

STEWARDSHIP SERMON

November 20, 2011

Money Matters

Why Become a Generous Christian?

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be now and always acceptable unto you O lord our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Please be seated.

I would first like to thank Darcey for the opportunity to bring you this stewardship message.

My name is David Hamon and when my partner Debbie and I moved to Oakville 3 years ago we looked at our options for churches and chose St. Simons based on the open and welcoming atmosphere we experienced when we attended the 8:15 services during our church shopping Sundays. In the spring of this year Heather asked me to join the stewardship committee and I thought I would help out not quite sure of what my role on the committee would entail. I do not do a great deal of public speaking and when I do, I only do it on subjects I am comfortable with and have some knowledge about. Now imagine my horror when at the stewardship committee meeting in September it was suggested that I be the presenter of the stewardship message on Stewardship Sunday as I would be a fresh face for you the audience. At the meeting I said I would reflect on the suggestion and report back. I thought about it, prayed about it, and reached the conclusion that if I had faith and let God work through me that everything would work out in the end. So here I am before you, way out of my comfort zone.

Three weeks ago on All Saints and Souls Sunday you heard from Lynda on one aspect of our vision statement- spirituality and about how "Money Matters" here at St. Simon's. Over the next few weeks Lynda will also be giving more examples of why Money Matters here at St. Simons.

However today, on Stewardship Sunday, I will be talking to you about becoming a generous Christian and I will provide you the life changing reasons WHY you should do so.

We are often told we "should" do something without being told "why". We should read our Bibles daily, we should give to God.

My message today will give everyone (regardless of their financial circumstances) 5 reasons "WHY" to faithfully give.

The Bible provides us good reasons for giving and some of what I am about to say may take some of you out of your comfort zone. That could be a good thing if it gets you thinking.

First reason – Generous giving allows you to see God as your provider.

In Deuteronomy 8:17-18 we are reminded

then you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth.’
“And you shall remember the LORD your God, for *it is* He who gives you power to get wealth,
that He may establish His covenant which He swore to your fathers, as *it is* this day.

Give generously to acknowledge that God has provided for you.

Second reason –Generous giving allows you to overcome financial fear and worry.

In Matthew 6 verses 31-33 says

“Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’
For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these
things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to
you.

Give generously and things will work out. God will provide you with what you really need.

Third reason – Generous giving allows you to bring order to your finances

In Proverbs 3:9 we are advised

Honor the LORD with your possessions,
And with the first fruits of all your increase

Put giving to the Lord first and everything else will fall into place naturally.

Fourth reason – Generous giving allows you to fight the dragon of materialism with the sword of giving.

In Luke Chapter 12 in the Parable of the Rich Fool verse 15 we are reminded -

And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the
abundance of the things he possesses

And in Timothy 6 which deals with error and greed verse 10 says

For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their
greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

We are inundated in the media to acquire “stuff”. You need this, you need that, buy it! I think generous
giving will provide you more satisfaction than all the material items you may acquire but don’t really
need.

The fifth reason I wish to impart is that generous giving allows you to experience true financial freedom and joy.

In Matthew Chapter 6 verses 19-21-

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The greatest acts of generosity are still ahead of us all if we are obedient to the spirit of God.

Let us excel in the grace of giving not in the guilt of giving.

St. Simon's has many active ministries that need your support. Some of those ministries affect the members of the church- you and me, some the local community, some the Diocese and some far beyond. Money Matters to St. Simon's. Please support St. Simons with your Time, Talents, and/or Treasures.

Hopefully one or more of my reasons that I have put forward this morning will get you thinking and encourage you to become or continue to be a generous Christian.

For those of you who might not quite be ready to fully commit yourself, I suggest you take small steps toward becoming a generous Christian. Perhaps as a first step you could consider making a commitment to increase your givings by 10% and then after a year assess how you feel about it. My sense is you won't even have noticed not having the money you pledged, especially if you take it off the top and give via Electronic Funds Transfer.

The stewardship committee is asking that you complete your 2012 pledge cards and consider signing up for EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) for the amount you commit. The church now has over 74 members on EFT and the counters on Sunday love it as it makes their life easier. Pledge cards and the EFT forms [hold them up] will be available after the service today in the Narthex. If you completed a pledge card previously there should be a card already made up with your name on it. There are blank pledge cards for those pledging for the first time.

Let me end my message with a prayer –

Lord God

please help each of us see you as our provider, help us overcome financial fear and worry, help bring order to our finances, help us fight the dragon of materialism, and bring us to true financial freedom and joy. Help us learn to become more generous Christians and experience your grace in our lives and your joy.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.