



Ps. 24:1 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

1 Tim. 6:7-8 For we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content.

1 Peter 4:10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace.

Eph.4:1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called.

As mentioned in the previous article, our understanding of stewardship starts with the knowledge that everything was created by God. He is the owner. (*Ps. 24:1*) We, on the other hand, come into this world with nothing and leave with nothing. (*1 Tim. 6:7-8*) Thus, we are only stewards entrusted with blessings from God, and we are to use all that God has given to us, for the roles for which He has called us. We call this our vocation (or calling). Consider the following excerpts from the article "Planning Year-Round Stewardship" by Rev. Larry Reinhardt:

"The word *vocation* means "calling"-God's calling. God calls us through Baptism to be His Christians. Through marriage, God calls us to be husbands and wives. If the Lord blesses us with children, He calls us to be parents. Each of these callings, these vocations, calls us to service; indeed they call us to a divine sort of service. God runs the world using men and women as his instruments. God blesses children by giving them faithful parents to raise them. God blesses the whole world through the work of His Church- a work that all the baptized have a role in."

"Each of our vocations has a claim on us- every part of us; our time, our money, our prayers, our concern and so on. A father who gave away all his whole income to the church would not be a faithful father. His vocation as father means he must use that income to raise his kids. Likewise, a Christian who gives but a pittance toward the Word and Sacrament ministry of the church is being unfaithful to his vocation as a Christian. That vocation also has a claim on his generosity."

Viewing stewardship through this lens of vocation can help us see that it is not simply about giving more, but about living the life for which God has created you. **All** aspects of living (time, resources, skills, prayers, etc.), in **all** the vocations to which you have been called (in the church, the family, the workforce, society, etc.). Your vocation is your own. God has created you for a specific purpose and gives you specific gifts to use to help achieve that purpose in His kingdom. (*1 Peter 4:10*)

Fortunately, we have good opportunities to help us examine our values and attitudes toward the life we are living, in the light of the Word of the Lord. Being present in worship, hearing the Word and receiving the Sacrament regularly, taking time to pray and read and study God's Word in daily devotions and Bible Study can help us discern the differences between what the world is telling us and what God is telling us. It can bring into clearer focus the vocation God has for us and how we can joyfully fulfill our calling. And it can help shape our behaviors to, as Paul writes, "walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called," (*Eph. 4:1*)

To God be the Glory!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, grant Your mercy and grace to Your people in their many and various callings. Give them patience, and strengthen them in their Christian vocation of witness to the world and of service to their neighbor in Christ's name; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen