

Stewardship of Spiritual Disciplines

Building Core Strength

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Bible Text: Psalm 1:1-6

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I am pastor Brent Aucoin. I normally oversee our 10:15 service, so I don't make it over to this side of the campus on Sunday morning as much. Pastor Viars is away today officially functioning as grand papa today. You may remember that over a month ago he... his daughter Bethany had a baby and while Chris was able to go up at that time, pastor Viars wasn't. So finally this week pastor Viars saw a good opening for him to get up there and start spoiling little Liam. And here he is right now.

You know, when he gets back, what shall we call pastor Viars now? Papa? Papau? Pastor Papau? What should we call him? None of those just seem to roll... none of those roll off the tongue easily, do they?

Well, today is the beginning of stewardship month here at the Faith Church family. Stewardship month has a long history here and it corresponds to the four weeks prior to Thanksgiving. Stewardship month is our churches' corporate thanksgiving celebration for what God has done in the life of our church this past year. By corporate I mean this. We want these four weeks before thanksgiving to be something that we all share commonly together so that there is a unifying impact on the church family.

Number two, thanksgiving for the national recognition of Thanksgiving, God's redeemed people ought to be the first to stand up and say, "I am thankful for the blessings that God has given us.

Number three, celebration. The climax of stewardship month occurs when the Faith Church family members and non members gathered together on Sunday night November 18th and 5 PM and on that night we come together to worship God in a crescendo of praise and to reflect on his blessings and to recommit ourselves to future service if the Lord tarries remembering the four principles of stewardship. Those four principles of stewardship which some of you may now, some of you may not know if you are new to our church family, have formed the backbone, the DNA of this church for as long as I can remember. Once you hear them I don't think it will be hard for you to kind of connect the dots as to why we do the things around here. But before we hear them, I want to see your hands for just a second. You put your notes down, your Bibles down. Let me see your

hands. You know, Baptists don't raise their hands too much. I wash you in worship, ok? All right.

Now in one of those hands, pull out your smart phone, your brain, ok? One of those. I know you have got them. they are always readily handy for you. Ladies, if you are... don't dig around in your purpose. This is not that significant of an illustration, ok? Wallet in the other hand. Yeah, now the pastor is asking for the wallet. I understand. The offering has already gone by, so it is not coming by again. Phone, wallet, hands. All right. Thank you, {?} go.

All right. The definition of stewardship is this. Hold them in your hands. God given responsibility with accountability. Each one of those words is crucially important and let's flesh those out with four principles.

God owns everything and I own nothing. Say that with me. God owns everything and I own nothing. Look for a moment at your hands, back at your hands. Ok? Holding your phone and your wallet. Look at your hands for just a moment. This is your hand, right, not your neighbor's hand. It is your hand, Danny. Look at the back of your hand. Look at the hair follicles on there. Look at the blood vessels on there. Look at the line patterns on there. Now let me ask you. Did you put those freckles there? Did you put those hair follicles there? Did you put the line patterns there? But it is your hand, right? If it is your hand, why haven't you formed it more like you wanted to, like you are the one who put the follicles there and the hair and the lines there? Ultimately it is God's hand. God is the one who made that hand and made that patterns and those prints on there exactly as he did. God owns it. His breath permeates that hand and keeps that blood flowing in there and has formed it by the information, the DNA that he implanted in you. God is the one that owns that hand.

Look at your phone for just a second. That phone represents your life, right? If you don't believe me, just how do you respond when you lose that phone, ok? By that I mean that phone is where your relational contacts are, your spheres of influence, who you text, who you message, who you call, your schedule of time. Maybe you have a smart phone. God owns that.

Look at that wallet for just a second. That represents your material resources. The paper and the plastic that are in that—I have not much paper in mine, you can see. There is not much there. That is the paper and the plastic that you get stuff with. When you make a transaction with other people that God owns. God owns the stuff and God owns the people.

Number two, God trusts me with everything that I have. Please note that a trust is different than a grant. Most of us would rather have a grant, not any kind of a loan? Why? Once I get a grant, I can do whatever I want to with that grant. A grant, however, represents that transfer of ownership to you so that you can do with it whatever you want to. However, a trust represents a temporary loan and many times we don't like that because there is accountability for that, which should be. And that accountability should

be used for however the real owner of that resource pleases. So your hands, your life, your resources. Those are on loan to you.

