

Stewardship Reflections

A Sermon on Second Corinthians 9:6-8 written by Rich Holmes

Delivered by Rich Holmes and Nick Zaccone on November 5, 2017 at Northminster Presbyterian Church in North Canton, Ohio

Rich: I want to start by telling you that this is certainly not the first stewardship sermon I've ever preached. This, in fact is my fourth time standing before this congregation and preaching a stewardship sermon. But I want to begin this sermon somewhat differently. I want to begin this sermon with an honest take on stewardship. This year, I think we need to be realistic about stewardship. And perhaps we should start with today's New Testament reading. Maybe you have read this text before in which Paul tells us that each of us, each of us should not give reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. But I want to be honest with you. I have never met someone whom I would call a cheerful giver. I have never met someone who just couldn't wait to turn in their pledge. I think each of us understands or we should understand that pledging is necessary. Each of us understands or should understand that everything we have in this church comes from what people have given. But while pledging is necessary, I will say it once again, I have never met someone who just couldn't wait to turn in their pledge.

Nick: Woo hoo! I can't wait! I can't wait to turn in my pledge for this year!

Rich: Excuse me, sir. Excuse me. Look I am in the middle of preaching a sermon and I don't appreciate your interrupting me. In fact, I think that's quite rude.

Nick: Well, I'm sorry, but I just can't stop telling everyone how happy I am to pledge this year. I can't wait.

Rich: Ok, very good, now let me get back to my sermon.....Well, hold on....wait a minute.....Did you just say you're excited about pledging? How is it that you are excited about

pledging? I just got through saying I've never met anyone who is excited about stewardship. Are you trying to tell me that you are actually excited about giving?

Nick: Yes sir, I couldn't be more excited! Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Joe McPresbyterian McChurch McLove. (Hands Rich a business card).

Rich: Well, it's very nice to meet you Mr. McLove. But let me ask you why are you so excited about pledging?

Nick: Well, sir, I'm not sure I know what do you mean by "why"?

Rich: Well, as I was saying, just before you interrupted me in the middle of my sermon...I was just saying that everyone here understands that we can't do anything as a church here at Northminster if people don't give, and we understand that everything we have comes from what others have given, but isn't it a little too much to think we should be happy about giving?

Nick: Well, sir, let me ask you something. Doesn't it make you happy to give things to people you love? People like your wife, your children, and your family?

Rich: Well, sure it does, Mr. McLove but...

Nick: Ah, no buts. You see, I believe that all the things I give to this church go to the Lord, whom I love. We are doing the Lord's work here at Northminster. That's what our worship is about. That's what our youth program is about. That's what our support of Young Life and Presbyterian missions and all the things we do in this church is all about.

Rich: Ok. I see. Well, I understand that you love God and we all love God, but to be happy about giving? My friend, that's just weird. What if we had some visitors come into this church today and they saw you being all excited about giving. I don't want to hurt your feelings, but they would think you're weird. They would think we were weird if we all acted that way.

Nick: (Hangs head). You hurt my feelings.

Rich: Well, I'm sorry Mr. McLove.

Nick: That's ok. I agree that people might think we're weird. But you see, when I was baptized, I remember I was told that I didn't belong to this world anymore. I belonged to Christ.

Rich: Okay, well, where are you going with this?

Nick: You see, Christ doesn't call us to be just like anyone else. He calls us to be different. I really like it when it says in Romans "Do not be conformed to this world. But be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

Rich: What do you mean "do not be conformed to this world?"

Nick: Well, I know that most people in the world are reluctant givers. They don't want to part with anything they have because they think it belongs to them. But, you see, it doesn't belong to them. It belongs to God. As Christians, we don't believe all the same things the world believes. As baptized people who believe in Jesus, we are simply different.

Rich: Ok. So, sir, are you suggesting that I should tell the people out there that they really should be cheerful givers?

Nick: Well, I would say that's a start. But it might help if you yourself were also a cheerful giver. Let me hear you say "Hallelujah! I can't wait to pledge this year!"

Rich: (Unenthusiastically) Hallelujah. I can't wait to pledge this year.

Nick: No, like you mean it!

Rich: Hallelujah! I can't wait to pledge this year!

Nick: Now everyone. Hallelujah! I can't wait to pledge this year!

Congregation: Hallelujah! I can't wait to pledge this year!