THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF STEWARDSHIP

INTRODUCTION

Martin Luther’s impression of God has its modern counterpart in the view many Christians have of stewardship. Young Luther was impressed early and deeply by the stained glass window in the chapel he attended. It pictured Christ riding on a white steed with shiny sword raised, poised for a death blow.

From this scene came the impression that God is primarily a judge, waiting for the opportunity to hurt people. We must fear Him, and by any and every possible way punish our bodies to gain God’s approval. Luther attempted every known method of appeasing the wrath of God, but to no avail. One day the light burst through, and Luther discovered the wonderful truth that “…The righteous will live by faith” (Galatians 3:11). He learned that God is more than our judge; He is our friend. He discovered God was not so anxious to take something from him as to give something to him.

So it is with stewardship. This is not God’s method of taking something from us, but His method of doing something for us. Stewardship defines a man’s relationship to God. It defines God as owner and man as manager. God makes man a co-worker with God in administering all of life to spiritual ends. Paul explains it by saying, For we are God’s fellow workers…(I Corinthians 3:9). If we can grip this truth, it will give us a proper view and a correct value of human life and possessions. It will cause us to see our divinely given opportunity to join with God in His world-wide and eternal redemptive movement. Stewardship is not God taking something from us; it is His method of bestowing His richest gifts upon His people.

Put another way, God is our friend, not our enemy. He will not hurt us but wants to help us. He will withhold nothing except that which will harm us, and He requires nothing except that which is beneficial. For the sake of the child, the wise parent demands responsibility. For the sake of the learner, a sensible teacher requires responsibility. For the sake of His children, the Lord requires commitment from Christians. Stewardship is not a plan by which God is primarily interest in extracting something from us. Rather, it is a channel through which He is seeking to bestow His blessings upon us.

If we apply the principle of stewardship to giving, we see that God has our interest at heart. We simply cannot receive unless we give. A boy cannot develop his strength unless he exerts strength. A person cannot develop mental aptitude without exercising his mind. Christians cannot grow in grace without giving of self and substance.

In the April 24, 1990, issue of Family Circle magazine, there is a heart-rending story that illustrates how we have to develop all facets of our lives.

When police and social workers found two-year-old Tommy, the child of alcohol and drug addicted parents, he was living in an apartment filled with the stench of waste and rotten food. His long blond hair was filthy and matted, and he cold not
speak or walk. One of the social workers said, "Tommy lived with a group of large
dogs, including a pit bull. His parents treated him like another dog."

Tommy was sent to the Village of Childhelp U.S.A. near Palm Springs, one of the
first residential treatment programs for abused children. They were accustomed
to the worst child abuse cases, but Tommy presented a unique challenge. They
had to teach him the most basic functions, beginning with what it meant to be a
human being. He thought he was a dog. When he arrived at the village, Tommy
had to be carried everywhere because he had never learned to walk upright. He
ate his food from the floor and barked like a dog.

When we become Christians, we must begin the process of growing in grace. If
we do not, even as Christians, we will take on the characteristics of the world
around us. Stewardship is God’s method of developing His children in His ways
and graces, rather than the ways of the world surrounding us.

Stewardship is important in the life of the believer. Therefore, let’s approach the
subject from four different biblical angles in order to better understand and apply
stewardship in our lives.

THE MEANING OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

In the New Testament two Greek words embody the meaning of our English
word "stewardship."

The first word is "epitropos." This word means "manager, foreman, or steward." From the standpoint of government, it means "governor or procurator." At times it was used in the New Testament to mean "guardian." This is the word Paul uses in Galatians 4:1-2: What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father.

The second word is "oikonomos." It also means "steward, manager, or administrator" and occurs more frequently in the New Testament. The most often used word in the New Testament having to do with stewardship is "oikonomia." The latter word, depending on the context, is often translated "dispensation, stewardship, management, arrangement, administration, order, plan, or training." It is a compound word containing "oikos" (house) and "nomos" (law). Together they refer to the law or management of a household, or of household affairs.

In the gospels the word is used principally to mean "the management or administration of the property which belongs to another." Note three examples:

"When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on the first’" (Matthew 20:8).

The Lord answered, "Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their
fool allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns” (Luke 12:42-43).

Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer’” (Luke 16:1-2).

