

Everything Belongs to God

Scripture: Psalm 24:1-2; 1 Chronicles 29:10-14

August 2, 2026 - Week 1 of Sermon Series: *"Fruitful Stewards"*

Key Sentence: *A faithful steward does not live as an owner, but as a grateful caretaker of God's gifts.*

Grace and peace to you in the name of God our Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, today we begin a new August sermon series entitled, "Fruitful Stewards: Faithful with All God Has Given." During this month, we will listen carefully to what Scripture teaches about money, possessions, tithing, generosity, debt, wise management, and the purpose of God's blessings.

These are important and sometimes sensitive subjects. When a pastor speaks about money, some may wonder, "Is the church simply asking us to give more?" Others may think about financial pressure at home. Yet Jesus spoke often about money and possessions because they are connected with trust, freedom, worship, and the direction of the human heart. Scripture speaks about money because God desires every part of our lives to be shaped by faith.

Before we discuss how much we should give, how we should manage our resources, or how our congregations should face their financial responsibilities, we must begin with a deeper question: To whom does everything belong?

Our answer to that question will shape everything else we believe about stewardship.

When we move into a house, we say, "This is our home." When we purchase a vehicle, we say, "This is my car." When we receive a paycheck, we say, "This is my money." When a congregation owns a building, property, accounts, and equipment, we say, "These belong to our church."

That language is understandable. It helps us identify responsibility. But the Bible asks us to look beneath our everyday language and recognize a deeper spiritual reality.

Psalm 24 begins with this great declaration: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it."

The earth belongs to the Lord. Everything on earth belongs to the Lord. Every person who lives upon the earth belongs to the Lord. Before anything belonged to us, it belonged to God. Before we received it, God created it. Before we managed it, God provided it.

So today, I would like to reflect on three movements from these Scriptures:

First, God Is the Owner of Everything

Second, We Are Stewards, Not Absolute Owners

Third, God Entrusts Gifts to Us for God's Mission

The key sentence for today is this:

"A faithful steward does not live as an owner, but as a grateful caretaker of God's gifts."

First, God Is the Owner of Everything

Psalm 24 does not begin by telling us what to do. It begins by telling us who God is. God is the Creator, the Sustainer, and the rightful Lord of all creation.

The psalm does not say that only the church belongs to God. It does not say that only Sunday belongs to God. It does not say that only ten percent of our income belongs to God. It says, "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it."

Our lives belong to God. Our time belongs to God. Our bodies belong to God. Our abilities belong to God. Our income belongs to God. Our homes, land, vehicles, savings, church buildings, and opportunities all belong to God.

This truth changes the way we ask the stewardship question. We often ask, "How much of my money should I give to God?" But biblical stewardship asks something larger: "God, how do you want me to use everything you have entrusted to me?"

Stewardship is not about giving God a small part of what belongs to us. Stewardship is about recognizing that everything belongs to God and that we are responsible for how we use it.

This can be difficult because we like the feeling of ownership. Ownership gives us a sense of control. We say, "I earned this. I worked hard for this. My family built this. Our members paid for this." There is truth in those statements. People have worked, sacrificed, saved, planned, and given.

But Scripture invites us to go one step deeper. Who gave us the strength to work? Who gave us the mind to plan? Who gave us health, opportunity, relationships, land, rain, skills, and the breath of life? Who placed faithful people in the generations before us? Who sustained the church through seasons of joy, conflict, loss, change, and uncertainty?

David answers these questions in 1 Chronicles 29. David desired to build a temple for the Lord, but God told him that his son Solomon would build it. So David gathered materials and gave generously his own treasures. The leaders and the people also gave willingly, and the whole assembly rejoiced.

David could have praised his own leadership. He could have celebrated the size of the offering or congratulated the wealthiest donors. Instead, David prayed, "Yours, O Lord, are greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours."

Then David made this remarkable confession: "All things come from you, and of your own have we given you."

David understood that even when we give something to God, we are returning what first came from God's hand. Imagine that a parent gives a child some money so the child can buy the parent a birthday gift. The child chooses the gift, wraps it, and presents it with joy. The parent truly delights in the child's love, but the resources originally came from the parent.

Our giving is real and meaningful. God delights in willing and grateful hearts. Yet our offerings never place God in our debt. We cannot say, "God, now you owe me, because I have given something to you." Everything we offer was first entrusted to us by God.