Now, third principle of stewardship is this. I am responsible to increase what God has given to me. I may increase it or I may diminish it. That hand, that hand that you have, how did you use it this week, to increase the real owner's interest in this world, to represent him well? Did you? Or did you use that hand to incessantly push buttons on the TV remote to please you? Or did you tap vainly with those fingers around the internet or using those to shove food in our mouth constantly or thumbing those video games? You guys, this crowd, 9:30 crowd probably don't do a whole lot of video games, do you, guys? That is the 10:15 service over there. That phone that you have, you are still holding it. What does the schedule in there or the messages or the calls reveal about you? A sphere of influence where your calls and your messages and your time are centered on helping one another. Fight to stay focused on spiritual realities, encouraging one another, scheduling time to fellowship with one another, reaching out on that phone to somebody new who is far from God. Or was this phone in your text messages, in your calls, was it mindless empty, vain, vain, chatter that doesn't matter for anything?

Number four, God can call me to account at any time. You can put those things back in your pockets or if you would like. God can call me to account at any time and it could be even today like Jonathan Lambeth's mom may be called into account even today as she goes to see her maker. Because these things, my hands, my resources, my life is only on loan to me, there will be a time when my creator says, "I am withdrawing that breath of life that I have implanted into you and it is coming back to me. And I will ask you how have you used those hands and that life and that resources for my kingdom?"

So stewardship, God given responsibility with accountability. God owns everything and I own nothing. God entrusts me with everything I have. It is different than a grant. I am responsible to increase what God has given me. God can call me into account any time and it may be today. It is certainly not very hard to see how those realities, those realities, not just principles, realities drive the makeup of this church. God owns Faith Church and we are responsible for increasing its witness for him. That is why we have a church to gather together and increase our knowledge of him. That is why we have a biblical counseling center to tell more people about him. That is why we have a seminary to equip more students, more men to spread the word about him. That is why we have a Christian school to educate young people about him. That is why we have a community center to serve more of those who are far from God and hopefully draw them to him. That is why we are establishing Faith West to continue to stretch—and it is a stretch—and to push for more faithful stewardship.

The rationale for all that we do can be expressed by those principles of stewardship, being a faithful steward. That is stewardship month and the basis for it. Today we begin by focusing on stewardship of the spiritual disciplines.

Please turn in your Bibles with me to Psalm chapter one. That is on page 393 in the provided Bible for you, if you are using that one. Psalm one starts with this phrase.

“How blessed is the man...”¹

There is a phrase there that begins to grab your attention, because who doesn't want to be blessed? Raise your hand if you don't want to be blessed, ok? Some of you who are listening, raise your hand. Of course, everyone wants to be blessed.

“How blessed is the man...”²

And he is going to tell us what he is not and what he is, ok?

“How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked.”³

The ways of the world that give you a different way other than God's. There is only one way. The counsel of the wicked will say that there is another way other than God's. The blessed man does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, those who are saying there is another way other than God's.

“...Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!”⁴

Notice walking, standing sitting. A man becomes firmly entrenched so he is dwelling in an established place. He walks there and then he stands and then he sits so that he is established there in the ways of the world. That is not the blessed man, but this one is.

“But his delight is in the law of the LORD.”⁵

Don't get hung up on the word law. It simply means the instructions of the Word, of God, the instructions, that which gives me guidance, that orients me to what is really true, God's way, his word that orients me to what is really true in God's economy of things what is God's way. That man who is abiding by God's way, he delights in it day and night.

“He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season.”⁶

Here is another establishment. Here is a tree that is firmly established somewhere.

“And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.”⁷

¹ Psalm 1:1.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Psalm 1:2.

⁶ Psalm 1:3.

⁷ Psalm 1:3-4.

Chaff is not firmly established. The wind drives it away wherever it wants.

“Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment.”⁸

Here is another establishment. There is a place called the judgment and where the sinners in the assembly of the righteous. This is a third place a person can be established. Whatever this place is, the assembly of the righteous, the text is driving us to want to be there. The blessed man ends up there. The non blessed man does not end up there.

“Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”⁹

What ever that is. Ok, let’s... what is that? The text is driving us to focus on that. What is the assembly of the righteous? And the text doesn't clarify it much here, but it is at the end of the psalm, right? You would say, “It is at the end of the psalm. It is at the end. Say it is at the end.”

