

**STEWARDSHIP**  
**Taught by Ted Wood**  
**Session: November 16, 2012**

Oh Lord God of Hosts, who is mighty as you are, oh Lord, with your faithfulness all around you. I will look to the Lord, I will wait for the God of my salvation, and my God will hear me. Lord God, you said in your Word that your Word is like a two-edged sword. You said in your Word, that your Word is truth. We pray that that truth may pierce our hearts for the effective changing of our lives and our desires so that we seek after you and seek to serve your body, and we ask this in Jesus' name.

*Audience Members: Amen!*

Well, Bruce, he was looking for someone to take his class today, and he looked at somebody and they were gone, and somebody else, and quite literally, I was, it's like when I tried to get a date to the junior high school prom; I was [UNCLEAR]. Very sad, very sad. I also want to say, Don, I really appreciate Don's playing. It's not only beautiful, but I don't know, I'm a big lover of hymns. Even before I was a believer, I loved hymns. Don plays... a lot of these tunes that he's playing go with hymns that are pretty old. I'm not especially enamored with early 20<sup>th</sup> century hymns that are easy to sing, but sometimes the words are pretty vacuous. The tunes he's playing have words to them that are fairly heavy. It's amazing the amount of content that you get in some of the earlier hymns, that we see missing today. It's almost like we've dumbed down our hymns that we can't say the heavy things in these words.

I was also reflecting on what Carl said about funerals. I always found that actual funerals are the best service to do because with baptisms and weddings, you really don't know how things are going to turn out. With a funeral, it's all settled. You don't have to say, you know, is this couple actually going to stay married? Is this person being baptized, are they going to grow up in the Lord? At the funeral, it's all done. That's something I don't have to agonize about.

Bruce has asked me to speak on the issue of stewardship. There are some handouts back there that I brought. Bruce always seems to light on those subjects that I've never really done a lot of study with, and this is no exception. I'm going to be talking, sharing with you what I've learned about the whole issue of stewardship as it appears in the Scripture. I guess I'm going to begin with some presuppositions about this whole subject.

These are my presuppositions. This is the basis of what I'm going to speak about in terms of stewardship. The first premise is "Do not marvel that I say to you, 'You must be born again.'" That's my first premise about stewardship. You must be born again. My second premise is "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come." My third premise is "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness, into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy." My fourth premise, "You are the body of Christ, and individually members of it."

When one moves from being dead in sin to being alive in Christ, when one moves from darkness into light, you are part of a dark world and a system that is under the control of Satan. Then through conversion, through the grace of God, you move into his kingdom—you become citizens of this kingdom—and you move into his marvelous light.

You don't move into that as an individual. You may move into it as an individual, but you don't stay there as an individual. You're connected to all other Christians in a supernatural way that's more profound than anything that we experience in this life. That's the basis that I'm thinking. Stewardship

has to do with this connection, how we're connected to one another. We don't do a very good job in trying to have folks understand the importance of this connectedness; of this relationship that we have with all of the believers in his body.

Often we think about our faith in terms of its "me and Jesus." I was in a [UNCLEAR] Bible study last Sunday. I actually preached at a church on the subject of stewardship. I went to a Bible study between the sermons. During the Bible study, we were talking about how we exercise discipline within the body. One of the persons in that group said, "Well, my relationship is just with Jesus and me. I don't have any right to judge others, and neither do they have a right to judge me." Now that was very interesting because that woman was absolutely wrong. It was interesting, I was able to get her understanding of the body, the life of the body, that when we're brought out of darkness, we're brought into his light, we're brought into that body. I said to her, she was a recovering addict, and recovery was very important to her on the 12 step plan, which is a tremendous plan. I said to her, "Could you recover from your addiction on your own?" It was like a light bulb went on. She said, "No, I couldn't." I said, "Well, that's why you need the body. It's just like your AA group, where everybody is very honest, 'Hi. My name is Ted, and I'm a sinner.'"

What did John Newton say? "This is what I know. I am an awful sinner and he is a great Savior." That's what you do in AA. You stand up and you say, "I am an alcoholic." In the body, we stand up and say, "I am a sinner," and then they say, "Hello Ted." And then they incorporate us into that healing that comes only through the body. The same thing goes with stewardship.