This truth protects us from pride. It also begins to free us from fear. When we imagine that everything depends entirely upon us, we become anxious and hold tightly to what we have. But when we remember that God is the source of every good gift, we can receive with humility and live with trust.

Second, We Are Stewards, Not Absolute Owners

The biblical image of a steward describes someone who is entrusted with the property or household of another. A steward does not own the household. A steward manages it on behalf of the owner.

A faithful steward asks, "What does the owner desire? How should these resources be cared for? How can they be used according to their purpose? How can I give a good account of what has been placed in my hands?"

That means God does not measure faithfulness only by how much we possess. God also looks at what we do with what we possess. Some people have many resources; others have very little. Some congregations have buildings, land, reserve funds, and long histories. Others worship in rented rooms and live from one month to the next.

The central question is not, "How much do we have?" The central question is, "Are we faithful with what God has entrusted to us?"

A person with a small income can still practice gratitude, planning, generosity, and honesty. A person with great wealth can still be unfaithful if money becomes a source of pride, fear, control, or indifference. A small congregation can make a powerful difference, while a congregation with many resources can become spiritually unfruitful if its gifts are buried or used only for itself.

Faithfulness is not determined by the size of the gift. Faithfulness is revealed by how the gift is received, managed, shared, and used.

As I have begun serving CPC Plainview and CPC Rochester, I have seen that God has entrusted both congregations with many treasures. We have faithful people, long Christian experience, church buildings, financial resources, musical gifts, leadership gifts, practical skills, compassion, and strong relationships within our communities.

We should thank God for these treasures. We should also honor the people who came before us. Their prayers, work, generosity, and sacrifice helped create what we have received. The pews in which we sit, the rooms in which we gather, the ministries we continue, and the financial resources we manage all tell stories of faithfulness from previous generations.

But every inheritance also brings responsibility. The question is not only, "What have we received?" The question is also, "What will we do with what God has entrusted to our generation?"

A church may possess valuable property and still struggle to support present ministry. A congregation may have financial assets and still carry debt. A church may have a rich history and still be uncertain about its future mission. A congregation may have many gifted people whose gifts have not yet been invited, encouraged, or used.

These realities should not lead us to blame previous leaders or shame faithful members. Every generation faces different circumstances and makes decisions according to the knowledge and needs of its time. Instead, these realities invite us to gratitude, honesty, prayer, and renewed faithfulness.

Now God has entrusted this season to us. We are called to honor the past, face the present truthfully, and prepare for the future courageously.

This applies not only to the church but also to our personal lives. A faithful steward pays attention. A faithful steward knows what is coming in and what is going out. A faithful steward plans, saves when

possible, avoids careless waste, addresses debt honestly, and remembers that financial decisions are spiritual decisions.

Trusting God does not mean avoiding responsibility. Prayer and planning belong together. Generosity and wisdom belong together. Faith and accountability belong together.

Perhaps one practical prayer for this week is simply: "Lord, show me what you have placed in my hands. Show me where I am faithful, where I am careless, where I am fearful, and where you are inviting me to grow."

Third, God Entrusts Gifts to Us for God's Mission

God does not entrust resources to us merely so that we may possess them. God gives gifts so that they may serve God's purposes and bear good fruit.

A church building is a blessing, but the building is not the church. The church is the people of God, called by Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. The building is a tool that supports worship, fellowship, teaching, pastoral care, hospitality, mission, and service.

Money is a blessing, but money is not the mission. Money is a tool that supports the mission. A budget is not merely a page of numbers. A church budget is a spiritual document because it reveals what we value, what we maintain, and what we believe God is calling us to do.

Every congregation must pay necessary expenses. Buildings require heat, electricity, insurance, repairs, and care. Staff members deserve faithful support. Administration, communication, and planning are real parts of ministry. Responsible maintenance is stewardship.

But maintenance must remain connected to mission. We do not maintain a building simply so that a building may continue to exist. We care for it so that people may worship, children may learn, neighbors may be welcomed, the grieving may be comforted, the hungry may be served, and the gospel may be proclaimed.

We do not save money simply so that we can say we have money. We save wisely so that the church can remain stable, respond to emergencies, prepare for future ministry, and follow new opportunities from God.

We do not reduce debt merely to make a financial report look better. We reduce unnecessary burdens so that more of our resources may be released for worship, discipleship, mission, and service.