In the writings of Paul, however, "oikonomia" is given its widest and fullest significance. Paul accepts his responsibility for preaching the gospel as a divine trust. I am entrusted with a commission (oikonomia), he writes the Corinthians (see I Corinthians 9:17). Paul refers to his call of God as the administration (stewardship) of the grace of God for a ministry of the divine mystery revealed in Christ (see Ephesians 3:2). In this context, Paul is probably portraying God as the master of a great household, wisely administering it through Paul himself as the obedient servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are three additional terms that will add insight to the Christian’s unique relationship with God and his personal responsibility before God.

The Christian Is a Trustee

The Christian is a trustee. As such, the believer is one to whom something is entrusted in the confidence that it will be kept and protected. Paul, called of God to herald the good news of Christ to both Jew and Gentile, speaks of having been entrusted by God with multiple and varied gifts for the purpose of serving others. Peter explains, Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms (I Peter 4:10).

The Christian Is a Steward

The Christian is not only a trustee, but a steward as well. As already stated, the word "steward" means "manager, administrator, or one charged with the management of certain things." The word is used to distinguish between the concept of trusteeship and stewardship.

"Trusteeship" means "to receive certain benefits or privileges with specific guidelines about the actual use or administration of that which is received and held in trust." The Christian however, is not only a trustee in the sense that he has received benefits from God to protect and hold intact, but he is also a steward who must administer these benefits according to a responsibility. It is more than a job to be performed.

The Christian Is a Partner

There are several Greek words translated into the English word "partner." They embody the idea of "partnership, fellowship, or partaking." The idea is, "one who
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has something in common with another, to become a joint partner, one who is a co-worker, fellow worker or an associate."

Paul, in Titus 1:1, refers to himself as a servant of God. The Greek word used is "doulos," meaning "one born into slavery." As Christians, we are servants or slaves of God. We must not forget this truth. We are not our own, for we are bought with a price. Yet, we are much more. God has made us, as his children, partakers in His divine nature. Peter tells us,

*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness. Through these He has given us His very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires* (II Peter 1:3-4).

We share in His eternal purpose.

The Christian steward is a fellow worker with God in the consummation of His kingdom among men (see I Corinthians 3:9). The Christian never has a reason to feel defensive, inferior or apologetic. Why? Because he is a partner with the sovereign God of heaven in the furtherance of the kingdom. A steward is one who has received a trust from God and is in partnership with God, through Christ, for the working out of God’s purposes for mankind.

THE MESSAGE OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

There are three dominant messages sounded in the theology of stewardship.

Thankful Witness to God’s Benevolence

Stewardship is our thankful witness to God’s benevolence. The right order is God giving to us followed by our response. Paul told us,

*But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8).

We love Christ! Why? Because He first loved us. We did not have the ability to respond to His love until He gave the ultimate gift of love.

Because we know God’s benevolence to be free and undeserved, the living spring of our practice of stewardship is gratitude. We give because we are thankful. Stewardship is the practical expression of appreciation to the giver of every good and perfect gift. We give because God gave, and we are thankful for His generosity.

Obedient Witness to God’s Sovereignty

Stewardship is our obedient witness to God’s sovereignty. It causes the child of God to go into action, doing deeds that prove his belief in God. Paul, when he
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was before King Agrippa, said, "...I preached that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds" (Acts 26:20).

Listen to James on the subject of actions and deeds.

> What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such a faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well, keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do (James 2:14-18).

Stewardship is not action for action's sake. It is action that flows from the acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The theology of stewardship starts with the acknowledgment that God is sovereign over our lives, even as He is sovereign over all things. Therefore, we acknowledge Him as the ultimate authority above every other claim to our loyalty. It is the practical expression of our yielding to the divine revelation—I am the Lord your God.

Stewardship defines our practical obedience in the administration of everything under our control, everything entrusted to us. It is the consecration of one's self and possessions to the service of the King. Stewardship acknowledges in practice that we do not have the right of control over ourselves or our property—God has that control. It means as stewards of God we are managers of that which belongs to the King, and we are under the constant order of the King as we administer His affairs. Faithful stewardship means that we fully acknowledge we are not our own but belong to Christ, the Lord, who gave Himself for us.

Stewardship expresses our obedience to the mission of the local church. The church consists of stewards who are responsible to the King for their actions and deeds. As such, the church must be accountable for what it is and how it acts under God. For example, a true Christian church marching under the orders of her King will not decide to whom she will minister based on race or class.

