



November 26, 2006

## The UnSermon

As we conclude our sermon series on Stewardship today lets take a moment to review where we've been. Two weeks ago we saw that stewardship is wisely using that which God has blessed us with in a manner that first of all expands His kingdom and second glorifies His name. That first week we saw that God blesses us with time, talents and treasures. And we saw that God himself not only gives us time but he gave us His time as he took the time to send His son who humbled himself, became a man, walked the earth for 33 years and then took the time to die on the cross. We ended the sermon with "he took the time now what are you going to do about it?" Last week we focused on talents. God had given each person talents or spiritual gifts that we are to fan into flame so that we can let our light shine. People by seeing our good deeds will praise our Father in heaven. Today its treasures, the one thing that many pastors including this one hate to preach on because we've all heard it. We've heard the people who say, "all they want is my money", or "all they ever do is ask for money". Well, that's not true at Zion I haven't preached about money for 12 months but the reality is just as God blesses us with time and talents God also blesses us with income, net worth, whatever you want to call it and God expects us to use it to fan it into flame just the same as time and talents. However with treasures God does give us a target that we can shoot for a standard gauge to follow and you know what it is. It's ten percent. It's not my idea it's God's, its right there in his words.

It begins with Father Abraham in Genesis 14:20 he gave a tenth of everything not just his income everything that's his net worth, a tenth of it to the priest Melchizedek. In Numbers 18:26 Moses gives ten percent of everything he receives to the Lord. Deuteronomy 14:22 the Lord says to set aside a tenth for the offering. This is what God has said and when we look at Malachi 3:8 we see

how God views the tithe. He says, "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. You might ask how do we rob you? In tithes and offerings." The people at the time of Malachi don't give a tithe God looks at that and says that's robbery; it's right there. Now I know what many people are thinking right about now, "but Matt you don't understand my budget is limited or you don't understand I've got expenses or you don't understand I'm just unable to do it". Wait, I guess the real question is it really about you? Or is it about God?

If we continue in Malachi chapter 3:9 God says, "You are under the curse the whole nation of you because you're robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into my storehouse that there may be food in my house. Test me in this says the Lord almighty and see if will no throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." Its black and white the people don't put God first they rob him they're under a curse. Or they put God first and he opens the floodgates and pours out so much blessing that they will not have enough room for it. Now understand this is not prosperity preaching God does not say, "bring to me your tithe and I will make you filthy rich". No, he says bring to me your tithes and you will be blessed. If you make God number one he will care for you as your Father and he will fulfill His promise of turning all things to good for those who love Him.

Last week I mentioned some childhood heroes, I left one out because in all honesty I didn't realize they were such heroes until I grew older. They live by what Paul says and speaks of in 2 Corinthians 9:7 where he says, "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver." As I look back its an amazing thing my mom and dad. My dad was in Bishop as pastor at Grace Lutheran Church actually he was there as a "missionary at large". The interpretation of that job title he was the pastor at a church that couldn't afford a pastor so the district that the church was in subsidized my dad's salary. As a result of being subsidized it was at the very lowest level. Even though my dad already had 20 years experience, even though my dad had served as the president of the mission board, even though he had all sorts of experience. How bad was it? We even were eligible for surplus cheese from the government. Yet my sister went to Concordia University in Seward Nebraska private school private tuition of course to become a Christian teacher. My brother John went to Concordia St. Paul in

Missouri then to Ann Arbor, Michigan then he continued with four years at the St. Louis seminary. Eight years private college and seminary eight years of private tuition. I went to four years of school down at Christ College Irvine. Private college and private tuition now I'm a pastor, my brother Phil went for five years Christ College Irvine also private college and private tuition to become a Christian day school teacher and now principal for a Christian school. All of us went into ministry, all of us private school, all of us private tuition, all of us graduated debt free, and all of us are Christians, all of us our servants of God. If you asked mom and dad they would say they're blessed; blessed beyond measure. In fact, if you asked them about the value of God's blessing to them they would reply from the word from the Mastercard commercial, priceless. Think about it, what would you give to know that all your children are Christians; all of them are Christians and are serving the Lord. Mom and dad have been greatly blessed. They're not rich financially, they don't live in a mansion, they don't drive expensive cars, they don't travel but boy are they happy.

When it comes to stewardship of our time talents and treasures we need to just flat out quit the excuses. I'm unable, I'm unqualified, I'm unwise, and I'm unworthy. We need to look at reality our time or talents our treasures are all given to us from an almighty God. He, the one who is almighty, says we're supposed to give back to Him, give back generously because He has given generously to us. Give back to Him cheerfully because He loves us and we should love Him too. There's great joy when you give to someone you love.

There's a video I came upon its from a song that Michael W. Smith wrote, I'd like you to listen to it and watch it I'd like you to listen to the words very carefully. You'll hear all the "uns", you will hear "I've been unfaithful, unworthy, unrighteous, unmerciful, unreachable, unteachable, unwilling, undesirable, unwise, undone, unsure, unbroken, unmended, uneasy, unapproachable, unemotional, unexceptional, undecided, unqualified" in fact the chorus says, "unaware I have been unfair. I've been unfit for blessing from above but even I can see the sacrifice you made for me to show that I have never been unloved. It's because of you and all that you've been through I know that I have never been unloved."

God has given us our time, our talents and our treasures more than that He has given us His love. How can we say we are unable, unqualified, and unwise, unworthy whatever when we're not unloved?

We are loved at a level greater than any man can express. The love of a heavenly father who gave His son took him from his throne in high in heaven put him in a manger in a baby's body let him live for 33 years as a human that's humbling for a God let him die at the hands of that which he created so that those who kill every time we sin can be forgiven can be loved by Him and can be made heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Maybe you have been unaware, maybe you have been unfair, maybe you have felt that you're unfit for blessing from above but I hope now that we can see the sacrifice he made for me to show that I have never been unloved. That's because of Him and all that he's been through I know that I have never been and never will be unloved. Please remember this when you fill out your volunteer form and your covenant responses don't rob God give back to Him cheerfully. Fill out and say to God; thank you I know I have never been unloved.

In our Savior's name, Amen