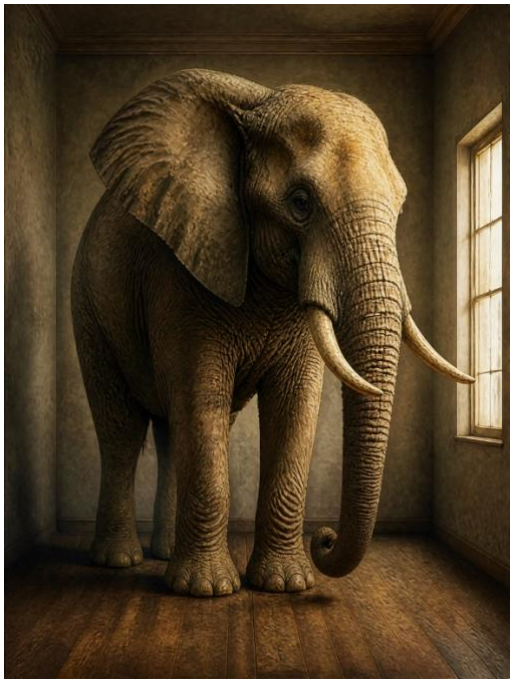


Elephant in the Room **by Kay Ryan**

The room is almost all elephant.

Almost none of it isn't.

Pretty much solid elephant.

So there is no room to talk about it.

This, my dear Siblings, is the way we handle stewardship. We have a concept of stewardship that simply is not truth. Rev. Dr. Michael Binder reminds us, "Generosity is what God wants **for us**, <u>not from us</u>." For some reason we always look at it as the exact opposite. Stewardship **IS** discipleship and generosity **IS** deeply contextual. Stewardship is mentioned 288 times in the gospels. Here are a few examples, Matthew 21:15-22 "Jesus and the Coin," Matthew 2:1-12 "Gifts of the Magi" and Luke 19:1-10 "the Story of Zacchaeus." You could probably point to other texts you know that only come out during stewardship campaigns.

The truth about stewardship, dear ones, is found in the words of Henri Nouwen, *A Spirituality of Fundraising*; "Practicing stewardship is as spiritual as giving a sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick, or feeding the hungry!" There are many ways you can practice your stewardship and express your generosity. Stewardship is not just financial! To be able to see this and make changes in the way you steward what God has given you may take a shift in your mindset.

Scarcity vs. Sufficiency is probably one of the biggest hurdles congregations face. What they see is declining membership and programs and paychecks being cut. These are very real results for congregations who do not practice stewardship as discipleship. You can starve in a pantry if you only look at the floor. It's time to stop looking at the floor!

The peace of Christ

Pastor Johnene