Let's look at number one. According to the New Testament, what is a steward? There are two words here that are going to be important. They're Greek words, but they tie into this whole understanding of the body life. There is the word *oikos*, which means house or home in the Greek. It's a very straight forward word. Then there is the *oikonomos*, the house ruler, the manager of the house. That manager of the house is a steward. That word, *oikonomos*, is translated steward, and sometimes in your translations, it's translated as manager.

Those are two very important concepts. I think it was Strong's Concordance says a steward is a manager superintendent to whom the head of the house has entrusted the management of his affairs, the care of receipts and expenditures and the duty of dealing out the proper portion to every servant, and even to the children not yet of age. The master has his house. He's given the *oikonomos*, the steward, the ruler of that house, he is the actual ruler, but he's given the management duty over to one who is a steward. That person is to be sure that the expenditures are made, the bills are paid, the children are in order, and that every servant gets what they're supposed to be getting.

We get that image in the Luke 16:1-2, in the parable where Jesus said to the disciples, "<sup>1</sup>There was a rich man who had a steward," an *oikonomos*, "and charges were brought to him that this man was wasting his possessions. <sup>2</sup>And he called him and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Turn in the account of your stewardship.'" In the parable, there's a man who owns his household. He hears that this steward is not managing the affairs of that house properly, and he asks him to turn in an account of everything he's done.

Generally speaking, in the world of the New Testament, the steward, the *oikonomos*, was a freed slave. He was a freed man. I think that's very interesting because we have that same idea in the New Testament about who we are. If the son sets you free, you are free indeed, so indeed we, in that role as being stewards, God's stewards, and we're going to get into that, we're like that steward in the first century A.D. We've been set free, that we've been purchased with a price. God had to come in, and his Son, and pay a price for us. We were formerly in bondage and slavery to the system of this world, and we were part of the family of Satan. But God came in and purchased us so that we could serve him as

free stewards.

What is the household that the steward manages? The household is *oikeios*, which is the word that you use for household in the New Testament. It means belonging to a house or a family. The steward belongs to a house or a family. What is that house? It's referred to as the household of God, which is the church of the Living God, a pillar buttress of the truth. That's an amazing statement to make about the church. Most of us think about church in terms of well, that's where we go and we get our batteries recharged. That's where we go and have fellowship, the three sacraments—baptism, communion and coffee hour. {LAUGHTER} We have this very encouraging time and it kind of helps us get down the road.

We'll look at how in 1 Timothy the church is described. It's called the household of God and it is the pillar, which is in Greek, the word is support or a column, and the buttress, which is the word for a foundation. It's the pillar and buttress of the truth. That's really what the church is about. The problem is that we get out into the world, we have this tremendous amount of influence and information from the world, and it's telling us what reality is all about. The world is telling us this is what's real; this is what's worth investing in, this is what's true. That's the message we get all the time.

Some of us, I was in a conversation last night with some Christians, and they were talking about, "Oh, the influences of the world," I mean, what do you expect the world to do? Are you surprised that the world tries to urge you to sin and to disbelieve and to trust in yourself and trust in the things of this world and the riches and everything that it provides? I mean, do you expect them to say, "No, you should trust in Jesus"? We're really surprised, as if the world...the world can't do anything else but that. That's all they can do.

People who are unregenerated, who've not been born again, would not move from darkness into his marvelous light, those folks can't help themselves. They're doing what comes naturally. That's when we go into the church, where we gather as the body, we have to be in a place that is the pillar and buttress of the truth.

The most important thing that you can have in a church is the teaching of the truth of God. Whether that pastor happens to be a great preacher or they have a great Sunday school program, or there's great time for the kids and youth group. I mean, I understand all of that. But the most important thing is that that church be the pillar and buttress of the truth. It's also called, this household is also called, the household of faith. The steward manages the household of God, which is the church of the Living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

Who are the members of God's household? It says in Ephesians 2:19-20, "<sup>19</sup>You are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God," the *oikos* of God, "<sup>20</sup>built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone." Once again, out of darkness, strangers and aliens. We've been made fellow citizens with all those who've been chosen from God from eternity, and members of his household. That's who the members of the household are.

Who are the actual stewards of God's household? We've talked about what a steward is. We've talked about who the steward manages, who's part of that household. Now who are the stewards of God's household? Well, there's a specific answer and a general answer for that because the Scripture speaks about both. First, the stewards of God's household are spoken of as the church's leaders or elders. In the Scripture, it might refer to them as the overseers. The word is *episcopoi*. We get our word *episcopal* from that. *Epi*=over, *scopo*=seeing; you're overseeing. The stewards of the church, of the household of God, are those who are overseeing the church.

This is how one should regard, 1 Corinthians 4:1, this is how one should regard us, and Paul is speaking about Paul, Appollos, Peter and some of the other leaders, as servants. “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.” (1 Corinthians 4:1-2) Paul said, “I have a responsibility. I’m a steward. I am managing, in the church, which is the pillar and foundation of the truth, I am managing the mysteries of God.”

What are those mysteries? What does it mean that he’s managing those mysteries? Well, we can find it in 1 Corinthians 2:7 (you’ll have to look this up because it’s not in my sheet there). “Yet among the mature, we do impart wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or the rulers of this age.” Once again, this age and the rulers of this age have no idea what the truth is. They are totally clueless about that. In fact, one of the greatest things that God gives you at regeneration, when he births you again, God gives you an apprehension, an embracing of the truth. This is the beginning of the whole process as far as I’m concerned. Unless you understand the truth about the gospel, who you are, who God is and what Jesus has done, unless you get that, there’s no regeneration. God gives you the truth, and that truth drives everything else in a Christian’s life.

“None of the rulers of this age, they did not understand any of this, who are doomed to pass away. But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glory.” None of the rulers of this age understood this. Or if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory. But as it is written, what no eye has seen, nor ear heard, no heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him. These things God has revealed to us through the spirit, for the spirit searches everything, even the depths of God” (1 Corinthians 2:8-10).

All of these things were written for our glory, these mysteries, that the world does not understand, were meant for our glory. I’m very much taken with the understanding of glory. This has always been helpful to me. The Hebrew word for glory is kabod. Of course, the Hebrews wouldn’t write it that way, but nonetheless. That meaning, that word has a meaning, a sense of weight and substance or abundance. Weight or substance.

We’re saying, “Glory to God,” or “It was a glorious thing,” I mean, what do we actually mean by that? Is that just another way of saying, “Whoopee?” Glory to God! Whoopee! Whoopee for God! Well no, it’s much more significant because what that word means is weight. The fact of the matter is outside of Christ, you have no weight. There is no substance to you. We used to talk about, what was it, was it George Bush who used to say he didn’t have enough gravitas or what was the term that we used? There’s no weight to us. When we’re given glory, when we’re assumed into God’s glory, when that is a gift, when we are glorified, that means we begin to have substance.

I’ve told the story...my son, until he was 19 or 20, made nothing of his life. He was running with the wrong crowd. He did all the things he shouldn’t do—drank too much, drugs, women, the whole thing. He was flunking out of college. He came to me and said, “Dad, I think I’m going to enlist in the Marines.” I said, Bishop Rogers said, “Way to go!” I agree. {LAUGHTER} I say the Lord, the Marines and a good woman saved my son’s life. That was the trinity that worked on him. {LAUGHTER} All in consort.

I said to my son, “Daniel, that’s great. But let me tell you something. Up to this point in your life, you’ve accomplished nothing of substance. Everything that you thought was important and fun and exciting to do has no meaning at all. Whatever you’re going to do, if you go into the Marines, give it 100%.” Well, he went to Parris Island for the three-month boot camp. He was writing letters after the second week crying about how awful it was, how he was going to flunk out.

He only told me this recently, he only revealed several things recently to me about what his life was like before he came to Christ. He said he got into a fight in boot camp with a Puerto Rican. He used a racial slur. At that point, the drill sergeant decided he was going to break Daniel and drive him out of the corps. Daniel's life was like hell from that point on, because he said in the Marines, "We don't have divisions between ethnic groups or racial groups."

By the grace of God, and none of us knew this, he gave Daniel the ability to shoot well and he was the number two marksman in his troop of 400 people, and he graduated honor graduate. When the troop went by, I went down to Parris Island to see him, and as the troop marched by, his fellow graduates, I sat in the stands, I wept...I get choked up about it now. I've also got a dry throat. {LAUGHTER} I wept as he stood there and I watched them go by, the troops. I went up to see him. His sergeant released him. He came up to me, and the first thing he said is, he did not say hi dad, glad you're here or anything of that sort. The first thing he said to me was, "I guess I've accomplished something of substance." I said, "You're exactly right." That was the beginning of the reclaiming of my son's life.

