

Servicable Stewards – I Peter 4:9-10

I. Introduction:

- A. Last week we looked at the Lord Jesus' *"Parable of the Talents"* applying it to the work of evangelism.
1. **Matthew 25** tell us that this was given just two or three days before Jesus' crucifixion.
 2. In **Luke 19** we read a similar, but different illustration, called the *"Parable of the Pounds."*
 3. The context tells us this was given much earlier in Jesus' ministry, shortly after the conversion of Zacchaeus.
- B. Please turn to **Luke 19:12** and let's read it together.
1. *"He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.
a. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.
b. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.
c. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.
2. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.
3. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities.
4. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: For I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.
5. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?"*
- C. I know the parable goes on, but this is enough to introduce Peter's exhortation and lesson.
1. (This lesson will be so simple and obvious that any one of you could get up here and teach it.)
 2. Peter tells us to be cheerfully hospitable, using God's gracious gifts wisely.

II. Our first question is this: To whom have these pounds and talents been given?

- A. And the answer once again is that Peter is writing to Christians – to the saints of God.
1. So this isn't instruction to only servants or masters as he had done earlier; it's not to ladies versus men.
 2. *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister."*
- B. And this brings us back into the context of the Lord's churches.
1. Calvary Baptist is a church body made up of eyes, ears, hands and feet, each with our several gifts and abilities.
 2. If there is not a proper sharing of the blessings we have received, then the whole body will suffer.
 3. If a blood clot prevents proper flow of blood to a leg, there may be the death of a foot or more.
 4. And if the nerves are pinched to that leg, there will be neuropathy and perhaps the inability for the body to walk.
 5. *"As every man hath received the gift, even so minister"* for the good of the entire church body.

III. What sort of things – what pounds and talents – has the Lord given to us?

- A. Since Peter doesn't list anything specific, we have the opportunity – and the responsibility – to fill in the blanks.
1. Last Sunday morning I suggested that one of God's blessings is His grace through the gospel. Salvation.
 2. Paul wrote to the **Romans**, *"I am debtor both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also..."*

- B. While applicable to the gospel, we notice that Peter calls our gifts *“the manifold grace of God.”*
1. We have been given a great variety of divine gifts, all under the umbrella of *“grace.”*
 2. *“Grace”* suggests that they are all unmerited gifts from God, freely given.
 3. They aren’t earnings paid for a job well done.
 4. They aren’t part of an inheritance due to people with the right blood line.
 5. As former rebels and slaves, everything good thing we possess has been a gift of divine grace.
 6. *“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning” – James 1:17.*
- C. Peter says, *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*
1. *“Manifold,”* of course, doesn’t refer to a part of the engine of your car.
 2. It means *“many”* and *“diverse.”* This word is most often translated *“divers.”*
 - a. In **Hebrews** the writer points to the gospel and the salvation which has been preached unto us.
 - b. And then in the next verse he adds, *“God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.”*
 3. Every morning of every day, we awaken to God’s blessings and divers bounty.
 4. Going to the kitchen, we open our metaphorical cupboard and refrigerator to a cornucopia of divine gifts.
 5. Not only do we find coffee, cereal, milk and eggs, but we have eyes with which to see them, hands to reach for them, skills to prepare them and taste buds to enjoy them.
- D. I’m not trying to silly.
1. I’m trying to suggest that we are given more daily grace than we are aware or are usually willing to admit.
 2. The opportunities of the day and whatever our health provides, are a part of the Lord’s diverse blessings.
 3. Our house, our vehicle, and a thousand other things are parts of the *“manifold grace of God.”*
 4. We could spend a considerable amount of time listing the talents, pounds & gifts our Lord has given to us.
 5. But perhaps it would be easier to list things we have which have not been given to us by of His grace.
 6. *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.”*

IV. For what reason have we been given this grace?

- A. It doesn’t matter of what particular grace you may be speaking, you have received it as **God’s steward.**
1. Obviously, if the Lord has given you an elk or a steer, a tomato and a potato, you must use some of that food to feed yourself and your family.
 2. I can’t remember where it was, but recently I heard about a child who was offended by the safety instructions she heard after she nervously took her seat to fly off to somewhere.
 - a. She listened as the stewardess said that if there was a sudden drop in air pressure a mask would drop down from the panel above her mother’s head, and Mom was to put the mask on over her mouth and nose, before she did the same for her daughter.
 - b. How unfair, thought the little girl. The helpless child should come first.
 - c. No, in this case the adult needs to do whatever is necessary in order to be a blessing to the child.
 3. The Lord has blessed you with life and provisions, enabling you to live and serve Him.
 4. But remember you have been given the gifts of oxygen, vitamin, provision and nutrition as one of God’s servants.
 5. When your needs have been sufficiently met, the rest is to be shared with those in need.
- B. Why did the grant to us this gift – whatever it is?
1. Ultimately, it has been given as an opportunity to do use it for the glory of the Giver.
 2. *“Whether therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all for the glory of God” – I Corinthians 10:31.*
 3. Whatsoever you have been given, whether food or drink, **minister** the same for the glory of God.

- C. Austin was pointing out to a couple of us the other day, that we serve God by serving the people whom God places before us.
1. Among other things, we glorify God by using hospitality one to another without grudging.
 2. We magnify the Lord, and we thank Him for His grace, by ministering the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

V. More specifically, what must we do with what has been given to us?

- A. I'm repeating myself, but we minister it to others.
1. The word "*minister*" is related to "*deacon*;" we are to be servants to others with the grace we have received.
 2. ***"USE hospitality one to another without grudging."***
- B. The other day I had to fix the self-closing door between our kitchen and the garage.
1. I bought the special hinges to replace the one's which had worn out.
 2. And then I got out some tools that I would have to "*use*" to install the replacements.
 3. ***"USE hospitality one to another."*** Hospitality is one of the tools the Lord has given to us.
 4. We *use* hospitality when we share with others the bounty we have been given.
- C. But just in passing, I find it interesting that in the Greek there is no actual verb in **verse 9**.
1. The word "*use*" is not to be found in the Greek.
 2. "*Hospitality*" which is a noun by nature, is written as a verb, if that makes any sense.
 3. The sheer existence of God's blessing... the fact that we possess a surplus of something... automatically demands that we re-gift it, as they say today.

VI. And what should be our attitude in this re-gifting?

- A. ***"Use hospitality one to another without grudging."***
1. I see the omniscience of the Lord in this statement.
 2. The Holy Spirit let Peter look through time into the 19th century and then into the 21st to see all the Ebenezer Scrooges among us.
 3. ***"Use hospitality one to another without murmuring or complaining."***
 4. In **Philippians** Paul summarily says, ***"Do all things without murmurings and disputings" (Philippians 2:14).***
- B. As has been often said, we live in the "*me generation*," when if we are not everything, we are at the least first.
1. But this is not the Christian perspective.
 2. And it is not a coincidence that this exhortation to hospitality, follows immediately the exhortation, ***"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves."***
 3. As Paul said in **I Corinthians 13**: ***"Charity is kind."***
 4. Where God's abundant love is received and appreciated, it will be shared.
 5. When hospitality is rooted in God's love, there won't be room for grudging.
- C. And by the way, ***"Use hospitality one to another without expecting to receive any hospitality in return."***
1. Many of us live with a "*quid pro quo*" mentality.
 2. The Latin phrase literally means "*something for something*."
 3. So many of the "*me generation*" think that in giving something, we think something must given to us in return. But, again, that is contrary to Christian principles.
 4. We have been saved by grace and therefore we should be gracious people – "*freely giving people*."
- D. What more can I say? ***"Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."***