The Church: Our Stewardship

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] Turn with me to 1 Chronicles 29, if you would.

1 Chronicles 29. If you've been around this semester, you know we're looking at our study on the church.
And it might at first seem strange for us to be going back to 1 Chronicles for our study on the church. But what I want to do is I want to show you a biblical example of what we're talking about today.
And then we're going to take you to the New Testament to see some principles of how we can apply that and live that out. We're looking at all different aspects of what the Bible says the people of God should be.
As a church, what kind of people should we be and how should we organize ourselves and what kind of work and ministry should we do? We've looked at a number of topics already, and we're looking this morning at a very important part of our life as individual believers and as a church as we talk about our stewardship.
[1:12] And I want to take you first to 1 Chronicles 29, where what we see is a picture of joyful worship and joyful giving and joyful unity.

The king and the leaders have followed through in a remarkable way as they prepare for the construction of the temple in the Old Testament. The king has given by example.
The people, the leaders have followed that example. They have been able to see just a remarkable display of worship, a remarkable display of generosity and joy and unity.
And when we think today about, as believers, our stewardship, I want you to think about that word very carefully and purposefully with me. We as God's people are stewards.
We're not owners. We're stewards. God has entrusted to each of us a measure of what ultimately belongs to Him in the first place.
[2:25] And so each of us, we've been given a certain number of years to live. We've been given a certain measure of spiritual gifts to utilize.

We've been given certain personalities and talents and experiences. We've been given resources with our finances, with our business, with our homes.
The things that we would typically talk about that which we own, which for the Christian better understood is that which is on loan to us.
We are stewards of what ultimately belongs to the Lord. The dictionary defines stewardship this way.
A person who acts as the surrogate of another or others, especially by managing property, financial affairs, or an estate.
[3:29] This really is who we are as believers. We could talk about the house that you own. We could talk about the children that belong to you.

We could talk about the income that you earn. But the truth for the Christian is it's all the Lord's. We're stewards of it. We want to be faithful stewards of all He has entrusted to us.
Now, we don't know how many years we get. The Lord does. The Lord is sovereign over that. But our responsibility as a steward is to be faithful with all the Lord entrusts to us.
And you don't know whether your income or resources are going to greatly expand over the next ten years or if they're going to be reduced. You don't know that.
The Lord does. Your responsibility is to be faithful as a steward. When Christians think like owners, they get selfish.
[4:37] They get arrogant. They get discouraged, depending on how that comparison looks. When we rightly think like stewards, we approach all of our life by understanding everything I have is from

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God.

My life is His. My resources are His. My spiritual gifts were given to me by the Holy Spirit.
And we just want to be found faithful. As a church, as families, as individuals, we just want to be faithful stewards. I feel that for our church.
And in this season of our church, our church is 123 years old. We are stewards of this season in our church's life.
And we want to be found faithful with that stewardship. To be faithful with what He's entrusted to us in this season of our church. Our pastors, which we've looked at in this series, our church members in using their spiritual gifts for ministry, which we've looked at.
[5:53] We want to be faithful, all of us together, with what He has entrusted to our care. Faithful stewards of our ministries, of our opportunities, of the preaching of the Word.

Faithful stewards of the opportunities He's given to us, of everything that the Lord has allowed and blessed our church to do. If we think like owners, we may clutch onto it too tightly.
If we think like owners, we may think in terms of what we want to do. But when we think like stewards, it becomes much more simple, doesn't it?
Who does this belong to? Who is in charge? And what does He want us to do? We're stewards of all that He has entrusted to our care.
I want to take you to a picture of this in 1 Chronicles 29 that Jeremy read for us. And I just want to highlight a few things from this passage about what faithful stewardship looks like and some things we can learn.
[7:09] Then I want to take you to 2 Corinthians, the New Testament, as we look at some principles of how we can live this out. Number one, faithful stewardship involves, here's what I want you to write down first, it involves a right view of God.

Faithful stewardship must have a right view of God. Look at verse 10. Therefore David blessed the Lord in the presence of all the assembly. And David said, Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.
David's coming to the end of his time, and this is going to be passed on in leadership to his son Solomon. And the temple is going to be built. And David has offered this incredibly generous gift toward this.
The other leaders are going to follow through in their response of joyful giving. But we start with the right view of God. Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our Father.
All of our life, all of our ministry, all of our giving, all of our stewardship, all of everything that we have stewardship over starts by having a proper view of God.
[8:14] God, you are great. God, you reign among us. God, we exist for you. This church isn't about us. It's not about our name. It's about the Lord's name.