Now I will thank you. It is at the end. The text is driving us toward that. That is at the end of all things that is where the blessed man will be and where you want to be. If you want to know what that is and if you want to know what is at the end of all things, where do you look? Thank you, Mrs. Kirko. And, oh, you guys have been such a great, helpful, engaging team this morning. At the end. So where do I look? At the end. The assembly of the righteous is standing at the end. Where should I look? At the end. Well, Revelation. How about this? Did you know that the psalms have an ending? Revelation is also built a lot on the ... many of the psalms, the praise choruses we were just singing about. Where do you find those? The psalms do have an end.

A careful examination of the psalms shows a progression of thought throughout. The collection of the psalms is not some random bunch of unrelated poems thrown together. God doesn't do things randomly. He never has. He never does. And the psalms are not throw together randomly either. Psalm one is obviously the beginning and forms a primary exhortation as to what God's people need to do to make it all the way to the end.

Turn with me to the end of the psalms right now. Look at Psalm 146, the last chapter, Psalm 146 through 150 are the concluding crescendo of something, ok? Of something. Psalm 146.

What is they primary word in verses one and two of Psalm 146? The primary word in verses one and two of Psalm 146? What would you say? How about Psalm 147? Praise. Look over to 148? What is the primary word in verses one and two? How about 150? And then let's go back to 149, 149 praise. Look at 149 for just a second.

“Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the congregation of the godly ones.”¹⁰

⁸ Psalm 1:5.

⁹ Ibid.

Does that sound like an assembly? It does.

Let Israel be glad in his Maker; Let the sons of Zion rejoice in their King. Let them praise His name with dancing; Let them sing praises to Him with timbrel and lyre. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the afflicted ones with salvation. Let the godly ones exult in glory; Let them sing for joy on their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, And a two-edged sword in their hand, To execute vengeance on the nations...¹¹

It sounds like judgment. At the end of all things, at the end of the psalms there is an assembly of the righteous and there is this judgment going on there in the midst of all of this praise. What is the summary of this as we put this together?

At the end of all things there is a climax of all creation praising God and God's people, right there in the thick of things. Established there with him, standing, reigning with God.

Those ending psalms are not just nice praise choruses. The psalms form a picture as to where God is moving his redemptive plan for all of creation and his people. That is where you want to be, in the assembly, established with God, looking back at what God has done with you and with all the world and there singing praises and rejoicing with joy nearly inexpressible.

So putting all this together now is this. What is the assembly of the righteous? What happens at the end of all things? God will bring his plan to an end of all things kind of climax in which you will want to be established in his assembly, in his presence, among his people with joy expressible through crescendo of praise in God.

Here is the question, then. If that... if there is an end of all things, what is the question? How will I be established at the end of all things? How will I be established there at the end of all things?

Psalm one, the answer is given at the beginning. Go back to the beginning, you can turn now back to Psalm one. Hear it again. How blessed is the man who does not listen to the worldly ways, that there is another way other than God's. He doesn't stand there nor does he sit there, but his delight is in the one true way of the Lord's, his law, his Word, that establishes what is real. And in that he meditates. He rehearses it over and over day and night. And that man will be like a tree that is established. And because he is a tree and he is not just like a bunch of chaff that is blowing around, he is a tree, he is going to make it until the end. So if the reality is this, there will be an end to all things. And the question is: How will I be firmly established at the end of all things? And the answer is, here is the answer. The only way for me to be established at the end of all things is for me

¹⁰ Psalm 149:1.

¹¹ Psalm 149:2-7.

personally, myself, my life being established around God's instructions now, delighting in, meditating in, day and night rehearsing in my brain.

Now at this moment in time normally you get a three point sermon, right? This is the time for point number one, point number two, point number three. I am not going to do three points. I am going to give two illustrations. Ok, the first one is from a man, well, the first illustration comes from an Old Testament character which the psalms are oriented around. The psalms have their expression and meaning in the life of this character. When you think of the psalms, who do you think of? David. If you don't know you Word, you probably wouldn't know the answer to that and it is ok, if you didn't, but those of you who do know, it was David. The first illustration is this. Let's think about the path. David said I am to inherit what I would call the kingdom of God. The psalms reflects his experiences on that path. David was the second king of Israel and we know that his early life forms the framework by which we begin to understand even who our Savior is, Jesus Christ, the Son of David. Ok? David is described in the Old Testament as having God's instructions in his youth. You can read about this life in 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel. And we are just doing a 30,000 foot flyover so we are not going to go there.