We should therefore ask: Are our resources serving Christ's mission? Are our buildings helping us welcome and serve people? Are our financial decisions strengthening worship, pastoral care, children and youth, local mission, and future ministry? Are we preserving resources because we are wise, or because we are afraid? Are we spending because something is truly needed, or simply because it has always been done?

These questions are not meant to accuse us. They are meant to help us listen for God's direction. A steward must always return to the purpose of the Owner.

For CPC Plainview, stewardship may mean asking how our building, relationships, leadership, and financial resources can bless families, farmers, workers, children, youth, older adults, and neighbors throughout the Plainview community.

For CPC Rochester, stewardship may mean asking how our building, location, financial resources, and gifts can welcome newcomers, support people connected with hospitals and schools, care for neighbors carrying hidden burdens, and offer a spiritual home in a growing and diverse city.

The contexts are different, but the calling is the same: everything God places in our hands is to be used in love for the glory of God and the good of our neighbors.

This is why stewardship begins with gratitude rather than guilt. Guilt says, "You must give because you are not doing enough." Gratitude says, "I give because God has already given so much to me." Fear says, "If I share, I may not have enough." Gratitude says, "God has been faithful, and I can trust God as I live faithfully." Pride says, "Everything I have is the result of my own effort." Gratitude says, "My strength, opportunity, life, and salvation are gifts of grace."

When gratitude fills the heart, generosity begins to grow. That generosity may include money, but it also includes time, ability, attention, hospitality, prayer, leadership, encouragement, and service.

Some can teach. Some can sing. Some can prepare meals. Some can visit. Some can repair things. Some can pray faithfully. Some can encourage children. Some can welcome visitors. Some can give wise leadership. Some can notice quiet needs that others overlook.

A fruitful church is not a church in which a few people do everything. A fruitful church is a congregation in which every person asks, "What has God placed in my hands, and how may I use it for God's glory?"

Most importantly, our stewardship is always a response to the gospel. The greatest gift God has given us is not money, property, health, or possessions. The greatest gift is Jesus Christ.

God did not hold back divine love. God came to us in Christ. Jesus gave himself for us. Through his life, death, and resurrection, we receive forgiveness, reconciliation, freedom, and eternal hope.

We do not give in order to earn this salvation. We give because salvation has already been given. We do not serve in order to purchase God's love. We serve because God has already loved us. We do not practice stewardship so that God will make us wealthy. We practice stewardship because we have already received the riches of God's grace.

The gospel is not, "Give more money, and God will make you rich." The gospel is, "In Jesus Christ, God has given himself to us; therefore, let us offer ourselves faithfully to God."

Conclusion

My brothers and sisters in Christ, as we begin this August series, let us remember the foundation: the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it.

Our lives are the Lord's. Our churches are the Lord's. Our buildings are the Lord's. Our abilities are the Lord's. Our money is the Lord's. Our present and our future are the Lord's.

We are not absolute owners. We are stewards.

The question is not simply, "How much do I own?" The question is, "How faithfully am I caring for what God has placed in my hands?"

The question for our congregations is not simply, "What treasures do we possess?" The question is, "How can these treasures serve Christ's mission in Plainview, Rochester, and beyond?"

So let us remember the key sentence:

"A faithful steward does not live as an owner, but as a grateful caretaker of God's gifts."

May we receive God's gifts with gratitude. May we manage them with wisdom. May we share them with generosity. May we use them for worship, discipleship, service, mission, and love.

And when God asks what we did with what was entrusted to us, may we be able to say, "Lord, we did not do everything perfectly, but by your grace we sought to be faithful."

David prayed, "All things come from you, and of your own have we given you." May that prayer shape our homes, our offerings, our budgets, our buildings, our ministries, and our daily decisions.

Everything comes from God. Everything belongs to God. And everything we have can become an instrument of God's love.

Therefore, let us receive gratefully, manage wisely, give generously, and serve faithfully.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reference Notes

1. The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition, Psalm 24:1-2; 1 Chronicles 29:10-14.
2. Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Chronicles, Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville: John Knox Press, 1982, commentary on 1 Chronicles 29.
3. Douglas John Hall, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Come of Age*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990.
4. Ronald E. Vallet, *Stepping Stones of the Steward: A Faith Journey through Jesus' Parables*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989.
5. Christopher J. H. Wright, *The Mission of God's People: A Biblical Theology of the Church's Mission*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010.
6. Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), *Book of Order 2025-2027*, F-1.0304, "The Great Ends of the Church."