Your spiritual gifts are not to elevate you. It's to make much of Christ. Everything we have as the people of God must start with the right view of God.
And our first thought in all of our ministry ought to be to bring glory to the name of our God. In our singing, in our preaching, in our giving, in our mission endeavors, in our evangelism, everything that we do as a church, we should start right here with the right view of God that understands He is our Father, He is our provider, He is our defender, and we want to bring glory to His name above all else.
That's where faithful stewardship must start. Before you study the teacher or want a lesson this Wednesday, first stop and think about how good and great God is.
Before you generously give your offering to the Lord, first stop and think about how good and great God is. Before you pray for our mission partnerships that I hope you pray for around the world, first stop and think about how good and great our God is.
[9:46] Verse 11, Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours.

Yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and You are exalted as head above all. Faithful stewardship in our church must start there.
It's all His. Your life is His. Your gifts are from Him. Your resources are from Him.
Everything about you, everything about you, you have because of the goodness and the grace and the greatness of God. Think like a steward.

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He's the owner. We're the steward. We're watching over what He's entrusted to us. We're faithfully putting to good use the things He has entrusted to us.
[10:48] But let us say, as David said, that God is great and powerful and glorious and victorious and majestic. For all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Yours.

Everything is this. We think in terms of my house, my investments, my retirement, my vehicles, our building, whatever it may be, but rightly understood everything belongs to the Lord.
Everything. We're a steward over it for a time. Our church, as it is organized today with the leadership it has today, we want to be faithful stewards.
But there will come those that will follow us. And one day new people will lead the church and new men will be the preachers of the church.
And my greatest prayer when that day comes is not that people will look back and be impressed with us or be wowed by us, but I hope they'll just look back and say that the men who were in charge of leading and shepherding the church, they were faithful.
[12:01] Because we were just stewards. We weren't owners of anything. Just stewards. And faithful stewardship starts by acknowledging the goodness and the greatness of God.

Look at verse 12. Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all in your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.
See, faithfulness in the believer's life starts by understanding who God is. Too many times Christians read the Bible and we struggle over things we shouldn't struggle with.
We'll read something and think, am I going to do this or not, when really it ought to be settled. He is the ruler of all things. What He says in His Word, let's just do it. We don't need to argue about it when it's clear.
We don't need to debate it. We just need to be faithful and just do it. But if we have too low a view of God or too high a view of ourselves, then we'll be tempted to read the Bible and then try to decide, am I going to obey this or not?
[13:12] Now, we probably wouldn't say that out loud, but in our heart of hearts, when we read the Word and we're confronted with the truth of how we're to live, why else would we not obey it unless we really just in that moment weren't convinced that God really is the ruler of all things and the owner of us and we're just a steward of what He's given to us?

So, all worship, all obedience, all discipleship, all preaching, all missions, all of everything that we do must start with a right view of God.
Second, faithful stewardship involves a thankful heart. A thankful heart. Look at verse 13. And now we thank You, our God, and we praise Your glorious name.
Now we thank You. This is the context here is David is offering this offering to the Lord. The leaders of the people are going to respond with incredible generosity of worship through giving to the Lord. But before that even happens, here's what the leaders hear David say. We thank You, our God. Gratitude is so important in our life if we're going to be faithful stewards.
[14:35] If you are healthy, you're tempted to want many things.

When you talk to someone who is seriously ill, at least humanly speaking, they only want one thing. Their health restored.
That's it. When we're sick, our wants have a way of getting clarified from our needs. Gratitude goes a long way to understanding how much we really have.
If we're not thankful to the Lord, it's so tempting to compare our life to other people and to be discouraged.
I'm sure for many in this room, we've done that this week. It's just hard in the flesh not to. When you see people in your office that have more than you do, when you see people in your Sunday school class that have more than you do, when you have people who are taking nicer vacations, longer vacations than you're able to, when you see people whose children seem to have more than you're able to provide, it can be so quick for us to be discouraged.
[16:04] And when we're discouraged, it's so difficult to be thankful. But stewardship starts here with a heart of gratitude. Of saying, Lord, you are so good.

You are so great. You have been so kind to us. You have been so benevolent and generous to us. Not in comparing what I have versus what they have, but in looking at what I deserve, and God, what you have done for me.

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David says we are grateful. Faithful stewardship must have a right view of God, and it must have a thankful heart.
Without a thankful heart, you're going to always assume you need more before you are generous. And I don't mean that just financially.
I mean that with all of who we are. Before you can be generous with your time, before you can be generous with your giving, before you can be generous in bearing burdens of people, we're going to always, if we're not grateful, we're going to always think, I need more.
[17:12] I deserve more. I need to accumulate more. And then, on the other side of getting more, then perhaps I'll become a generous person. When truly, faithful stewardship starts by saying, God, I see you for as great as you are, and I know what I deserve, and I recognize how much you've given to me, and if you never gave me one more thing, I am thankful.

It's hard to live in our world and think like that. We're so bombarded and accustomed to people spending billions of dollars to convince us that we need something else in order to be thankful.
I don't play golf anymore. My back didn't allow it. But in my former life, I used to love to play golf. I was never good, but boy, was I a sucker. I was convinced I was one club away from making the PGA Tour.
The club would change because the club I bought was never the club, but I was always convinced. And I would go into these golf stores, and I would hit on their, you know, golf simulators, and they would say, oh, this is a brand new driver.
You can't slice it with this driver if you tried. I said, oh, I better buy that driver then. And for some reason, it didn't work when I would swing it.
[18:40] And I'd go back, and I'd hit on the putting green. They'd say, we've got a brand new putter. You practically can't miss with this putter. And I'd say, I guess I better buy that putter. If I get that putter, I'm probably going on tour.

It's going to work. I was always one club away from being good. And I would go play golf on Fridays, and I was terrible.
I had a nice-looking bag. I had sweet clubs. I was dressed like a golfer. If you saw me get out of my truck and get my golf bag out, and what I was wearing, and the clubs I was pulling on my back, you might think, I bet that guy knows what he's doing.
Until you saw that guy swing the club one time, you'd say, oh, that guy's a sucker. That's what he is. There's always one club away from being good. That may still be true, but the club's not been made yet.
That's how so many of us live our life, isn't it? If I just got a little more money, if we just could get out of this house, if I could just get that one dream vacation, if I could just get this one thing, if I just could have enough money for this one thing, if I could just get this one piece of jewelry, if I could just get this one vehicle, we'd just spend our lives, like I did as a pretend golfer, one thing away from finding fulfillment, only to discover that every time you get that one thing, it did not bring fulfillment, and there's always someone who has something even nicer than that.
[20:16] A thankful heart. That's where stewardship begins. There's a right view of God.

There's a thankful heart. Verses 14 to 16, there's a third aspect of being a faithful steward, and we see it expressed in joyful giving. Verse 14, you need to memorize this, underline this.
Let this verse be in your mind and heart all this week. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly?
How different is this from how so many people think about stewardship today? David says, God, who am I that I would get the joy, the privilege, the honor of worshiping you by willingly, joyfully giving in this way?
Who are these people that are a part of this nation that they would get the joy, like I get the joy, to freely, joyfully, generously show you that we trust you, and that we love you, and that we're thankful?
[21:38] And contrast that, how so many people think today, when the question, if we're honest, is often, how little can I do and still get by? How little can I give and still not have my conscience feel guilty?

How little can I bear the weight of the ministry the church is doing, and not, you know, feel like people are looking down on me? We so often live our life thinking, how little can I do and get by with it?

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Or, we look at other people and think, well, that's their response. That's what they should be doing. David says, God, you've been so good. You've been so kind.
I'm so thankful, and I can't even believe that you give me the joy and the privilege and these people the privilege to be able to worship you and be a part of what you're doing.
You've invited us. You've allowed us. You've allowed us to be a part of the work you are doing. How thankful are we? Church, that's how we've got to think as stewards.
[22:47] How good is God that He allows us to be a part of His work? When we see people baptized as we did last Sunday, these are people in most cases who had preschool teachers who held them and rocked them and prayed over them and children, Sunday school teachers who taught them the foundation of the gospel and parents who loved them and taught them the Bible and people in the church who freely have given generously financial offerings so that our church can do ministry to children and teenagers.

And we've got people in our church who pray over the needs of our church and our staff that every single week is praying systematically through our entire membership directory.
And when someone is baptized, what we are getting to do is say, God, You've allowed us to be a part of what You've done. Yes, only God can save, but He uses your teaching and your prayers and your faithful life and your example and your testimony and only God gives the increase, but You planted and another watered and we get to be a part of that.
How good is God? We get to be a part of that. This very week, as hundreds from our church give generously, this week, there's money going to be spent and given all over the world because You gave.
And there are going to be people in heaven because God in His kindness brought them to salvation and He used missionaries and pastors and Christians in parts of the world we've never been.
[24:37] And they're going to be there because God used that preaching, that gospel declaration, those men and women in gospel evangelism, and they came to faith in Christ.

We got to be a part of that. Who are we to get to be a part of that? David said, who am I and who are my people that You would be so good as to let us be a part of what You're doing?
That is so different than saying, I feel guilty today, I'm going to give a short, small offering to get the guilt off my conscience.
That is so different than saying, I don't want to serve. Somebody else can do that, surely. I don't want to bear this burden for these friends of mine in Sunday school class.
Isn't it somebody else's turn to get to do that? David has a right view of God, a thankful heart, and so joyful giving is just the natural response that comes from that.
[25:54] God, who are we that we would get to do this? He goes on to say, for all things come from You and of Your own we have given You.

For we are strangers before You and sojourners as all our fathers were. Our days on the earth are like a shadow and there is no abiding.
You know what David is saying here? Our time is short. This isn't ours. Everything you have is on loan to you by God to use for His glory.
Everything you have is the Lord's. You need some money for yourself to feed your family? You need some money from yourself to meet the needs of those that you're responsible for?
You need a place to live? You've got to be able to drive and get back and forth from work? You need to be able to enjoy life and enjoy things with your family and with your kids, with your grandkids? But it's all God's.
[27:04] You have what the Lord has meant for you to have and your life is a vapor. It's a mist. It's here today and gone tomorrow. And live your life with eternity in mind.

So many people think to themselves, well, I don't know how people are joyful givers because you just think, I'm not really, I don't have joy when I give.
And I just think that it's instructive for us to see how this is working out in 1 Chronicles 29. The joyful giving came after the right view of God and the thankful heart.
If you would stop and think about who God is and let your heart and mind meditate on the goodness and the greatness and the kindness of God and all that He's done for you and then take time to express your thankfulness and your gratitude, now people who are grateful love to serve and love to give.

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That's why giving really isn't first about a financial thing. It really is a theology thing. Do you understand how great God is? Do you understand how good He's been to you?
[28:21] Let your heart be grateful by meditating on the goodness and the kindness of God and then joyful giving becomes natural for us. Verse 16 says, O Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name comes from your hand and is all your own.

And you say, well that's kind of strange. They're giving what they owned and David says, what we've given to you is what you own. How is that? It's because we're just stewards.
We're stewards. We're not the owner. God is. Let your mind get oriented around that central truth that God owns all things, is the giver, James 1 17, of every good and perfect gift and everything entrusted to you, your life, your time, your resources, your home, all the things He's entrusted to you are things He owns that He's given to you to steward faithfully.
So use everything He's given you, your time, your resources, your finances, your spiritual gifts, everything He's given to you, use them in a way that would honor His name.
You have a right view of God, you have a thankful heart, you have joyful giving and in all, verse 17 and 18 comes from a pure heart. That's number four, a pure heart. Verse 17, I know my God that You test the heart and have pleasures in uprightness.
[30:05] In the uprightness of my heart, I have freely offered all these things and now I have seen Your people who are present here offering freely and joyously to You.

They had a right view of God, they had a thankful heart as they thought about His goodness, they were joyfully giving and He clarifies that they did that because of a pure heart.
And what kind of giving resulted from a pure heart? Freely giving and joyful giving. Do you understand that's how the ministries of this church are provided for?
Joyful, freely, given. Has anybody here ever had someone from the church knock on your door and ask you why you don't give more?
Anybody ever called you and said, hey, we were looking at your giving record and we think you don't give enough? You ever got that phone call? You ever seen a list of names printed in the bulletin of here's the families who give and here's the families who don't?
[31:16] Of course not. Every single thing the Lord allows us to be stewards over has been freely given.

I hope also joyfully given. But it's been freely given. I had somebody ask me at the gym a couple of weeks ago, what are the do's to be a part of your church?
And I thought he meant like what are the things you have to do? He meant D-U-E. Like, what's the annual membership cost? And I thought, we haven't tried that.
Maybe we should. I don't know. I haven't thought of that one. And I said, there's no, there's no do. He's not a believer.
He said, so people can come to your church and just benefit from everything the church does and they never have to contribute? And I said, sure. And he says, sounds like a good deal.
[32:21] He's an unbeliever. He's not thinking about worship. He's thinking about ownership. I could get and receive and take and it cost me nothing?

