

1 Chronicles 29:1-9
Stewardship 2; February 1 & 2, 2015

“True Riches – Called to Give Our Best”

(Video clip) We do have an awesome God, don't we? Think of all the awesome things that he does in your lives. There is nothing that we can do but to praise him. Two weeks ago, we began talking about Christian Stewardship. We will conclude our series next week. When we hear that word “Stewardship,” most of us probably think it is about “money.” Christian Stewardship is not about money. Christian Stewardship is really about “praise.” It is about looking at all the awesome things that God does in our lives and praising Him in everything we do and say. Christian Stewardship is all about reflecting God's love back to him by giving Him of our best.

It took King David a lifetime to understand that in his life, God had blessed him richly. Again and again God poured his love into David's heart. He was there with David as he walked out onto the battlefield against Goliath. He protected David as he had to run for his life from King Saul. He was with David as he conquered the nations around him. He was there with pointing out David's sin of adultery and murder. He was also there comforting David as he cried out to God: **“Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.”** (Psalm 51:12)

As the King of Israel, he was powerful. He was incredibly rich. He had built an amazing palace for himself. Then it hit David one day: **“Here I am, living in a palace of cedar, while the ark of God remains in a tent.”** (2 Samuel 7:2) David wanted to build a proper temple for the Lord -- A building that would say just how awesome God had been to his people. It sounded like a great plan. Even God's prophet Nathan thought it was a great plan as he said to David: **“Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.”** (2 Samuel 7:3)

However, there was one little problem with David's plan. God came to David the next day and said: *“It is a great idea for you to build me a church, but you are not the one who is going to do it.”* Can you imagine how much of a disappointment that must have been for David? God told David that he was a *conquering king*. THAT had been his assignment from God. He was not going to build the temple, but his son, Solomon, would build it. God had a plan for David though. He would allow David to gather the materials together for this temple. David accepted this assignment from God. He also had a bigger plan. **“When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, who will come from your own body, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.”** (2 Samuel 7:12-14) That offspring would be the Savior of the world.

And so, he began to make plans for God's temple. In the chapter before our text, David spoke about the plans for the temple. As he nears the end of his life in our text, he speaks about the commitment that he was giving for the Lord's temple. **“With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God — gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble — all of these in large quantities....”** This was just the beginning. In today's dollars, David's gift would have a value of about \$5 billion dollars.

David didn't stop there. He then asked the people: **“Now, who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord?”** Literally, he was asking the people to *“fill God's hand,”* to give to God their all. The people do! Look at how they opened their hearts: **“They gave toward the work on the temple of God five thousand talents and ten thousand darics of gold, ten thousand talents of silver, eighteen thousand talents of bronze and a hundred thousand talents of iron. Any who had precious stones gave them to the treasury of the temple of the Lord.”** They gave billions of dollars to this temple. The numbers are staggering.

Yet, what is even more amazing is how David and the nation of Israel stepped out in faith. They did this **“wholeheartedly.”** Literally, with *“their hearts at perfect peace”* with God. This all was done with **“willing”** hearts and **“given freely.”** Both David and the people **“rejoiced greatly”** as they saw what happened. They saw God work in the hearts of people.

God's message of peace works in your hearts today. That's why you give so willingly and wholeheartedly of your wealth to share the message of Jesus' peace with ourselves and others. God has blessed all of us with his love. You see, Jesus had everything, but he chose to have nothing. He sat in the glories of heaven, but he came to this earth to hear shouts of "*crucify him, crucify him.*" He chose to give his life, so that we might have eternal life. It is that self-sacrificing love that motivates us to bring our gifts to our Lord.

That is what I mean that Stewardship is not about the dollars. It isn't about the billions of dollars that the children of Israel gave to build the Lord's temple. It is about hearts being filled with love – God's love. You look outside today, and you see a new blanket of snow. All of the dirty ground is covered with white. That is what Jesus has done for you and me. He has made our sins white again by covering them with his righteousness. It is that love of God that moves us to give God of our best – not just with our gifts for his work, but with every word and action that we do every single day of our lives. In a couple of verses past our text, David prays: "**Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.**" May we join David in his prayer. Amen.