

Contemplating Stewardship¹ for NL

Just copy and paste into your bulletin!

Source: EaND Stewardship Team

Put "Contemplating Stewardship" in your Sunday bulletin every week! A brief reflection on stewardship following the Narrative Lectionary readings will keep the stewardship conversation vibrant. Just cut and paste!

Contemplating Stewardship: Be Bold

August 5th, 2018 (Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost)

"She came to her mother-in-law, who said, 'How did things go with you, my daughter?' Then she told her all that the man had done for her." – Ruth 3:16

You may be familiar with the Latin proverb "fortune favors the bold". Whether or not this holds true in all cases is debatable though it is certainly true that fortune does not favor those who sit on the sidelines. In taking bold action Ruth achieved that which would not have been possible otherwise. Naomi's encouragement and Ruth's action are signs of a bold faith. May we be bold in our faith and encourage others to do likewise.

Contemplating Stewardship: Life Restored

August 12th, 2018 (Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost)

"Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renown in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age."
– Ruth 4:14-15

When Naomi first returned to Bethlehem do you think she could have imagined the events to come? She had gone away full but had returned empty, having lost her husband and then her sons in Moab; left with little but her own anguish and despair. Could she have possibly imagined the ways God would work in her life? We could ask the same of Ruth. Yet unbeknownst to both woman, and Boaz, God was at work in unexpected ways. In the midst of trials and tribulations we may cry out as Naomi does in verses 1:20-21. We may kick and scream and ask why we have been forsaken but our suffering does not mean God has left us. We know that God is at work in all things to bring out the good. If you ever doubt this look to the cross.

Contemplating Stewardship: Trust

August 19th, 2018 (Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost)

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear." – Matthew 6:25

During the first week of internship a young seminarian was told by his supervisor that she expected him to tithe. The intern laughed in response. The prospect of giving 10% seemed foolish at best, reckless at worst. "It would be far wiser to hold on to the little I have than to give

¹Inspired by the "Stewardship Snippet" written by Rev. Rob Blezard, Assistant to the Bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Further resources available at <http://www.lss-elca.org/resources/stewardship/>

so much up,” he thought. The supervisor pressed upon him the wisdom of giving first to God but the intern resisted her words. As time passed he discovered that his resistance stemmed not from wisdom but a lack of trust. He did not trust God would provide and feared he would not have enough. This he realized was foolishness. The wise trust in the Lord and live in confidence. Fools lack trust and live in fear.

Contemplating Stewardship: Wealth Won't Save You

August 26th, 2018 (Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost)

“They were greatly astounded and said to one another, ‘Then who can be saved?’”

– Mark 10:27

The crowd was astounded to hear Jesus speak of how hard it will be for the wealthy to enter the kingdom. They, like so many today, wrongly believed that wealth was a sign of God's favor. If someone “does well” in this life they *must* be blessed, after all that's how it was for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so the thinking went. Not so much. Here's the truth: Prosperity gospel is heresy. Wealth isn't a sign of grace or righteousness. Wealth won't save you from sin or death. Wealth won't give you life and it won't lead you closer to God. The only thing which is saving and truly life-giving is the gospel of Jesus Christ.