That's how an owner would think, not a steward. I don't fault or blame him. He's not a believer. But we who know the risen Lord ought to know better, shouldn't we?
Who are we that we get to do this? Walk around our church if you get a chance on Wednesday night. Just take some time right before church starts, after church, walk around and just look at how many people are here serving.
So many volunteers in our children's ministry in Awana with our preschoolers, adults in our youth service helping there, a hundred people in our adult choir rehearsing and getting ready to lead us in music, people who are serving as greeters and eyes and ears around the campus, people who are doing discipleship, leading small groups.
We've got a couple of Bible studies on Wednesday night that go on and then our main Bible study in here in this sanctuary. It's just filled with people in the middle of the week who come here after a long day at work to do nothing but to give away their time and their life and it's not poor pitiful them.
[33:53] Here's the biblical way to think of that. Who are we that we would get such a privilege as that? We get to teach people the gospel. That we get to give people eternal truth.

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That we get to give our time and our money and our effort, everything about us unto the Lord that He somehow takes our imperfect offerings, our imperfect teaching, our imperfect ministry and by His grace and for His glory uses it literally to bring spiritually dead people to everlasting life.
and we get to be a part of that. It needs to come from a pure heart. The Lord doesn't need your money.
The Lord doesn't need your ministry as if there's some deficit in Him. It is our honor and joy to get to be a part of this. A pure heart.
You give me any church anywhere and if that church has a right view of God, if that church is grateful for what the Lord has done, if that church has a pure heart, they will not have a giving problem and they will not have a service problem and they will not have a unity problem because it will be the joy of their life to respond in joyful giving and joyful service and joyful ministry.
[35:23] That leads us to number five. to a life of obedience. Verse 19, Grant to Solomon, my son, a whole heart that he may keep your commandments, your testimonies and your statutes performing all and that he may build the palace for which I have made provision.

Obedience. We're stewards of everything. When we think about stewardship, we often think just about giving and that is a part of it, but all of our life is to be an act of worship and obedience to the Lord.
I love how David prays for Solomon here. Would you give him a heart to keep your commandments? let me encourage you moms and dads and grandparents, pray for the kids in your life that they would follow the ways of the Lord.
Be a faithful steward of your parenting and a faithful steward of your grandparenting. very, very quickly, turn with me to the New Testament to 2 Corinthians 8.
I just want to very quickly show you some New Testament principles here. If we're going to be the kind of church that's faithful to serve and faithful to give and faithful to be stewards as we've talked about this morning, let me just show you quickly some New Testament principles.
[36:54] They're on the bottom of your sermon notes. I want you to be able to write these in just so you can think through these and pray through these as a family this week. 2 Corinthians 8. We want you to know, brothers, about the grace of God that has been given among the churches of Macedonia for in a severe test of affliction their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of generosity on their part.

For they gave according to their means as I can testify and beyond their means of their own accord begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints and this not as we expected but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.
If you go down to verse 8, I say this not as a command but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich for your sake became poor so that you by his poverty might become rich.
Everything is about Christ, loving Christ, honoring Christ, responding to the gospel. Let me give you five quick principles from this passage about our stewardship.
Number one, extreme poverty and abundance of joy existed at the same time. Extreme poverty and abundance of joy existed at the same time.
[38:31] That's verse 2. Their abundance of joy and their extreme poverty overflowed in the wealth of generosity. Don't wait till you have more to be faithful with what you have today.

Would you be a faithful steward today? I know it seems like if you doubled your income it'd be easier to give but think about it. If you doubled your income and you were a faithful giver you're going to have to give a whole lot more then than today.
This isn't a financial issue this really is a theology issue. Do you see God as great as he is? Are you thankful for what he's given to you? Number two they were stewards of what they had been given. Verse 3 says they gave according to their means. They were faithful with what they had. I can tell you lots of people in the world that I wish I had their talents and I wish I had their gifts and I wish I had their ability.
God didn't give that to me. I'm not responsible to be faithful with what he didn't give to me but I should be found faithful with what he has.
[39:51] Number three this is staggering they begged for the joy of giving. They begged for the joy of giving. Verse 4 begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.