I'm saying, in the same way, that until you come to Christ, you have no weight. You're ephemeral. You're an absolute lightweight. But once you've come to Christ, you have the weight of glory, the kabod, the very heaviness and the substance and abundance of God is yours. You're part of that. You've been drawn into it. You've been made part of it. You've been put into Christ. Remember Bruce says, the expression, "in Christ," is used 129 times in the New Testament to describe Christians. When you go into Christ, you have all his substance and weight.

That's part of that mystery. The mystery is also talked about in Ephesians 3:2. Paul talks here, he says, "2assuming that you have heard of the stewardship," remember the stewardship, the oikonomos, "the stewardship (the management) of God's grace that was given to me for you, 3how the mystery was made known to me by revelation, as I have written briefly. 4When you read this, you can perceive my insight into the mystery of Christ, 5which was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. 6This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

Paul is saying that he is a steward; he is managing this mystery. Not only are the church leaders, the overseers, not only are they stewards of the household of God, in terms...and the stewardship they have is of this mystery, of this great truth, that indeed Jesus Christ is the Savior of all of God's people, regardless of whether they're Jew, Gentile or whatever else they are.

Also Scripture talks about us being members of the household of God and stewards of that household. It says in 1 Peter 4:10, "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's very grace. Whoever speaks as one who speaks oracles of God, whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order that in everything, God may be glorified," that means God gets the substance and the weight, "through Christ Jesus." Stewards of those who've received the gift and they take this gift in. It's the opposite of asking or requesting a gift.

The purpose of that gift, that stewardship, is that each of you have been given a gift to serve the body. Your job is to steward that gift, is to manage that gift. I've often said I think my gift, my steward, the gift I've been given to steward, is an exposition on the Word of God. I love to do this. This is not a hard thing for me. I wake up first thing in the morning, and I have this question in my mind, "What does that word mean?" or "What does that verse mean?" I get right on the computer, I go to Bible Gateway, and I love to do that. I'm not, that is my strength, and that is the gift that God has given me. That is the stewardship I have of that gift.

Others have another stewardship. I think about Ed Glover and the gifts that God has given him in terms of reaching out over on the North Side. That's his gift. Each of us have a gift, and that gift is meant to build each other up, to strengthen where we are. That is the purpose of our stewardship.

Next is what are the qualities of a steward when serving his gifts? I guess I want to stop right there. Are there any thoughts or questions up to this point? It's been pretty modest. Carl, you look like you're about to say something.

***Audience Member:** This, what you just said here about each receiving gifts. It's true. What's been laying on my heart over the years, and I preach this, I've been to Colorado and I've seen the beautiful waterfalls and that fresh water, and that tells me when you get the gift of God it's like making a nice vessel and filling it with that refreshing water. But we make the mistake of putting it on the shelf and saying, "Look." You close up a container of water and check it in a couple of days and it stinks. You cannot let it die in you; it much flow through you.*

Yeah, that's good. Exactly. That's what it's meant, it's meant for the whole body. It's not meant for you; it's meant for the whole body. We've talked about this before. I think the key here is for you to seek out and ask God to show you what that gift is you are to steward. If that is the gift you're to steward, that's where you focus.

A lot of people say, "Well, I need to do this well and this well and this well." No, you don't have to do that well. Even in the business world, I think the thing I've found is that the key is to find out what you do well and focus on that. The things I do poorly, I can work on, but I have a sneaking suspicion, at 64, I'm going to die and still have those problems. {LAUGHTER} I'm not overly optimistic about my progress between now and whenever I die. My dad died at 82 and I'm 64. I've got 18 more years. I don't think the things where my weaknesses are, where I'm not gifted. I don't think those are going to come along. I think what God wants me to do is to find out what I am doing that he's given me to do, to steward, to manage, for God's household, and to strengthen that. That's what I try to do.

I think it behooves each of you to figure out what God has given you to do, to steward. What is your stewardship in the household of God, as it says, "in order that in everything God might be glorified, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies. Whoever speaks is one who speaks oracles of God. Whoever serves as one who serves in the strength that God supplies."

We have folks in this group that do a great job of service. They need to focus on that and do that well for the body. If you're not a good teacher or preacher, just forget it. You're not a good preacher or teacher. That's not your gift.

