

Stewardship: A Way of Life
The Stewardship of the Gospel part 1
‘Commissioning Service for the Glasscock family’

Sermon preached by Chris Lofquist
September 29, 2019

Introduction

This morning, as we begin our two-part sermon, I would like to take you back to the hills of Jerusalem, nearly 2,000 years ago. Jesus was alive. How could this be? Truly He is the Son of God, who has power over creation, sickness, and death. Each day after His resurrection was filled with excitement and anticipation. What would Jesus do next? What was His next move in His Kingdom initiative? Is this the day that Israel would be restored? These were the questions the disciples were asking as they received the word to stay in Jerusalem and wait for Jesus’ further instructions. Oh, this was a time of great joy, excitement and anticipation. And in the book of Acts chapter 1 we read about Jesus’ encounter with His disciples, for the last time. **Acts 1:6-8**. *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”* And after He said these things, entrusting His disciples with the Gospel message, as His Witnesses – He ascended to Heaven. His last words were spoken to entrust His disciples, that is you and I, with the Gospel message as His witnesses. And as we look at being Stewards of the Gospel, we will acknowledge our roles in this Divine Mission as the Church and then Pastor Don will share in our time looking into the role of the Missionary within this Great Commission. *Let us pray.*

When we hear those words, ‘The Great Commission’ our thoughts go straight to the Gospel of **Matthew chapter 28, verses 19-20** – which read, **Matthew 28:19-20**. The word ‘commission’ means, “an instruction or command given to a person or a group of people to do something.” In Scripture this speaks of our Stewardship of the Gospel – this is our Mission, this the instruction given to us from the very mouth of the Son of God, our Savior. All throughout the New Testament we read about the urgency of this message and this mission. Our Stewardship of the Gospel will impact the very souls of humanity. We have been placed in this world as believers of Jesus Christ in order to impact it with faithful stewarding of the Gospel. *“you are the light of the world” – “you are the salt of the earth” – “you are to be My witnesses” – “you are ambassadors of Jesus Christ”* – time and time again, in the Holy Words of Scripture, we are reminded of our responsibility to be Good Stewards of the Gospel – when it all comes down to it, this is the only thing that matters – for when you stand before Christ, He will ask you this question – have you been good stewards of the Gospel Message?

I believe when Scripture speaks of the Gospel being entrusted to us as Stewards, it speaks both of our proclamation of the Gospel Message and our Lives testifying to the Gospel Message. Let’s begin with the Proclamation of the Gospel Message...

1. **The Stewardship of the Gospel in Proclamation**

In the book of Titus 1:1-3, the Apostle Paul speaks forth a truth, particular to him, but also I believe one that speaks to the responsibility of every believer. *“Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to the godliness, in the hope of eternal life, which God, who cannot lie, promised long ages ago, but at the proper time manifested, even His word, in the proclamation with which I (we) was entrusted according to the commandment of God our Savior.”* Like Paul, we have been chosen of God in accordance with the knowledge of the truth, as disciples of Jesus Christ, entrusted with the proclamation of the Gospel – a sure hope of eternal life manifested in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

You have been entrusted with this hope of eternal life, peace, and joy – to a world that is hopeless, wrought with anxiety and struggle, and seeking joy in counterfeits. Since sin entered the world, mankind has been lost and destined to Hell. God’s plan? To offer redemption and salvation through His Son – spoken of by His Church – this is the Gospel Message. What drives us in this mission of proclamation is the compassion for those who are lost and dying without salvation. It should strike at the heart of every believer – young and old. Teenagers, you have friends and family who do not know Christ – God has sent you to them in order to point them toward salvation. And this message of the Gospel is needed now more than ever. **Illustration:** According to a study in the next 24 hours (in the U.S.) 1,439 teens will attempt suicide – 20% of teenagers (roughly 8.5 million teenagers) struggle with depression each day; 15,006 teens will use drugs for the first time, 3,506 teens will run away from home – why are these numbers so high? It’s because our teenagers are overwhelmed with hopelessness, they are swallowed up in a counterfeit form of love, and have fallen into the entrapments of fulfillment by drugs in order to find peace. Hope, love, and peace are what teenagers today are desiring above all else – and we have what they’re looking for in the Gospel Message. Teenagers, first have you tasted of this truth? Have you trusted in Jesus Christ as your Savior, and enjoyed the peace, joy, and hope that He brings? Or are you a part of the statistics? Second, are you proclaiming the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to your friends who are desperately in need of it?

Adults, I have said it before, but God has placed you exactly in the place He desires you to be in order to proclaim the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ to those around you. Every moment of your life has been orchestrated by God in order to give you opportunities to proclaim the Gospel Message. **Illustration:** Nearly 40 million people within the U.S. (18% of the population) are struggling with anxiety and depression. And it has been linked to eating disorders, sleeping disorders, relational problems, substance abuse, divorce and other relational troubles, chronic pain, and is the leading cause of suicide. This means that you most likely know someone today who struggles with anxiety and depression and are seeking antichrists or false saviors to relieve them from what they believe is a hopeless meaningless existence. This breaks God’s heart – and so He sent His Son to die for them, in order that they can know they are loved, and find hope and peace in a relationship with Him. And you have the message. If this is your neighbor, than be a witness to your neighbor. If this is your co-worker, than be a witness to your

co-worker. If this is your spouse, cousin, or child, than be a witness to your family member. If this is your college buddy, or high school friend, than be a witness to them. **The world desperately needs the life changing message of the Gospel! Believers need to step up and be Good Stewards in proclaiming it!** This is the Great Commission that all believers have been called to – we have been sent out by God in order to proclaim the Gospel message to the world in such great need of it. We are to do this individually, but as the Church gathered – as New Hope Bible Church – we also have the opportunity to care for, pray for and send out Missionaries to the remotest parts of the world – as the Glasscocks make their way to Uganda in order to make disciples of those dear men, women, and children of Africa, we are to partner with them in the proclamation of the Gospel Message by praying for them, by caring for them, and by supporting them in every way possible. What a glorious and purposeful mission we are on as we strive together for the Gospel.

Not only are we stewards of the proclamation of the Gospel message, but we are also stewards of the Gospel message by how we live. For no one will believe the message of the Gospel if it is proclaimed to them by someone who is no different than they are.

2. The Stewardship of the Gospel in Living

We won't spend a lot of time on this, as I do not want to take any more time away from the second half of this Commissioning Service, but it is important for us to understand that Stewardship of the Gospel message is both a testifying to it in word and testifying to it in deed. **Philippians 1:27** - *“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”* **Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.** As believers we are to be unified under the mission of the Gospel. We have been called out, chosen, separated from the world, in order to lead lives that would testify to the Salvation we have in Jesus Christ. This is why we speak about Christian living in so many of our applications of Scripture – for the world will only understand how much God loves them when they see how much you love them. Again, the message of the Gospel is received so much easier when you, the faithful witness, testifies to it by transparent living. Your life changed by Christ will bear witness to the life, hope, peace, and love that Salvation brings.

Conclusion

The Master is returning soon - How are we doing in Proclaiming the Gospel in Word and Deed? That is half of the teaching on the Stewardship of the Gospel. The other half of our Stewardship is more defined in mission work. So we will be concentrated the second half of our service speaking specifically to that.