

Stewardship: Who Owns it All?

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Introduction: Open your Bible to the book of **Colossians 1:16**. This evening the title of our Message is: "Who Owns it All?".

We all ought to aspire to be responsible people. We are encouraged via that duty toward responsibility to be owners. Those that live off the till of others are less than responsible, unless they are unable to care for themselves.

And yet, in truth, none of us truly owns anything. We have to ask ourselves the question: Who Owns It All? We find the answer to that in **Colossians 1:12-18**, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. 18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."

[Prayer]

I. Who **Owns** it All? In order to answer the question: who owns it all, we have to first ask...

A. Who **Made** it all?

Evolutionists of necessity must believe in the eternity of matter. Stated another way, they believe that everything that exists has always existed in some form. The reason for their leap of faith in drawing this conclusion is the obvious necessity of a point of origin for the material universe. They recognize that theistic evolution simply does not work. If the material world came into existence by divine fiat, then there must be a powerful personal deity to whom this material existence including man is accountable.

Christians understand that the reality of creation by the direct act of God. The Bible is emphatic upon this point.

Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".

Ten times in the first chapter of Genesis reference is made to the fact that God spoke and material reality resulted. Further, there is and was no other source of creation other than the direct work of God.

John 1:3, "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

God's creative acts were complete and entire, that is, there has been no continuing process of creation since God pronounced His own approval of His handiwork.

Genesis 1:31, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day".

It must also be understood that the creation of God extends beyond the physically definable material world.

Colossians 1:16 For by him were **all** things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and **invisible**, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all** things were created by him, and for him:

God made everything and he owns every thing.

B. **Why** Did He Make It ALL?

God is certainly under no obligation to explain His actions to man. Many things are quite beyond our ability to understand. Other things that He has explained we still refuse because of our carnal fallen natures. One of these critical issues is the purpose for creation. Most people believe that God created the world expressly and only for the benefit of man. Certainly there is obvious benefit to the highest aspect of God's creation but the earth does not exist primarily for man. Man does not exist primarily for himself. All of existence is for God alone! Again the Word of God is abundantly clear.

Colossians 1:16, "...all things were created by him, and **for** him:

Revelation 4:11, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and **for thy pleasure** they are and were created."

C. Who **Sustains** It ALL?

In an age of radical environmentalism, it would be wise to pause and reflect upon the effective force that sustains the universe. It is true that people ought not to pollute the environment, nor should they abuse and exploit the resources with which God has blessed us. At the same time we must realize that man cannot save the earth.

The mechanisms which interact in the function of our world are so intricate and minute, we are continually surprised in discovering how they function. The interaction of these mechanisms most certainly has a sustaining element that defies our best science. That sustaining force is God!

Colossians 1:17, "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist".

The word *consist* literally means “stand together.”¹ It is significant that this truth is recorded in another creation context.

Hebrews 11:1-3, “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power**, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”.

D. Who Can and Will **Destroy** It ALL?

There is much fear mongering among liberal thinkers who desire peace at any cost. They decry the existence of nuclear power and anticipate that man will eventually destroy the earth with his powerful weapons systems the use of which would trigger a chain reaction detonating all the nuclear weapons and facilities around the globe. We can categorically say that man will not destroy the earth. Neither will a stray asteroid collide with the earth bringing about its destruction. There is only one person capable of such an event and Scripture makes clear that one day He will destroy the earth in such a cataclysmic manner that it will have to be recreated.

2 Peter 3:9-13, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness”.

E. Therefore, **Who** Owns It ALL?

If God made all things for Himself, and God sustains all that exists, and God can and will one day destroy this material world and every thing in it, how could anyone doubt that everything belongs to God exclusively? Mercifully God permits human possession for a time and the rightful use of that possession blesses the lives of men. Fallen men fight and claw to possess and then foolishly think that their acquisitions are a perpetual right.

No one will understand stewardship who does not come to the realization that all ownership resides ultimately with God alone.

Psalms 24:1, “The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

Psalms 50:10-12, “For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the

¹ W. E. Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, (McClean: MacDonald Publishing Co., n.d.), 232.

field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof."

Romans 11:33-36, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable *are* his judgments, and his ways past finding out! 34 For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? 35 Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For **of him, and through him, and to him, *are all things***: to whom *be* glory for ever. Amen".

- II. What **Responsibility** do YOU and I have with the things we are watching over? Because we are not owners, but stewards or managers of all that God has given us, we will give an account to Jesus Christ for all he has put into our realm of management.

A. A Steward **Controls** and/or Possesses the Property

Material possessions are committed to trusted people for safekeeping, maintenance, and investment for return. This is precisely the picture in the parable of the talents.

2 Corinthians 5:10-11a, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. 11 Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men".

Matthew 25:14-18, "For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money".

Now what happened to this one who buried his talent? It was taken away from him. He didn't invest it. He was to control it to gain more money.

Note that the owner disburses to servants who are obligated to him. He gives to them *his goods* according to the ability of each person. A wise owner never gives his stewards more than they can effectively manage. He studies his stewards so as to disburse carefully. God does not give indiscriminately. At the same time He does give every steward the opportunity to manage *his lord's money*.

It is critical to realize that possession does not equal ownership. No one transfers ownership of his money to bank in which he makes a deposit. The bank has possession but the ownership remains with the depositor.

The control aspect is emphasized in the important Psalm 8 where man's elevated position is taught. This vast and wonderful creation of God is placed into the hands of man to control and utilize.

Psalm 8:1-9, "O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens. 2 Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger. 3 ¶ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; 4 What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? 5 For thou hast made

him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. 6 Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: 7 All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; 8 The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. 9 O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

God mercifully places much in the hands of His stewards but does not transfer ownership. We may have possession and a measure of control but we do not own those things which God has given to us in trust.

B. A Steward is Responsible to **Advance** the Value of the Property that he Manages

The parable of the pounds is directly applicable to the church today. **Luke 19:11-23**, "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. 12 He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. 13 And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. 14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this *man* to reign over us. 15 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. 16 Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. 17 And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. 18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. 19 And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. 20 And another came, saying, Lord, behold, *here is* thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: 21 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. 22 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: 23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?"

You will note from this passage that the owner had a very clear expectation that his stewards would actively seek to improve upon the value of the money that had been committed to their care. Every servant was expected to produce.

In our horridly consumer oriented culture, it is critical that believers understand that we are not consumers; we are producers. We are not here to take God's blessings for our own consumption and pleasure. We are here to use God's blessings for God's glory!

C. A Steward is Always Accountable for his Management of the Property Committed to Him

This steward was dismissed because he had been unfaithful in his stewardship. Even when he took his limited opportunity to further abuse his trust in order to provide recourse for himself, the owner became aware. The key word used four times in the explanation following the parable is the word *"faithful."*

1 Corinthians 4:2, "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

III. What are some **important things** we are Stewards of?

- A. Family
- B. Time
- C. Money
- D. Our Salvation – don't neglect so great a salvation
- E. The Gospel – preach to every creature

Conclusion: We will all give an account! One of the things I am grateful but concerned over is our missions giving. We have committed to give \$10,000 this year so far. Our budget is \$15,000. I'm going to ask that each of us increase what we are already giving. We need to lay up treasure in heaven, and this is one practical way that we can utilize what God has give us to invest.