But David was a shepherd. And when he was out shepherding, predators like lions and bears would come to attack the sheep. And David had to learn to depend upon God during those times to help and protect his flock. At one point a bigger responsibility came on David's way. God came to and intersected him and said, "David you are going to be king." Can you imagine that? The shepherd who would be king, the meek, lowly one who would one day reign as king. This is what God said would be real. This is your reality. This is my way, David. You are going to be king.

Well, that didn't happen, not immediately. Instead of a big parade on the following day with David being carried on the shoulders of his friends, he was pursued relentlessly by the then current king, King Saul who pursued him until David was almost dead. The psalms record those struggles as well. Remember, I said there is a thread to the psalms.

Psalm three, don't go there, but Psalm three David laments. He says:

O LORD, how my adversaries have increased! Many are rising up against me. Many are saying of my soul, "There is no deliverance for him in God."¹²

That is what the counsel of the wicked was saying. The promises of kingship did not seem to be coming true for David. During his wilderness experiences, running from this insane king David had to rehearse over and over again in his mind the promises of God, even when it seemed that they would not ever come to pass. He had to begin to delight in them as he rehearsed them over and over, when he wasn't seeing the reality coming true.

Please note also that he could have listened to the counsel of the wicked in multiple ways when people were saying in Psalm three, "Your God will not deliver you, David." He

¹² Psalm 3:1-2.

could have listened to them and despaired. When people were saying in Psalm four, “Nobody will do you any good, David,” he could have listened and become depressed. When circumstances presented David... presented themselves to David where he could have reached out and seized the kingdom by violence, he could have done that. There was an instance where David was hiding in a cave, in a dark care and his adversary King Saul came to him and he was urinating in the cave and David could have reached out and slit his throat right then and he would have seized the kingdom by force. He didn't.

To the counsel of the wicked David says in Psalm five, “There is nothing reliable in the counsel of the wicked, nothing reliable in what they say.”

Finally, after years of suffering the Lord exalted David as the King of Israel, the appointed one, the Messiah of Israel and the one who gave Israel refuge and rest from all of her enemies, because David stood in the instruction of the Lord.

David, you will be king, not in the counsel of the wicked. He stood as a tree in trial. And he was established until the end in the assembly of God.

One of the first things that David did was bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem and he set up a great praise team. Titus and the faith worship team is not the first praise team. You know that, right? David set that up. And his psalms are filled with his praises and work toward the crescendo after the pattern of his life, the pattern of the servant that depended upon the Word of God through suffering, persevering through the suffering by dependence upon the promises of the Word of the Lord.

And then when David was established as a king he gave his nation rest from all their enemies. He was able to be a light to all the nations and proclaim the one true God Yahweh in the midst of all the idols of the nations. The psalms give us testimony to that pattern. That should be a pattern for all of us.

Furthermore, note this. We are talking about the spiritual disciplines. Yeah, we are talking about that, the Word. Secondly, the psalms express in prayer. The psalms are prayers of David. As he struggles with the promises of God, to the servant figure David in the midst of the suffering and the promises of God have intersected his life. They don't seem to be coming to reality, but he goes to God in prayer, not to the counsel of the wicked. He goes there and he waits for the Lord. He continues to return over and over again to the instruction of the Lord and the promises of God. And then one day the Lord acts. Saul is gone. David is exalted and he inherits the kingdom of God. The meek inherit the kingdom of God.

And all those who had joined themselves to David explode in joy and praise at the end of all things. If the reality is this, that there is an end of all things and the question is: How will I be firmly established at the end of all thing? Here is the answer. By establishing my life around God's instructions right now, delighting in them, meditating day and night in the instruction of the Word.

Throughout this month our leadership would like our church family to be hearing from the people who are trying to live out their faith, though the principles we have been discussing. This time I would like us to hear from Justin Miller. Justin would tell you he is no super Christian. He is just an ordinary person who has been striving to take steps of growth and establishing his life around God's instructions.

Justin, could you please come and minister to us?

Change of Voice: Good morning. This time last year I was at a point where I was extremely frustrated with my spiritual growth. I was not growing, not moving, just stagnant. I came to church consistently, even involved in an ABF, but my personal relationship with God was not growing and I was disappointed in my biblical knowledge. I would see people in my ABF and all around our church who were on fire for God. I could just see it in their eyes, or, as pastor Viars likes to say they are foaming at the mouth.