***Audience Member:** I wanted to mention that [UNCLEAR] has what they call the strengths finders. In that process, they say find out what your strengths are. Find out where you can win. Spend all your time on that. Your weaknesses—forget about it. Don't spend time on it. [UNCLEAR] 20 or 30 year research [UNCLEAR].*

Thank you. That's good.

***Audience Member:** They could have just read the Bible. {LAUGHTER} Think of the money they'd have saved.*

Do many of you feel like you have a sense of what you've been asked to steward? You think you have a sense of that? Does it concern some of you that you don't have a sense of that?

*Sig: I thought you were going to talk about managing money and things...*

I'm not talking about managing money.

*Sig: I know. That's why I'm [UNCLEAR] on you. When you put it that way, I think yeah, there are a lot of gifts that I think I could offer more intently or directly, intentionally, I guess, to the body of Christ. But I've never thought of stewardship that way. I thought of it as managing the physical resources, like money, use of my possessions or use of my resources to help other people. What you're really saying is the talents that we have to give back to the body of Christ, to encourage them or we build them up, or whatever they... Every one reacts differently to what you give them, but it's more, like Bruce has said many times, give to others what God has given you. It's not ours to own; it's ours to share.*

I guess what I'm trying to say is I'm taking what Bruce said and saying that's actually a role described in the Bible. It's called being an oikonomos. You're an oikonomos. You're a manager of the house of God in that area that the Master of the house has given you to manage.

Sig, for instance, Sig is very entertaining. Wouldn't you say? Sig is very entertaining. He could take that entertainment and only use it with the world and get work or whatever. What Sig has chosen to do by the grace of God, he manages that for our benefit. I often think folks come in here, they may be questioning, they may be doubting, "Here I am in a men's Bible study, what's this going to be like. It's going to tell me I should quit lusting, and that's going to be basically the message," because that's an easy message for men. We can always hit you between the eyes with that one. {LAUGHTER} Hey guys, just quit lusting. Okay. That's it. Any questions? {LAUGHTER} That's really unfair.

*Audience Member: I just want to point out that he works for you, too.*

Who does?

*Audience Member: Sig.*

He works for me. He has in the past, yes. And it's been good.

What I'm saying is that Sig has taken that and fellows come in and what do they think. I'm often thinking, "What are people thinking when they come in here?" Is there some apprehension, folks who have maybe not been to church or to a men's Bible study. Sig gets up there, and it's like, it's funny. And everybody's laughing and there's a good spirit. We put down Sig and he puts down us. There's a great give and take. But see, he manages that.

*Sig: [UNCLEAR]...an easy target. {LAUGHTER}*

Well, you see, what we're doing here. You see, if a man hears that, he's going to say, "Hey, I can relax," because when you joke with someone, you're telling them I accept you. That's a way, if it's not at their expense...one of the things that humor does is it lets the person know, "I accept you. I like you. I can joke with you." Sig does that, and that sets the mood, and then guys are ready. Their guards are down. Even in fundraising, you know, I do fundraising consulting. I want, the first thing I want to have happen in that solicitation of a gift, is I want the resistance to go down from the person who's hearing the message, so I'm going to do whatever I need to do to lower that resistance and apprehension. You go in there and the person says, "Okay. Tell me what you want. How much money do you want?" I try to avoid that question for as long as I can because I want the person to slow down and relax. The same thing happens here. The exact same thing.

**Bishop Rogers:** *I guess what I want...do you want to convey the impression that you only one gift? Are you really saying you have one dominant gift?*

Well, that's right. I don't want to get off on the whole subject of gifts. I'm more in the management of gifts.

**Bishop Rogers:** *I understand.*

There are those gifts, whatever you want to call them, giftedness or whatever. I'm not being overly rigid here. I'm talking about...that's what God has given you, to give you weight and to give weight to the body. So absolutely, there could be several.

**Audience Member:** *I think, parallel that in terms of importance of gifts and talents and capabilities and skills, a real key component is passion. I think that without passion, then what is able to be accomplished is really reduced significantly. You can have all the skill in the world, but if you don't have a passion. I've not been able to figure out how you manufacture...*

You cannot. You cannot do it. You absolutely cannot. That's right.