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They begged for the joy of giving. Why? Because people who understand who God is and how great he is give freely and give joyfully.
Number four they first gave themselves to the Lord. Verse 5 but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us.
They gave themselves first to the Lord. And number five they saw giving as an act of grace. Verse 6 accordingly we urge Titus that as he had started so he should complete among you this act of grace.
But as you excel in everything in faith and speech and knowledge and all earnestness and in our love for you see that you excel in this act of grace also. Giving as an act of grace. They were stewards and they were faithful.
[41:07] Turn just one chapter over to chapter 9 verse 6 the point is this whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver. We see here that giving is rewarded.
Giving is first a heart issue. Each one must give as he's had in his heart it says not reluctantly not under compulsion freely and joyfully and then thirdly giving is to be done cheerfully.
I was thinking last night as I was reading through these texts again about some of the things the last seven days that had blessed me.
I had conversations with Sunday school teachers last Sunday they were telling me how fun it was for them to get to teach people the Bible and they work hard and they spend hours preparing and studying but they saw it as a joy.
[42:29] Monday we had mom's group here. 18,000 children were here Monday morning. That's what it sounded like. Had our largest adult classroom filled with moms of all ages.

Talking, eating, laughing, eating, praying, eating. That's what I saw. Just the sound of young moms with older moms talking about life and parenting, encouraging each other, building relationships with each other.
Wednesday night I saw Awana teachers, some of whom I know for sure had to rush straight from work to get here Wednesday night so they would be here on time.
not complaining, not mad about it, but saying what a joy it was to be able to invest in the lives of children.
I was at a funeral Tuesday and saw a number of families from our church that were there to rally around church members who had lost a loved one there to celebrate when it's time to celebrate and to cry when it's time to cry.
[43:55] I saw people whose lives were so intertwined taking off work and adjusting your schedule in short notice to be there with someone you love, to grieve with them.

It's not a burden. It's a privilege to love people that deeply. And I was touched as I saw that. I saw volunteers in our church who are equipped and trained taking upon themselves the added hours of work of spending time discipling and counseling people in the Word that needed help.
I saw a church last Sunday talking about mission partners and getting updates from missionaries that our church financially supports and we spent time praying for them and I looked and I watched as hundreds of people in the sanctuary were praying for people, some of whom they've never met them, who are ministering most of the time in a part of the world, most of whom here have never physically been and we give to them and we pray for them because we love them.
Had conversations this week about families who are in the process of adoption, our church financially helps and supports families who are adopting because people joyfully and freely give and had conversations about families and praying for them going through that process.
And I think to myself, who are we? And we get to be a part of this. this isn't a burden. This is a privilege.
[45:44] Who are we that God would be so good to us that He would entrust us with everything we have and everything we need and more than we need so that we can use our finances, our resources, our lives to be able to worship Him and to serve each other and to make a difference all around the world?

I just say, as David said in 1 Chronicles 29, who are we that we would get to so joyfully and freely give in this way? Give our lives away.

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Give our income to the Lord. Give our life and ministry to Him. And I just want to begin the message and end the message the same place.
Set your mind on who God is. Don't first take a spiritual gifts test. Don't first give a financial offering. Don't first say, I've got to adjust my calendar. let your first thought be on the goodness and the greatness and the glory of God. And then you think about all He's given to you.
[47:08] And you think and you meditate until your heart is grateful. And then you'll say, like David said, how sweet it is that He would allow us to give so freely and so joyfully.

No one's not going to adore this week either. Nobody's going to call your phone and ask you about your giving or your serving. I don't even think there's going to be membership dues next week you're asked to give.
This church, by the grace of God, is able to do what we do by people who freely and joyfully say, this is a privilege.
If you don't know the Lord as your Savior, you can't serve your way into heaven. You can't give your way into heaven. The Lord Jesus Christ lived a perfect life and died on a cross and was raised back to life.
That those who would believe in Him would have everlasting life. This morning, don't first give an offering.
[48:45] First, give your heart to God. Give yourself to Him. Receive through faith the precious gift made possible through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then let those of us who know Him with a pure heart. Let us pray. Let us pray. Let us pray. Be faithful stewards of all He has entrusted to our care.
Not as a burden we bear, but as the sweetest blessing. And to say, God, who are we that you would give us such a privilege?
Let's be found faithful. Stewards. Not owners. He's the owner. We're the steward. We exist for His glory.
Lord, you have been good to us. And we give you thanks. You have been kind. You have been generous.
[49:55] I pray it would be our heart's desire to walk with You in joyful obedience. In Christ's name, Amen.

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