It is in the way they talk, the selfless ways they serve, the way they lead their families. One year ago it definitely wasn't me. They had it. I didn't... They were doing things biblically. I wasn't. What was stopping my growth? Something needed to change. I needed to change. I was letting the business of life interfere with my relationship with God. I was doing poorly at balancing the drain of work with my roles of being a husband and a parent. And I was not working at my relationship with God. I had forgotten that as a Christian I have a direct responsibility to insure my growth and my wife and kids' growth. Yes, we are saved by grace and faith alone, but it is alone, but it is also critical to seek and pursue God. My one day of week of worship did not cut it in the view of God's mercy it is definitely not what he deserves.

So I joined a point man group on October 27th of last year which ironically is almost exactly one year ago today. The point man group gave me the needed accountability for Bible study. I started to pay closer attention to the habits of men like Joe Blake and other men in my group. I was encouraged to set spiritual goals. Previously my Bible study was inconsistent at best and when I did it there was no plan. I might read a little before bed and basically fall asleep. So I set a schedule for my regular Bible study and prayer time and set it at a time that was one hour earlier than I previously woke up. I took notes and thought about how I could apply what I had just read in my life. And after just a few days of study I felt closer to God and knew I was on the right track.

I have never been more disciplined and focused about Bible study than this year and I know it is not a coincidence that I have grown more spiritually this year than every before. I attribute it directly to the amount of time I spent reading the Bible. I have been consistently amazed at the wisdom found in the Bible and am realizing the fruits from meditating on God's Word. I still have a long way to go, but I am comforted by the growth that I have had. I am better equipped to fight the spiritual warfare against sin. My marriage is stronger and my parenting improved. I am becoming bolder and more confident about sharing my faith.

The coolest thing is that the more I study and learn, the more convicted I become and the more I want to learn, the more I want to serve and the more I want to shine God's light. I am beginning to feel like that established tree in Psalm one, firmly planted by the streams of water which also become a refuge to others in the desert.

Just this week in our point man we memorized Romans 12:1-2. Therefore I urge you in view of God's mercy to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.

I have thought a lot about this passage this week as I wrote my testimony. How can we be transformed and our mind renewed if we don't read his Word?

I would like to leave you with some advice Job Lake gave to our point man group. He said, "Don't squeeze out the most important things in life or the most urgent."

Change of Voice: Thank you, Justin.

[applause]

One of the take always for today, number one, you understand that David's kingdom didn't last, because he stopped counseling... he stopped taking counsel in the Lord. He spent ... he violated like almost all 10 commandments in one day when he committed adultery with Bathsheba. His kingdom didn't last. We are not finding refuge in David's kingdom. There is a king, though, not David the king, but Christ the King. He was the meek person that will inherit God's kingdom for all of eternity and there will be an end in which the assembly of the righteous, those who have attached themselves to the king will be standing.

Folks, the first instruction that God would have us to take today is simply this. If you don't know that you know that you know King Jesus is the Savior of our sins, will you turn to him and what he did on the cross, the humble servant who came down from heaven, died on the cross for your and my sin and rose again? And he will be at the end of all things ruling all things and those who have trusted in him will be with him at the end of all things. That this the first instruction of the Lord you need to heed.

Number two, you do rehearse and nurture some form of instruction in your mind over and over day and night, you do. You are either thinking about how I can get the next pleasure or the next praise of man or the next influence, that I can get people to do what I want. We do. That is the instruction and the counsel of the world. And yet the temporary things now. God's way is not that. God's ways wait on his plans and programs. Seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. And all these other things will be added unto you.

What are you rehearsing in your mind starting in the morning when you get up? You are

facing the pressures of that day. What do you bring to rehearse in your mind? The easy way of escape or turning to God for refuge? What do you rehearse over and over?

Number three. Spiritual disciplines is the topic today. We have talked about the Word, but the Word in prayer, inextricably linked together. Prayer is our expression of the outworking of God's promises and instructions in our lives. David continued to go to God in prayer when he was wrestling with the promises of God. Very little prayer reflects very little wrestling with the instruction of God in our lives. Spiritual disciplines of delighting in the Word and prayer go hand in hand. Very little prayer, very little of the Word. You are not praying? I bet you are not in the Word as well. And if you are not in the Word, you are not necessarily wrestling with it. I doubt you are praying.

Number four, what is this all driving to? Stewardship month, being a faithful steward of what God has given us here. What ways do you need to increase your understanding and establishment on God's instruction? Will you be like Justin who began to seek out personal relationships that challenged him to get into the Word and meditate it an hour earlier in the morning and write things out? Justin is being established right now and his marriage, his parenting and as we continue ultimately to the end of all things, the crescendo of praise.