**Audience Member:** *[UNCLEAR]...so the concern I have, [UNCLEAR], what am I passionate about? If you have skills and talents and you can do lots of different things, that's fine, but what is that drives you. Not everyone is driven. Some people are extremely passionate about something and they'll drive and they'll accomplish and they'll achieve. Other people, not so much.*

We have to leave room here for personality types. I know when I worked for Ketchum, Inc., I would supervise fundraising consultants throughout the country. I found there were some consultants that came in and it was like the high school band and rah rah and let's get our bayonets and go over the top. They had that attitude. There were others that you had to take their pulse to see if they were dead or not. Both of those types got the job done. Both of them. I've become less and less concerned about how you present yourself overtly to me. God has the way of working through that.

I would just take from what you said about passion, I think this is very important. I said to you the first thing I believe that God gives every generation is an apprehension of the truth. All at once, you say, "My gosh, this is true." That's what happened to me when I was in college. Steve laid out the Gospel for me. For the first three days, it was interesting and a nice BS session in a college dorm. On the evening of the third, all at once, for whatever reason, by a miracle of God, the regeneration, I said, "He's talking about me!" Isn't that amazing? For three days, he's presenting the Gospel and how I as a sinner need a Savior, and it was a philosophical topic. I had nothing to do with me. For some reason, all at once, that apprehension of the truth, what he's saying is true and it's meant for me."

Now the thing that follows, I believe, truth, the very thing that follows next after apprehension of the truth, is a desire. God gives a desire for him and the things of him. This is where the passion comes in. All Christians, all your life is always driven by desire. What do you desire? What do you want out of life? "Well Ted, I have mixed feelings about various things. I want to do that, but..." Well, in the end, one of those guys' desires is going to win out. What God gives you, at regeneration, is a desire for him and the things of him.

The unregenerate man does not only not apprehend the truth, the unregenerate man does not have a desire for the truth. The unregenerate man does not desire the things of God. Basically, the things of God, for the unregenerate man, are irrelevant. You can get to the point of hating the things of God and being repulsed by them, but in the end, it has nothing to do with them.



It's incredible to me that people will never settle things with God and go to their death really thinking it's kind of irrelevant. I'm amazed that death doesn't drive more people's motivation to get right with God, "People die, well, I guess, you know, everybody dies." Well, you know, you're going to die and then there's a judgment. "Yeah, well, whatever." Whatever? Whatever? When you think about spending eternity, isn't that motive enough? It's not, because the unregenerate man does not believe it's true. They think what they're living in, the world they're living in, the culture, the influences, the family, the business—that's what's true. It takes a supernatural act for anyone to come to the place where they say, "Gosh! This is true!" After you hear it's true, after God wakes your heart to the truth, then you will act, because men always act by what they believe is true. If you believe the world is true in reality, that's what you act on. If you believe that Jesus Christ indeed is the way, the truth and the life, and that no one comes to the Father but by me, if you believe that, then you'll act accordingly. The truth will drive everything else in your life, and it will give you the desire. That desire will be more focused in the passion doing a particular thing.

**Audience Member:** *Adrian Rogers, this morning, was talking about love and hate. He said, "If you love something then you hate also."*

If you love something, then you hate it.

*Yes. Not it. You hate the opposite. God loves truth. He hates sin. He went on for 20 minutes about [UNCLEAR] out of the Bible, one list, I didn't catch where it was, but he said it's there, of all the things that God hates. Does that have a relation to passion.*

I mean, you'd be passionate one or the other, I think, either loving or hating. I guess what I'm saying is that I think the real problem is that the world doesn't find any meaning in God.

**Bishop Rogers:** *They just say, "I'm not interested."*

I'm not interested.

**Bishop Rogers:** *"I'm okay. I don't need a Savior."*

I'm really not interested. Right I don't need...I'm glad it works for you. God bless you. I think that's a good idea. I'm glad it works for you, but you know what, it really...it doesn't mean anything to me because it's really not true.

**Audience Member:** *Does that nonchalant turn into hate of God?*

Well, it could. I mean, if pressed...yeah, pressed. Satan will always act in hatred. But generally, speaking, that's not what we're facing in this world. We're not facing, in our culture, that. We're facing...

**Bishop Rogers:** *Indifference.*

Indifference. Apathy.

**Bishop Rogers:** *Give it time, though.*

Right Give it time. We've seen in...absolutely, when Satan is released, then he has great hatred.

