



October 19, 2020

Stewardship season is upon us again and, as the vestry and I ask you to pledge your financial support to the parish, it is a good time to think about what we are doing exactly. Where does your mind go when you think of stewardship? Have you ever associated joy with stewardship? If you are like me, it is likely you have not! Stewardship season is commonly seen as the way we raise money to pay the bills. It is that way in most churches throughout the world. It might even be so- except for that pesky word “stewardship”. What does that word even mean? Is it just another example of “Christian-ese” that we all must endure? Fundraising that is overly spiritualized?

It is actually much more than that. Stewardship is as different from simple income generation as the new is from the old. There is nothing wrong with simple income generation but stewardship is on a different plane because it comes from a different place. Being a steward means being one who looks after the belongings of Another. What am I steward of? I am steward of the resources I have been given. I a steward of the health and time I have been given. I am steward of the skills and attributes given to me. I am even steward of the children and older parents who depend on my care. As a Christian, I am most of all a steward of the Good News that has been given to me in Jesus Christ (2 Tim. 1:14). During stewardship season, I am simply asked to apply resources God has entrusted to me to the proclamation of His Gospel.

Where does the joy come in, then? It comes when the lightbulb comes on about the Gospel. The Gospel is not just for those beyond our walls. The Gospel is also for you. The Gospel is for you whether life is going generally well for you or if you are in deep distress. It is for you if you have been a Christian for fifty years or two seconds. Joy is also distinguished from happiness because joy is entirely rooted in something that has happened outside of you that changes your reality. That something is the Gospel. Happiness, on the other hand, is either dependent on your ability to produce it or create the circumstances for it to take place.

It all comes down to the joy of a gift- a gift that is wholly dependent on God, the Giver. It is a gift that, when even partially grasped, completely changes how we view everything in life. This is a joy we have every time we hear the gift of the Gospel and it is a joy we all experience together at St. Thomas'. We are Together for Joy because God has always been *for* us in His Son, Jesus Christ. As we recover for all sorts of adversity as a church, let us experience that joy and spread that gift around to Southwest Houston and beyond.

Joyfully,
In Christ,

David