How about ... and part of that was also Justin got himself into a small group, point man. Folks, we have got small groups all over this place. Lady's, men's, college, all over, to drive us to the Word.

How about this? Adult Bible fellowships. Maybe you need to find yourself connected to an adult Bible fellowship so that you may also be established or an FCI class. All kinds of classes around here. There is not a want of opportunity for you to be around God's Word. It is just a matter of what will you begin to do by delighting in it, seeking God's face through it? There will be an end to all things. If that is the reality and it is, there is an end of all things. But the question is: How will I be firmly established at the end of all things? And the answer is: By establishing my life around God's instructions, his Word now, delighting in, rehearsing over and over from morning to night about the one true way of the Lord.

Joel Burtles.

Change of Voice: Hello, my name is Joe Burtles and I am a pastoral intern here at the church. And I don't know about you guys, but I love hearing the testimonies like Justin's testimony. I am just seeing God working in each other's lives is a huge encouragement to me. So with that I am going to go ahead and pray.

Heavenly Father, thank you for this church. I just thank you for what it has meant to me, how I have grown here. Thank you for the people that are gathered here to praise your name, to hear the Word preached and also just to hear testimony of how you have been working in one man's life this year. I am so grateful, God, that you didn't just set the world in motion and walk away, but that you are in it and really involved in our lives,

that you love us and care about us and you provide. So grateful for your Word that we can spend time in it and know who you are and how you want us to live and we can spend time in prayer just communicating with you, spending time in groups like point man groups where we can fellowship with each other and share experiences and carry each other's burdens, God. You are so good in the way that you set up this world and that you provided for us. And I pray that this church would take advantage of those opportunities that you have given us to fellowship with you and fellowship with each other. I pray all these things in Christ's name. Amen.

10/28/12

Psalm 1 – Stewardship of Spiritual Disciplines

Today is the beginning of Stewardship Month for the Faith Church Family.

Stewardship Month has a long standing tradition here at Faith Church

The “month” aspect of Stewardship month doesn’t correspond precisely with a calendar month

...the four weeks before Thanksgiving is what we call “Stewardship Month.”

The best way for me to describe Stewardship Month is

...Faith Church’s corporate thanksgiving celebration for what God has done in the life of Faith Church this past year.

Corporate-we want these four weeks to be something that we share together in common so that these weeks have a unifying impact and influence on all of us.

Thanksgiving—ahead of our national recognition of thanksgiving, we as God’s people are to be the first to recognize God’s blessings on His people. Each week of Stewardship Month, including today, we will hear from an individual giving thanks about how God has blessed them in a certain way.

Celebration—the climax of stewardship month occurs when the Faith Church Family (members and non-members) gather together in the community center on Sunday Night, November 18.

On that night we come together and worship God, reflect on His blessings, and recommit ourselves to Him for future service in the next year remembering the four principles of Stewardship that have constituted the DNA of this church for as long as I can remember.

Each church in Christ’s body has a particular niche, way of acting, and ministering to needs and all of them together make of the body of Christ.

For those of you who have been around here at Faith for a while you know that Faith’s emphases tends to be on

- The sufficient Scriptures
- Biblical Counseling (Four principles of communication)
- Progressive Sanctification
- And Outreach in terms of the best platform for evangelisms is a transformed life—we are sinners who are being transformed offering sinners the transforming Gospel message by attempting to meet various community needs...

In addition to those four emphases that are fairly overt, the four principles of stewardship also form the backbone of this church. We don’t talk about them every Sunday. But your staff does attempt to live

them out and we do speak about them at least once per year during Stewardship Month as we recommit ourselves to future service in the year ahead.

These principles are found in Luke 16:1–13. I am not going to read that parable for you. We did study it earlier this year in our verse by verse treatment of Luke.

Engagement with Audience: Before we review the principles of stewardship I need to prepare us a bit. I want to see your hands for a moment...Lift up your hands... Now in one of those hands get out your cell phone, smart/phone, in another one of those hands get out your wallet.

Stewardship: God-given responsibility with accountability (Say it with me...I may during the service just ask you on the fly and you need to be ready to shout it out)

First Foundational Principle of Stewardship:

1. God owns everything. I own nothing

Look at your hand (You did nothing to make that, you can take care of it make it smoother with lotion, put a tattoo on it, but you did nothing to create it)...God owns it.

