

See!
*I am making
all things
new.*

Rev. 21:5

More about the new
theme in the next
bulletin. Meanwhile
why do you think it's
appropriate?



St. Augustine's Anglican Church

Biblical Stewardship 365

Bulletin 1 October 2021

Stewardship is about how we use the gifts God has given us to work with God to make the world a better place, to help build the Kingdom of God on Earth.

It is Fall now and it is many months since we all met together in our church building, however, we can take comfort in the knowledge that we, the people of St. Augustine's, are the Church, whether we meet on-line or in a building. **So, it is now time to get on with Church things, such as planning and year-round Stewardship**

First a Reminder - What is Biblical Stewardship?

Stewardship is about how we care for and use the gifts God has entrusted to us, gifts given to us as a Parish and gifts given to us as individuals.

Biblical Stewardship is about how we use scripture as our guide.

Although money is involved and is particularly important at various points, Stewardship is most definitely not primarily about money. You could be the financially poorest person you can imagine and still be an effective steward!

What did Jesus have to say about Stewardship?

Scripture tells us that Jesus frequently employed parables when teaching. In the way in which Jesus chose to use them, parables were way more than stories to engage his audience. They were challenges to encourage his listeners to engage their God-given gifts of the ability to think for themselves and challenge the obvious.

The parable on which we base this Stewardship programme is a parable of this type, usually known as **The Parable of the Talents**, you can find it in Matthew 25:14-30, and another version is in **Luke 19:11-24**. (I owe this understanding to Dr. Dominic Crossan, a theologian, a lecturer, and writer of fascinating books.) This is how the parable goes:

Next the story. A rich man is going on a lengthy business trip, so he gives control of his wealth to his Stewards to look after until he comes back. On his return, he seeks an accounting of what the Stewards had done with his money. Almost all had made profits for the rich man, but one of the Stewards had buried the money to keep it safe. When the master returned, he had some very unkind things to say to this Steward!



Dr. Crossan, maintained that at this point some of Jesus' audience would be crying "Unfair!" and "The poor man was only looking after the money." Someone else would maintain, "But he was being lazy and didn't use what had been entrusted to him!" Another person might argue that the Steward certainly knew what it was that the rich man expected him to do with what had been entrusted to him, and similar divergent comments. Then an argument/discussion would probably result. The audience would start thinking for themselves and

would probably figure out what Jesus was getting at. Namely, it was/is wrong for people to ignore the gifts entrusted to them, when by using them, God's world would be better off. The 'gifts' in both versions of this Biblical story are financial (A 'talent' was an ancient coin), but as usual with Jesus' teaching, the principle which the story is getting at, had/has a much wider application than simply money.

Some understandings on which this Biblical Stewardship Programme is based:

Steward: a trusted person whose job is to manage the land and property of another person.

Who is the 'other person?' In our case the 'other person' is God. *'The Earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.'* (Psalm 24:1)

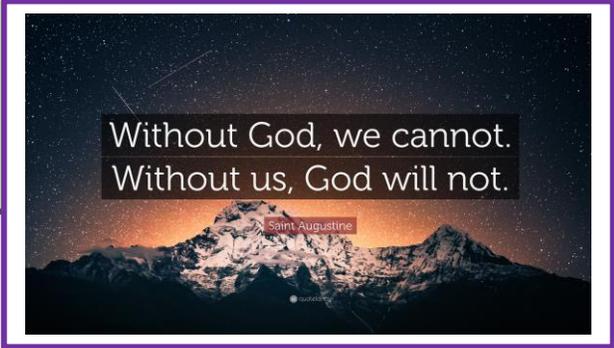
Stewardship is everything we think, say, and do after we first say, "I believe in God." Stewardship is a fact, you took it on at your baptism, and confirmed it each time you repeated the Baptismal Covenant. However, you can choose to be a good, caring, effective steward doing the best you can, or you can choose to do nothing. Read the Parable of the Talents carefully! Jesus does not have nice things to say about those who do nothing!

Stewardship is collaboration with God in building the 'Kingdom of God' on earth. It takes many forms and could well be described as 'living a Christian life.'

Christ has no body on earth now but yours, no hands but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks with compassion on the world, Yours are the feet with which he walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.
St Teresa of Ávila

An imagined comment from Jesus.
 "You've been waiting for God to do it for you (i.e., *Bring in the age of justice and peace – the Kingdom of God*), and God has been waiting for you to collaborate."
An imagined reply.
 "Where's that in the tradition? We hope for it. We pray for it. Who said we had to do anything?"
Nothing is going to happen if we continue doing nothing to further the Kingdom
God is ready, are you?

Sage advice from St. Augustine of Hippo C 400 CE
 Desmond Tutu
 And others



'Doing Something' is Stewardship!

And Surprise! God gives us the gifts we need to do this.

What are our gifts as individuals?	
What are our gifts as a family?	
What are our gifts as a Parish?	