doing something.

[34 : 17] And the conversation lasts for 45 minutes. What's going on in our hearts? Many things could be happening.

One of many things, there could be a selfishness, a hoarding of time and resources. I just don't want to deal with it. I deserve my own time. I deserve my rest.

Takes up too much space in my mind. I don't want it to bother my life. You don't want other people mismanaging or touching your stuff. There's limits on your giving.

Or maybe a self-protection because people have hurt you when you've given, when you felt like you were stewarding well, and then in return, you just don't want it to happen ever again. Maybe you fear of what people might think of you when you bring them into your home.

Maybe it's a fear of exposure of your life. Maybe it's a fear causing offense. Maybe it's a fear of getting it wrong. A self-pity about not having more. Or an anxiousness about not knowing what to do.

[35 : 26] Maybe you have a desire for perfectionism and it suffocates you. People don't give adequate thanks because they don't think it's worth the effort.

And you don't think it's worth the effort, so you stop. This is why I chose the text that I did for our sermon scripture reading this morning.

And I want to take you back there because I think our Savior provides such a sweet example of this. Would you go back to Matthew chapter 14 for a moment? And this is just a good rule of thumb as you're thinking about principles of mind renewal and heart renewal.

What did Christ do? How did Christ respond? Matthew chapter 14. Jesus' dear friend is beheaded.

Look at verse 13. Now when Jesus heard about this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a secluded place by himself. He was filled with grief.

[36 : 39] As all of us are at one point or another. We're just filled with grief. We lose someone dear to us. But look at the next text. And when the people heard about this, they followed him on foot to the cities.

He wants to be alone. He wants time to himself. He wants opportunities in his grief to think about his dear friend. And now people are starting to follow him. Verse 22.

Immediately he made his disciples get into a boat and go ahead to the other side while he sent the crowds away. Even in the midst of this. I'm sorry, I went ahead of myself a little bit here.

In the midst of his grief. Look at verse 16. Jesus said to them, They do not need to go away. You give them some to eat.

He went ashore. Saw the Lord crowd. Felt compassion for them. Healed their sick. And he said, Don't push them away. When he's grieving about the brutal murder of his friend.

[37 : 48] He still fed them. He still cared for their sick. Still ministered to their needs. Now verse 22.

He sent them away. And what did he do? Verse 23. He went up in the mountain by himself to pray. And he was there alone.

But then the boat starts to waver because of the winds and the waves. He's praying all night. And he has to go minister to his dear friends who are not believing in him.

Verse 34. When they crossed over and came to the land of Gennesaret. When the man of that place recognized him. They sent word to all that surrounding district.

And brought to him all who were sick. And they implored him that they might just touch the fringe of his cloak. As many as touched were cured. Grief stricken.

[38 : 48] Wants time to be with his God. People are hoarding around for who he is. And what he can provide for them. What might be going on in our minds.

And then you go to chapter 15. False teachers come and start accusing him. Start questioning him and his disciples. Of why they act the way that they act.

So he goes from grief. To provision. To false teachers. That's a pretty good ministry day right there. He explains to them what the heart of man is.

He sees a Syrophenician Gentile woman have great faith. And then look at verse 29 of chapter 15. Departing from there Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee.

And having gone up on a mountain he was sitting there. And large crowds came to him. Bringing them all who were lame. Crippled, blind, mute and many others. And they laid them down at his feet.

[39 : 57] And he healed them. So the crowd marveled. As they saw the mute speaking. The crippled restored. The lame walking. And the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel. We'll get to it.

Just as a reminder. Everything that we are using as a steward gives God glory. So here's our example. Jesus Christ. But look at verse 32. This amazed me when I was looking at it this week.

And Jesus called his disciples to him. I feel compassion for the people. Because they have remained with me now three days. With nothing to eat.

And I do not want them sent away hungry. For they might faint on the way. Three days. He was with them. Not much sleep.

Grief stricken. Crowds following him. He says here's what their need is. And I want to provide for it. Because I can. We must renew our minds in these truths.

[40 : 59] And we have to be careful of not letting our individualistic culture build in our hearts. Where our personal kingdoms are promoted and encouraged.

One commentator said Christianity is the open hand, the open heart, and the open door. King of kings and the Lord of lords who owns a cattle on a thousand hills.

He gives to bless. He gives so that others may be built up. We have encouraged and strengthened the physical resources that we have.

Test our hearts in our willingness to serve. Go back to 1 Peter chapter 4. You don't have much time as you think.

Your love is supremely expressed when others sin. Your physical resources reflect your heart. 4. Your spiritual resources reflect your faith.

[42 : 07] Verse 10. As each one has received a special gift, employ it in serving one another as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Whoever speaks is to do so as one speaking the utterances of God. Whoever serves is to do so as one who is serving by the strength that God supplies. This sweet and important mind renewing truth that people, even when they are saved, if they're new in Christ, maybe they've been in Christ for a while, they can come in broken and burdened.

They can come in hanging by a threat of life. We can come in. We can come into the church thinking, I don't have much to offer. How do I make an impact with all of these people?

That's why we spent last time talking about how much we actually have in Christ. And how small groups is going to help us kind of shrink the focus a little bit. Because you cannot serve 150 people the exact same way.

So let's serve 12 to 15 people in a very specific way. Young, old, believer for a day or for 50 years, you have the same wealth portfolio.

[43 : 22] You have the same inheritance. You have the same riches of Christ, grace, mercy, and forgiveness. But each one of you, verse 10.

Each one serving one another. This is the value in each person's gift. Each one is to be used. Each one to be expressed, grown, encouraged, and strengthened.

