

Good Stewardship 11-3-13

In Matthew 24:42-51 Jesus begins a series of three parables designed to speak to us about being ready for His return. Specifically, they each speak to the expectations of God among His servants for their preparations for His return. The first parable speaks to servants and their conduct towards each other; the second, to virgins and their conservation of their assets; the third to servants and their trusted talents. You see in each parable an expectation of God for His servants to show proper care and use of the things they are trusted with; in one case, nothing is mentioned, but the expectation is revealed at the end, that their fellows servants are the cared for item. The second, oil is the items; the third is of course the talents.

We might look at these three parables and discern three different lessons about the same subject – stewardship, or the care we are to have for the blessings entrusted to our care. In the first parable, the point perhaps is to the heart of the servant. The second parable speaks to the wise management of those things, and the third speaks to the will to try to do what is right.

Let's think about that first point, and choose one of our many assets – our wealth. Do we have the right heart with our wealth? Are you generous towards God? In Luke 12:16-21 we see a man blessed with much, and his first instinct is for his own comfort. God called him a fool. Do you share with others? In Isaiah 58:6-7 God spoke to Israel about the expectation He had for them to share their blessings with others. Do you trust your wealth or God? When Job spoke about integrity in Job 31:24-28, he made it clear that he did not trust his wealth. Do you? Isn't it odd that our money says "in God we trust"?

Now what about management? Let's compare that to our most precious blessing, our time and health. In Ecclesiastes 12:1-7 the writer there warns of the temptation in older people not to be minded towards God. Oddly, he says that this problem needs to be addressed in our youth, before the time comes. How do we use our God given time? We are told to redeem time "*because the days are evil.*" (Ephesians 5:16). We are also told to "*walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.*" (Colossians 4:5)

Let's think about the importance of simply trying to do what is right. How about in our home? Some great blessings God have us include our spouses (Proverbs 18:22) and our children (Psalm 127:3-5). Do we wisely try to be good stewards of these blessings? Often we fail to make the impression we seek to make; is that a reason not to try?

So we are stewards of great things, and we need to keep Jesus' admonitions in mind. Matthew 24:44 through Matthew 25:30 speak to ideas that surround our judgment:

1. God observes your stewardship
2. God expects wise decisions
3. God expects good use of your gifts

Romans 14:12 - *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*