A pastor in a West Texas First Baptist Church led a "woman of the street" to the Lord. The following Sunday she came to church to make her decision public and be baptized. A wealthy deacon met her at the door of the church to explain that first Baptist was not a church for "her kind." He went on to say that across town was a mission placed there by First Baptist for the purpose of ministering to "her kind." The deacon caused the church to fail in its stewardship responsibility of deed and action to the new Christian.

When a church makes class or race a criteria for membership, it is substituting man's authority for God's authority. Therefore, stewardship is the practical side of the acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in one's life. It is that which must be fleshed out by the deeds and actions of the local church.
Faithful Response to God’s Commission

Stewardship is our faithful response to God’s commission to minister to our fellowman in the service of Christ. Our Lord has elected and commissioned us to continue His ministry. He said to His disciples, "…anyone who has faith in me…will do even greater things than these…” (John 14:12). The practice of stewardship is our participation in the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ to the people of His world. It is the expression of our incorporation into the body of Christ. Stewardship means that the whole church is called to share in the continuing ministry of Jesus Christ.

The mission of the whole church is to be a witness to the world of God’s great act of reconciliation as seen in the death of Jesus Christ on the cross and His resurrection from the grave. Stewardship is our responsibility to a lost world in sharing the message of hope and reconciliation that comes to them through Jesus Christ. It is our highest service to mankind. It is faith, hope, and love in action. It is offering to men the best we have to offer—the gift we ourselves have received. Stewardship at its best is self-sacrificial giving. It starts with Christ giving Himself on the cross and culminates as we give ourselves away in order to give Christ to a lost and dying world.

THE MONEY SIDE OF BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

It is readily apparent that stewardship is more than money. However, stewardship does involve money. We cannot be a good steward by being faithful in all areas of our life with one exception—money. When we fail in our stewardship of money, we fail as a steward. Someone has well said, "Stewardship hinges on the money issue." The man who is true to God as a steward in the use of his money will usually be faithful in the stewardship of other things. An old saint once said to a young pastor, "Be more concerned about the tightwad in your congregation than the drunkard. The latter is a sin of the flesh, but the former is a sin of the soul."

The scriptures abound with references to material things. Money and property are referred to some 1,000 times in the Bible. This is more often than prayer which is referred to about 500 times, or faith which is mentioned less than 500 times. Christian stewardship is based on the premise that the eternal and the economic cannot be separated.

When reading the gospels, it is easy to recognize the great emphasis Jesus placed on material possessions. In 15 of 33 familiar parables, He spoke of physical assets. A number of His deeds and actions involve the use of property.

The Teaching of Jesus

THE PLACEMENT OF POSSESSIONS

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple
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treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasure than all the others. They gave out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on" (Mark 12:41-44)

Certainly sitting here was a daring act by Jesus. By sitting in this place He could show that He was interested in the way people gave to the work of God. He declared that economics was not a side issue in the kingdom of God. It was His way of saying that men show their love for God as well as their true relationship to the Master by the way they cast their gifts into the treasury. Where we place our possessions reveals the true condition of our heart.

THE PRIORITY OF POSSESSIONS

As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" "Why do you call me good?" Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.'" "Teacher," he declared, "all these I have kept since I was a boy." Jesus looked at him and loved him. "One thing you lack," he said. "Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." At this the man's face fell. He went away sad, because he had great wealth (Mark 10:17-22).

In this familiar account of the rich young man's search for life, Jesus placed great emphasis upon possessions. The man's possessions stood between him and God because his possessions were his god. Temporal riches were in the way of his gaining true and lasting wealth. In essence, Jesus said to him, "If you would be rich, you must go and sell what you have and give the proceeds to the poor." Because money was his god, his money had to be dethroned before God could be allowed to reign. When Jesus told him what he must do, the young man thought Jesus' requirement was extreme. Not so, however; it was basic. The Lord God Almighty will not be second place to any other god. Our possessions must not have the place of priority in our lives.

THE POSSIBILITY OF POSSSESSIONS

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also (Matthew 6:19-21).
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In the Sermon on the Mount, the words of Jesus are clear when He speaks about earthly treasure as compared to heavenly treasure. He speaks in this passage about the fading and changeable values of earthly treasure and about the enduring and unchanging values of heavenly treasure. In so doing, Jesus is not divorcing eternal worth from material wealth and thus making them two different subjects. Instead, He is seeking to point out a scheme of priorities in the realm of ultimate values. Spiritual treasure is primary. Material treasure may be used in such a way as to be converted into spiritual treasure. It is possible to transform that which we possess in this life into treasures of infinite significance. Only that which is spiritual will have eternal value.