That hand is attached to the rest of your body and if God owns the hand what does that mean about you...

Look at your phone....represents your life, your relationships, your spheres of influences in how you use your time...God owns that

Look at your walletrepresents your resourcesthat paper in there and that plastic in there that allows you to make transactions for the stuff of this world...God owns the stuff of this world. He made all the components out of which that paper and plastic are made and which those paper and plastic purchase.

2. God entrusts me with everything I have

A trust is different than a grant.

A grant to you represents a transferal of ownership for you to do with whatever you please (Hand, phone, wallet)

A trust represents a temporary loan which should be used as real owner pleases (Hand, phone, wallet)

3. I am responsible to increase what God has given to me. (I may increase it or diminish it)

Hand..multiplying the hands (am I supposed to mutate into some weird freakish 12 handed individual) ...of course not...But I use my hands to multiply God's reign in bringing other hands into the Family of God

Phone...sphere of influence your resource of time...to use wisely so that your relationships, your time, are being deployed to increase the amount of people and time given to God's Reign across the world and not your reign.

That wallet... (Banality, Vanity)

4. **God can call me into account at any time. It could be today.**
 - a. Because God owns it...it is his
 - b. Because it is only on loan to me
 - c. There will be a time when He says, "I am withdrawing my breath of life from you and your soul we come back to me. And I will ask you how you used those hands, that cell phone, that wallet for my kingdom"
- Stewardship God-given responsibility with accountability
 - God owns everything, I own nothing
 - God entrusts me with everything I have
 - I am responsible to increase what God has given me. (it is possible to increase or diminish it)
 - God can call me into account at any time. It may be today.

It is not very hard to see how those realities drive what we do around here is it?

God owns Faith Church and we are responsible for increasing the witness for Him in this community and around the world while we are here. That's why we come together and learn about Him, that's why we equip one another to serve for Him, that why we have a Biblical Counseling Center to tell people about him. That is why we have a Seminary to equip men to spread the word about him. That is why we have a vision of hope to rescue hurting ladies for Him and spread his fame. That's why we have a Christian School. That is why we have a Community Center. That is why we are continuing to stretch and establish Faith West...

The rationale for all that we do can be expressed by these Biblical principles of Stewardship.

This is to what we are corporately and individual committing ourselves in the future year.

So that is Stewardship Month...

We begin today by focusing on Stewardship of the Spiritual Disciplines.

Please turn with me to Psalm 1. In our brief time remaining I would like to make some observations about Psalm 1. We do not have enough time to do a full expository message today. But I do want to make a few observations about this passage and bring home some applications.

Psalm 1 is on page 393 in the front section of the Bible in the chair in front of you.

Let me see your Bibles...we are going to be using them today and talking precisely about that which you are holding in your hand ...so I want to see you Bibles...hold them up...

Psalm 1

- 1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
- 2 But his delight is in the law (Torah—instruction) of the LORD,
And in His law (Torah—instruction) he meditates day and night.
- 3 He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season
And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not so,
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.

This text is describing three places where you can **be established** or stand.

The text drives us to want to be established in the last place—whatever that is...

If you are established in the first place **you will never end up** in the last one place

If you are established in the second place one you will be established in the third place.

You got that?

Let's take these in the reverse order...let's look at the last place in verse 5.....and I think it will begin to make a bit more sense

Verse 5..“Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.”

What is the “assembly of the righteous” or “standing at the judgment?”

It may not be clear in this text exactly what that means

But it is clear that in some way shape or form that “the assembly of the righteous” is the place you want to be **at the end of all things**....

If I want to know what is the “**end of all things**” where should I look?

-At the end

Did you know that Psalms has an end?

Did you know that a careful examination of the Psalms does show a progression of thought through the collection of Psalms

The collection of Psalms is not simply a bunch of unrelated poems thrown together

The Psalms does have a beginning and an end and a loose progression of thought throughout.

Psalm 1 is obviously the beginning and forms the primary exhortation as to what God's people need to do to make it to the end.

Psalm 146-150 are the concluding Psalms

Turn there if you will please

What do you notice about the end of the Psalms...Psalm 146:1-5,

Ps 147:1-3;

Psalm 148:1 notice verse 14....there is an assembly

Psalm 149:1-9...there is an assembly of righteous ones as well

At the end of all things there is a climax of all of creation praising God and God's people right there in the thick of things...established there with Him—standing, reigning with God.

This is a picture of to where God is moving His redemptive plans.