Paul said, or Peter says in very few words, what Paul spends whole chapters on. Romans chapter 12 and 1 Corinthians chapter 12. Well, Paul basically is 13, 12, 13, and 14 of 1 Corinthians.

Because remember, Corinth had all the gifts. But they didn't use them in love. This might be the first time that you hear it. But you have been given something from God to build of the body.

Your Father in heaven, as you, an adopted child of God, given you a spiritual grace gift to use. So how do we think about that?

[44 : 27] First, we need to grow in our holiness. We need to grow in our love. That was a problem in Corinth. We need to focus on growing in Christ and look for opportunities in the bodies.

And second, we just start asking for places to serve. We start looking for opportunities to be used in the body. Ask your leadership. Ask a godly man or woman in your life to assess, where am I at?

How can I be used? Where is your character? How do you interact in the life of the church? What brings you joy when you serve others? Is there something that you're gravitating to or you think about?

He gives a couple here. Whoever speaks, do so with the utterances of God. It's basically saying, when you teach, do so with the authority of God.

Not any personal authority. Handle God's word accurately. Be ready in season and out of season, he tells Timothy. You may have to grow in that.

[45 : 36] Remember Apollos in Acts 18. He was mighty in the scriptures, but Priscilla and Aquila had to take him aside. And explain to him the way of God more accurately. We need to grow in that.

And if you're going to teach, your character needs to be in such a way. That you're not a hypocrite. Or you serve, he says. Serve as one serving by the strength of which God supplies.

Giving yourself and what you have to others. Paul goes on to say in these other chapters, maybe it's mercy.

Maybe it's leading. Maybe it's administration. There's lots of ways. But spiritually speaking, you have been giving something to serve the body of Christ.

That's why Paul in 2 Timothy 2 verse 1. If anyone cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel of honor, sanctified, useful for the master, prepared for every good work.

[46 : 38] If you grow in godliness, if you look for opportunities, God with the discipleship and the life of the church will bring out what you love and how you love to serve in the body. And your gift will be on full display.

God's grace. God's power at your disposal. The manifold grace of God. This word, the manifold or the diverse way that God gives gifts in the church.

And I think we can reclaim that word in the church. Diversity. This is true diversity. God gives you something to give to others.

And it's various. It's diverse. And it's purposeful. And he supplies the power to do so. That's why last week you have incomprehensible power. God is going to give you the strength that you need to supply.

As you love. As you use your physical resources. And as you think spiritually about what he has given you. It's your stewardship. So let's get after it.

[47 : 46] Employ it. Use it. Lastly. Minor new truth in faithful stewardship of God's salvation.

You are not the focus. You knew it was going here, right? If the end of all things is near, which focuses on God's plan of salvation. If loving others is being sacrificial for others' sake.

If being hospitable is using what you have for others without complaining. If what you have as a gift is to be used in the church for others, for one another. Then it has to end here.

Verse 11. So that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever.

Amen. Amen. Amen. The purpose is God being the focus. The culmination of everything in your life. What God gives is to point to God.

[48 : 49] He's to be glorified. And I know sometimes God's glory can be mysterious. How do we describe it? What God's glory is, is something that brings into focus. Glory is something that brings you into focus.

Draws your attention to an object or a person because of who they are or what they represent. If you're in the dark and a light flashes, what happens? You're drawn to that light because of what it represents for you.

I can see. I can get out of this place. It represents hope. Maybe you're in a public place and a famous athlete or movie star just walks in unannounced.

What happens? Their glory is their accomplishments and who they are and everybody recognizes them and they all get drawn to that person. They want autographs. They want pictures. They want to say, do you know who I saw today to their friends?

So God's glory is what draws our attention to him. So what draws our attention to God? What the world should see as we want their attention being drawn to God?

[49 : 57] It's through all of this. Loving one another. Being hospitable. Serving with your gifts. Being sober-minded.

Self-restraining. Praying. Not grumbling. People ought to look into our small groups when no one else is watching and saying, look what God is doing in there.

That's incredible. No way that group of people can do that on their own. There's something more to this. It shouldn't be normal because it's supernatural.

It's normal because of the church. That's the normal interactions of the church according to what God calls us to do and to be. But it's supernatural.

It's his glory. It's his dominion forever and ever. It's not our personal kingdom being built up that's going to be taken away with our last breath. It's about God and what he is doing.

[51 : 04] And you all get to be a part of it. We get to be a part of it. Little old us. This little old plot of land in Squamish. We get to be a part of the culminating plan of God that's bringing all things to an end.

Where Christ is going to be revealed and every tongue is going to confess and every knee is going to bow. That Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. When all nations hear the gospel. When discipleship goes forth.

And we get to be a part of every tongue and tribe and nation before the throne of grace. You get to be a part of that. We get to be a part of that. That's faithful stewardship.

So let's strive. Let's work. Let's grow. And make this church and these small groups and the discipleship and the life of the church.

Be more concerned about what God is doing. Because we're not missing opportunities. We're prepared. And we're ready. Five mind renewing truths of faithful stewardship of God's grace.

[52 : 12] You don't have much as time as you think. Your love is supremely expressed when sin occurs. Your physical resources reflect your heart. Your spiritual resources reflect your faith. And we are not the focus.

Let's pray. Father. Would you bring your glory into focus in this place please? Would you continue to remind us that we fall short of the perfections of Christ in this life?

Would you remind us that we are all pressing on towards the upper call of God in Christ Jesus? That we will be transformed.

This mortal will take on immortality. This perishable will be made imperishable by the power of the gospel in Christ Jesus.

Until that day, Father. Help us to be faithful stewards. For the manifold grace that you've given to us in the life of this church.

[53 : 22] And would you make more disciples here? Would you save sinners and mature saints? All for your glory.

Forever and ever we ask. Amen.