The Teaching of Paul

The Apostle Paul did not consider it unspiritual to talk about money. Notice what he has to say about the subject in his writings.

PRAYER AND GIVING (see Acts 20:17-36)

On Paul’s third missionary journey, he stopped at the coastal town of Miletus and conferred with the elders from the church at Ephesus. He recounted his own three years of faithful ministry in Ephesus. He exhorted the elders to remain true to the faith, guarding against the grievous wolves who would seek to prey upon the flock of God. His final exhortation was that they should “…help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35). Following this closing word about offerings for the needy, we read: When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed (Acts 20:36). Certainly to Paul, prayer was a scriptural thing to do. But, so was giving. Both prayers and possessions, when used as God intended, are expressions of a deep love for Christ.

RESURRECTION AND MONEY (see I Corinthians 15:50-16:2)

In this great discourse, Paul links the doctrine of the resurrection to a collection for the poor in Jerusalem. When we read I Corinthians 15, we naturally move rapidly to its thrilling climax:

"...Death has been swallowed up in victory. Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting?" The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 15:54-57).

Read on into Chapter 16 remembering that Paul did not make these chapter divisions but wrote continuously just as we write letters. Notice what he said about giving.

Now about the collection for God’s people. Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income,
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saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made. Then, when I arrive, I will give letters of introduction to the men you approve and send them with your gift to Jerusalem. If it seems advisable for me to go also, they will accompany me (1 Corinthians 16:1-4).

To Paul, there was nothing unspiritual about speaking of the resurrection in one paragraph and the collection of money in the next. To be sure, it is spiritual to think of an offering to be taken in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Christian’s Management of Material Possessions

Christian stewards must recognize their responsibility for proper management of the material possessions God allows them to have in this life. This is not easy because man is constantly engaged in the struggle to keep "money" in its right place. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount:

"No man can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money" (Matthew 6:24).

Christian stewardship shows us that possessions can never have priority in our lives.

Christians are bound to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (see Matthew 6:33). We are obligated to do all to the glory of God—to earn, to spend, and to give, as well as to pray, to witness, and to conduct our lives to the glory of God.

Man in his relationship to property has three choices: (1) ownership, (2) poverty, and (3) stewardship. The first choice (ownership) is the most popular in our day. In the middle ages the second choice (poverty) prevailed, based upon the feeling that the only way a man could be saved was to sever himself from the world of things. The third choice (stewardship) has not been tried seriously by the majority of Christians at any one time in history. Just think what would happen if every Baptist in Texas would suddenly become serious about being a good steward of his/her possessions!

Christian stewards must also recognize their responsibility for the possessions that extend beyond this present life. While at death what we have called "ours" will pass on to others, we have the opportunity to determine where those possessions should go.

God expects our Christian influence to continue beyond death. Our Lord wants the good in every life to be extended. It has been stated that 60% of the property owners in America do not have wills or any legal provisions for disposing of their property after death. Also, a large percent of wills that are made are broken because they are improperly prepared. Therefore, a very large percentage of the
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Property owners in America leave their possessions in the hands of the courts or relatives.

Sadly, many Christians are guilty of not planning beyond their death. Surely it should be considered a disgrace for Christians to leave this life without providing for the disposition of their estates in a way which would honor Christ, as well as care for loved ones. Can you imagine what would happen if every Texas Baptist would leave a tenth of his/her estate to Baptist causes? Many ought to leave more than a tenth! This would provide many millions of dollars we presently do not have for Texas Baptist causes and for the Lord’s work.

This also would make possible a heightened service to mankind. We would have enlarged endowments, plus needed buildings and equipment for our schools and hospitals. There would be money for the benevolent work in our state. Why not consider leaving a percentage of our income to the Cooperative Program or some other Southern Baptist mission program? In so doing, our money and influence will live far beyond our lifetime and Baptist causes will be greatly enhanced.

Christians should take seriously the right use of their possessions while living and the proper investment of them when life here is over. By doing this we can become a steward in two worlds.

The recognition of the stewardship of possessions by the Christian throws open the doors to spiritual growth and power. A Texas Baptist layman gave the following testimony: "Whatever growth I have had in my Christian experience began when I settled the matter of the relation of my property to my God. When I began to tithe, I began to grow along other lines beyond anything I had ever known before."