**Carl:** [UNCLEAR]...90% of the people say that they are a Christian [UNCLEAR] and the problem with [UNCLEAR] is that the Gospel has been so watered down, that we have forsaken the salvation of what the Word of God really is.

Right.

**Carl:** And what has happened [UNCLEAR] the church, the church, the household of God, we've got to stand up and hold fast to those principles and not compromise in the effort to try to entertain [UNCLEAR]...we've got to not entertain them, we've got to teach the Word of God. [UNCLEAR]...in order for that Word to flow out of you, it's someone has to got to be put in you. [UNCLEAR]...and then we are, as you said, [UNCLEAR] stewards, and we have to be stewards over what he's given, make sure that we teach [UNCLEAR].

I like what you said. I would just add to that, we've talked about the rivers of living water flow out from us. This is the promise that Jesus made to those who have been born again. But that water comes in, not only kind of between Jesus and I, but it comes in from the body. Jesus is channeling his power through...well, this sounds a little new age like Edgar Casey, but in essence, I become the conduit for the power of God to you. As I'm speaking here, there are some who say, "Okay, fine. Interesting Ted. I know that. Fine. That's great." But there are others who are going to be hit by it, and their life from this point on will be different because it's the power of God's Word, because the Word of God is living and powerful.

**Carl:** That's the reason [UNCLEAR]...we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us. As long as we move us out of the way and make sure God [UNCLEAR]...see God and not see us.

Well, and I will tell you that God will get you out of the way. I think, in my flesh, I am not capable of getting out of the way. God has to do a serious work on me. That's when it talks here about the qualities of the steward, that first one, and we won't have time to get into the rest, but it talks about, in that same section of 1 Peter, where it talks about how we've all been made stewards of the very grace of God. It says, "Since therefore Christ suffered in the flesh, arm yourself with the same way of thinking, for whoever has suffered in the flesh, has ceased from sin."

We suffer for righteousness's sake. We suffer because of persecution. And we really don't get much of that. I mean, I think that in my career, there are some clients that haven't hired me because they know I'm a Christian, but that doesn't happen very often. What I mostly suffer for is my own sin. God has a way of using my sin to crank down on me and to break open that vessel so that his grace can flow through, and to get me out of the way. He loves me so much, he'll push me out of the way. He'll do that, he'll accomplish that, by the revealing of my sin to myself and to others.

Watchman Nee has a great image that he uses, Christian evangelist from the earlier part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He talks about, he was sitting with a brother at a table. They were talking about what it means to be broken in Christ. Watchman Nee took up a biscuit, like a cracker, and he broke it and then he put it together and he held it up to the fella, and then he touched the top of that cracker and it fell over. He said, "When we've been broken, we will yield to the slightest touch from the Master's hand." That's what brokenness is about.

All the difficulty you're going through, whether it's because of your own sin or because of your circumstances, all of that is meant to break you so that you will yield to the slightest touch from the Master's hand. There's no other way around it. That is our message. If that message is difficult, to get to

the place where you're a steward, if that's difficult to hear, I mean, that is the truth. And the truth will set you free.

Anything that you're going through. I have, right now, a client that is, that won't sign a contract. It's reducing my income this month by 40%. Okay. I guess that must be God doing something. It's not the client's fault. It's God's doing. That's the way God makes me...he says, "Okay. Forty percent less income this month. You think I can handle this, Ted? You think I'm competent to carry you through? Do you think that my provision is enough for you? Or are you only looking at that little pittance that's in your bank account and in your checkbook? Is that what you're looking at?" "Yes, Lord, I am. Okay." {LAUGHTER} "Well, you know what, Ted, I can actually make that smaller. How do you like that?" {LAUGHTER} I said, "No, Lord, I'd rather just say okay, fine. It's not the client, it's you and your marvelous work changing my life to make me into the person and servant you want me to be."

Why don't we close in prayer.

The Lord be with you.

***Audience Members:** And also with you.*

Let us pray. Lord God, in your Word, you have told us that you have given us stewardship of the various varied grace that you've given us. We pray, Lord, that you make clear to us that grace that you have particularly given to each one of us, and that you'd use that grace to build up your body so that the life of Christ may flow through your body to us and that we in turn may give to others. We ask this in your Name. Amen!