

Stewardship: Discover This Word and Love It!

Stewardship of the Earth

Psalm 8:1-9

When God made us, God gave us a wonderful place to be.

We have woods and hills and waterfalls. We have varieties of creatures, great and small.

When God made us, God gave us an awesome responsibility.

There is a great political debate waging in our world concerning global warming. Some affirm it and others deny it. Meanwhile, the rest of us sweat our way through one of the hottest, driest summers in history, but I have not come to preach about an inconvenient truth.

Today I Am Here to Declare an Absolute Truth, an Undebatable Fact, an Everlasting Reality,

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it” (Psalm 24:1).

Until this sovereign truth becomes an abiding conviction, we are lost in endless debate and ultimate destruction.

Of course, not everybody agrees.

Who says the Earth is the Lord’s? It’s my land, it’s my house, it’s my car, it’s my investments; I will do with them as I please. We become so engrossed in our appointments, our accomplishments, our accolades, our assessments that we have little time to consider alternatives.

Jesus told a sobering parable about such self-possessed persons. We call it the parable of the rich fool. “The ground of a certain rich man produced much.” The bountiful harvest presented a perplexing problem. “What shall I do? Where can I store my crops?” The self-centeredness of this successful farmer is quickly evident. “Then he said, ‘This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods.’ I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink, and be merry.’” I, me, myself, - 15 times in 2 verses.

God called the man a fool. Not a robber, not a thief, not an adulterer or an abuser, not a liar, certainly not lazy, but a fool - a nitwit, a dumbbell, a crackpot, a bonehead. Somebody that ought to have known better. “For this very night your life is demanded from you.” Smart people remember who owns the place.

Another group who ignores the God’s ownership of the Earth are those who say, “Who Cares?” If the Earth is God’s then let God worry about it. Let God take care of it. God’s probably going to destroy it anyway, so why bother?

This thought is prevalent among conservative Christians. If this world is not our home, then why should we care what happens to the Earth? If we plan to fly away, why be concerned with what’s left behind? If it’s just a matter of time until the world self-destructs, why should we interfere with this final judgment?

The Bible, however, never teaches such deism. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. Consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. God cares for each one of them. According to Job, even the whales were made to praise God.

When will we come to grip with this Absolute Truth? The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it. We are not owners, we are renters. We are not kings, we are stewards. We are not the masters of our fate and the captains of our souls. The very air we breathe is a gift of God.

Our awesome responsibility, God has given us, humanity, dominion over the works of God’s hands; God has put all things under our feet” (Psalm 8:6). By dominion the Bible means steward, manager, caretaker.

We are CO-CREATORS with God. “Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:28). Every time I visit a newborn, I say a prayer of thanksgiving. “Dear God, thank you for allowing these parents to participate with you in the glorious wonder of creating a life.”

Every time I see a beautiful painting, a remarkable building, a piece of sculpture bringing praise to God, my soul leaps for joy.

As one of our creeds of the Christian faith so eloquently states, “We are not alone, we live in God’s world. We believe in God, who has created and is creating.”

We are CARETAKERS for “The flocks and herds, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea” (Psalm 8:7).

During WWII patriotic Americans recycled tin cans and old tires for the war effort. People of that great generation valued hard work, modest consumption, consistent giving, and frugal spending. They lived by a simple motto: “Buy what you need and make it last as long as you can.”

What has happened to that great American Spirit? Have we the desire to leave the Earth in better shape than we found it? Are we willing to put in more than we take out? Are we willing to do little things for the good of all?

- Change our light bulbs
- Recycle our plastic and paper
- Change our thermostats a degree or two
- Turn off the lights
- Drive fuel efficient cars
- Plant more trees

I believe Americans want to do better. In recent decades, great strides have been made toward reducing the pollution of our air and water. Creeks and rivers once filled with debris now flow with fresh streams of fish and wildlife.

Concerned leaders came together some years ago to stop the arms race, possibly avoiding a nuclear holocaust. Even the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. Let us not lessen that resolve.

To think that over the last 100 years, women got the right to vote and people of color have had their rights guaranteed, marriage rights have changed and now we can legally marry the person we love, and LGBTQ+ persons rights have been recognized, all of this speaks volumes to our capabilities under God, to bring liberty and justice for all. Even though there is so much more still to do.

So let us not relent on this issue of global warming, or the destruction of the rain forest, or the depletion of human worth through the trafficking of drugs. We can do better, and we must do better for the glory of God and the good of people.

We are called to CELEBRATE and WORSHIP the God of all creation. “O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.” (Psalm 8:9)

We are called to be stewards of all of God’s creation. A responsibility that we cannot ignore or take for granted. May we see God in all of creation and strive in our daily lives to care for what God has entrusted to us so that the generations to come will be able to enjoy all that God has created. And let us not give up fighting for the rights of all people until that day when there is Liberty and Justice for all.

May God inspire us and strengthen us for the work that is before us so that we may be good stewards of all that God has given us.