When Christian stewards make the decision to surrender their pocketbook and checkbook to the Lord, the way is open for further spiritual progress in prayer, Bible study, soul winning, and Christ-like character. The Apostle Paul spoke of the grace of giving. He exhorted:

\[ \text{But just as you excel in everything – in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in your love for us – see that you also excel in this grace of giving} (\text{II Corinthians 8:7}). \]

We all accept the fact that such things as faith, proper speech, knowledge, diligence, and love are integral parts of Christian character. But, if we are to have a well-rounded Christian life, we cannot omit the grace of giving. A recognition of the stewardship of possessions truly sets us on the path of spiritual development in our own souls.

Several years ago a business company, the Layman Company, summed it up well:
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The Book teaches, logic proves, and God knows, that with the money we get and the money we spend, we either through and by that money get closer to God or further from God. Money is the golden cord which binds us to God and identifies us with Him in world-wide salvation, or it is the cement and the adamant with which we build a wall that separates us from God.

THE MENACE TO BIBLICAL STEWARDSHIP

The stewardship of possessions is a divinely given barrier to the temptation to covet. Covetousness stands before us as one of the ugliest and most destructive of sins. It is the one sin which Francis Xavier said was never confessed to him. Yet, it is a sin which constantly gnaws at the human heart.

Biblical Examples of Covetousness

The pathway of history is marred by the woeful wrecks produced by covetousness. It was covetousness that made Achan appropriate for himself a portion of the riches of Jericho and bring defeat and disgrace upon the people of God (see Joshua 7:1-26). It was covetousness that caused David to commit the double sin of adultery and murder (see II Samuel 11:1-17). It was covetousness that barred the door to the kingdom of God when the rich young ruler knocked urgently (see Mark 10:17-22). It was covetousness that led Judas Iscariot to sell his Lord for a handful of money (see Matthew 26:14-16, 21-25, 47-50, 27:3-10). It was covetousness that caused Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the Holy Spirit and bring death upon themselves and shame upon the church (see Acts 4:32-37; 5:1-11).

Biblical Warnings Against Covetousness

The only sin that is more often warned against in the Bible than covetousness is the sin of unbelief.

The Ten Commandments, which conclude with You shall not covet…(Exodus 20:17), include at least one other commandment which would be unnecessary except for covetousness, You shall not steal (Exodus 20:15). The well known words of Paul are applicable: For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil (I Timothy 6:10).

Jesus gave advice against covetousness to two brothers who were having strife over the dividing of an inheritance:

…”Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed: a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions” (Luke 12:15).

According to Jesus, avoiding covetousness requires constant vigilance. In Matthew 4:4 Jesus makes it plain that man does not live by bread alone. Listen to Jesus in Matthew 16:26:
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"What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?"

Jesus also taught that man’s immortal soul has greater value than all the riches of the world.

Now listen to the warning given by John:

_Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him_ (I John 2:15).

**Biblical Instruction Against Covetousness**

The one effective antidote for this deceitful and destructive sin of covetousness is the recognition of ourselves as stewards of God. The Christian steward fully accepts that whatever we may possess belongs to another, to God. The steward knows that God, who owns all, has entrusted His property to the care of His servant. When property and possessions are viewed in this way, they do not become our master, but we become their master. Thus, we can gladly use them in such ways as to further the will of God in His world and bring glory to the Father.

When by faith, and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we come to the place of being total stewards of God, the promises of God are tremendous:

_Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you"_ (Hebrews 13:5).

_But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well_ (Matthew 6:33).

**CONCLUSION**

Being a faithful steward is an evidence of salvation. In Psalm 107:2 we read: _Let the redeemed of the Lord say this_.… The saved will speak of their redemption with their mouths and they will prove their redemption by their deeds.

In Luke 7:36-50 we have the account of Jesus going to the home of Simon the Pharisee for dinner. A woman who was a prostitute heard that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee’s house. She came to the house bringing an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind Jesus weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she dried his feet with her hair, kissed them, and poured perfume on them.

Simon the Pharisee said to himself, …"_If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner_" (Luke 7:39). Jesus turned to Simon and told him the following story.

"_Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the"
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money to pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said (Luke 7:41-43).

Turning toward the woman, Jesus continued to speak to Simon:

…”Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little” (Luke 7:44-47).

Then Jesus addressed the woman,

”…Your sins are forgiven…Your faith has saved you; go in peace” (Luke 7:48-50).

The proof of the woman’s salvation was in her deeds. We are not saved by our works or deeds. However, if we have been saved, our works and deeds will show forth our salvation to the world. Stewardship is faith and salvation in action.