The Vocation of Stewardship

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Introduction


The Pathos of Stewardship

Why We Have What We Have: The Universal Destination of Material Goods
“For our money is the Lord’s, however we may have gathered it. If we provide for those in need, we shall obtain great plenty. This is why God has allowed you to have more: not for you to waste on prostitutes, drink, or fancy food, expensive clothes, and all the other kinds of indolence, but for you to distribute to those in need. . . . [T]he rich man is a kind of steward of the money which is owed for distribution to the poor. He is directed to distribute it to his fellow servants who are in want. So if he spends more on himself than his need requires, he will pay the harshest penalty hereafter. For his own goods are not his own, but belong to his fellow servants. . . . For you have obtained more than others have, and you have received it, not to spend it on yourself, but to become a good steward for others as well.”
“Whatever certain people have in superabundance is due, by natural law, to the purpose of succoring the poor. For this reason Ambrose says . . . “It is the hungry man’s bread that you withhold, the naked man’s cloak that you store away, the money that you bury in the earth is the price of the poor man’s ransom and freedom.” . . . each one is entrusted with the stewardship of his own things, so that out of them he may come to the aid of those who are in need. Nevertheless, if the need be so manifest and urgent . . . then it is lawful for a man to succor his own need by means of another’s property, by taking it either openly or secretly: nor is this properly speaking theft or robbery.”
Vocation

Martin Luther: “A man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body . . . but he lives also for all men on earth; rather he lives only for others and not for himself. . . Therefore he should be guided in all his works by this thought and contemplate this one thing alone, that he may serve and benefit others in all that he does, considering nothing except the need and the advantage of his neighbor. . . . This is what makes caring for the body a Christian work, that through its health and comfort we may be able to work, to acquire, and lay by funds with which to aid those who are in need.”
Eucharistic Liturgy of TUMC

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves for others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

From Going to Church to Being the Church