

A Living Gift

If you want to live an unfulfilled and empty life, hold on to everything you have. That is what Solomon teaches in the book of Ecclesiastes. Solomon writes, "I gathered for myself silver and gold and the treasure of kings and provinces...all was vanity and a striving after wind..." (Eccl. 2:8, 11). It's quite common to go through life tallying up everything that is "ours" and keep it all. Our culture is filled with people who desperately want to find fulfillment and are seeking it in their day-to-day struggles. Yet, such a life, according to Scripture, leads to a downward spiral that leads to emptiness.

Christianity, on the other hand, teaches a way that is different from the world. First it begins in our Lord's gift to us: Jesus and His heavenly treasures. In Baptism and being washed in Jesus' blood, we are brought into our Lord's kingdom as children of the Father. As His beloved, He includes us as co-rulers and co-priests with Jesus. Our treasure, then, is not in found material wealth, but in heavenly wealth. As a result, we have nothing to lose.

Since we have the treasure and hope of eternal life and the resurrection of the body, we can learn from Christ how to use our lives well here on earth. In Christ, we see God's way of fulfillment: self-gift. Jesus gives himself entirely for the good of the world as He opens the gates of heaven. In God's kingdom, a full life is a life of sacrifice, that is, giving

yourself and your earthly blessings for the good of others. It serves as a reminder that everything is a gift from God, and was never really ours. It was through God's generosity, that we have this money and life.

As a result, God takes what we have received by His hand, and He uses it to be a blessing. Your tithes and offerings are used to support the ministry and mission of this congregation, and they ensure that you and future generations are able to receive the eternal treasure given in this place: Jesus Christ. What a great joy to know that God looks with joy upon our offerings and uses them for our good and the good of His Church.

In the month of October we focus our attention more intently on our lives as stewards of God's gifts. Stewardship is not just for one month of the year, but every day of our lives because every day is a gift from God. May our Lord keep His heavenly gifts and promises at the forefront of our minds as we consider the ways in which we can use our lives and earthly blessings for the praise and glory of His Holy Name in this place.

Joy,

Pastor Smith