That is where you want to be in the assembly, established with God, looking back at what God has done with you and with all of the world, and there singing Praises and rejoicing with joy nearly inexpressible.

So

Psalm 1

Observation: God will bring His plans to an “end of all things” climax in which you will want to be established in His assembly, in His presence, among His people with joy expressible through praising God.

Question: How can I make it so that I am firmly established then at the end of all things?

- 1 How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stand in the path of sinners,
Nor sit in the seat of scoffers!
- 2 But his delight is in the law (Torah—instruction) of the LORD,
And in His law (Torah—instruction) he meditates day and night.
- 3 He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water,
Which yields its fruit in its season

- And its leaf does not wither;
And in whatever he does, he prospers.
- 4 The wicked are not so,
But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.
- 5 Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
- 6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the wicked will perish.

Answer: The only way for me to be *established* at the end of all things is by *establishing* my life around God's instructions now—"Delighting in," "meditating day and night in the instruction of the Lord."

Instead of developing Psalm 1 by listing several points about the text, I would like to illustrate Psalm 1 from the perspective of the Biblical character with whom we most closely associate the Psalms

When you think of the Psalms, you think of which OT figure? –DAVID

Illustration: David's path to inherit the kingdom of His God

A significant portion of the Psalms written by a man name David.

David was the second King of Israel.

The pattern of David's early life forms the framework by which we begin to think about our ultimate King Christ.

The OT describes David's youth as one who knew God's instructions as demonstrated by David's dependence upon God in his youthful experiences.

David was a shepherd. When he was out shepherding sheep, predators like lions and bears would come to attack the sheep.

He learned to depend on God's instructions during those times and he was able to protect the sheep

At one point in his youth, God's instruction came to him and said, "YOU WILL BE KING"

Well it didn't happen...immediately!

Instead of a big parade on the following day, with David being carried on the shoulders of his family and friends, he was pursued by the then current threaten king—Saul—until David was almost dead (Psalm testimonies)

During his wilderness experiences running from the insane king trying to kill him...he had to continually rehearse in his brain the promises of God even though they didn't seem to be coming to fruition.

He had to be established in God's promises that assured him he would be king even when there was nothing circumstantially around him that indicated that was coming about.

Finally after years of suffering, the Lord exalted David to be King of Israel...the appointed one, the messiah, and the one who gave Israel rest from all her enemies.

David, at the end was standing and reigning over the Kingdom of God in Israel

And all of Israel was led by David to offer praise and worship to Yahweh.

David was the first to write the many praise and thanksgiving psalms that led to the collection of Psalms we have today

He was the pattern of a servant that dependent upon the word of God through suffering

Persevering through the suffering while even offering praise

David then was able to help Israel be a light to the nations and exalt the one true God

He fulfilled His role of being a Praise offering witness to the one true God and other nations began to find their refuge and strength in Israel for a short while.

David was established in the end

- David had known God's instructions as a youth
- David had to rehearse over in his mind the promises of God in trial even when it seemed the promises of God would never come to pass
- David could have listened to the "counsel of the wicked" in multiple forms but he did not in his early years
- Because David stood in the instruction of God's word, not in the counsel of the wicked, he stood in trial and he was established at the end of all things in the assembly of God, reigning over the kingdom of God, enjoying the chorus of praises to God.
- The Psalms express in prayer the struggles of the servant of God figure—David—in the midst of suffering as the promises of God seem to languish. Yet the servant continues to return to the instruction of the Lord. Then, when God acts, the servant and all those who have joined themselves with God's servant explodes in joy and praise at the end of all things.

Illustration: Testimony from Justin Miller

Take Aways:

1. God's first instruction to those who don't know Him is to repent and turn to Jesus Christ.
2. You do rehearse and nurture some form of instruction in your mind day and night? Which instruction is it? Only God's instruction will establish you to persevere—standing now and at the end of all things.

3. Prayer is our expression of the outworking of God's promises and instructions in our lives. Very little prayer reflects very little wrestling with the instruction of God in our lives. The spiritual disciplines of delighting in the Word and prayer go hand in hand.

4. What ways do you need to increase your understanding and establishment in God's instruction
 - a. Seeking out personal relationships that challenge you with the instruction of the Lord?
 - b. Small group Bible Study?
 - c. Adult Bible Fellowship?
 - d. An FCI class?

The only way for you to be standing when and where it matters most is that you are now orienting your life around God's instruction for life.