

Stewardship

Gary Presbyterian Church

Scripture

Deuteronomy 8:12-18 NRSV When you have eaten your fill and have built fine houses and live in them, and when your herds and flocks have multiplied, and your silver and gold is multiplied, and all that you have is multiplied, then do not exalt yourself, forgetting the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; who led you through the great and terrible wilderness, an arid wasteland with poisonous snakes and scorpions. He made water flow for you from flint rock, and fed you in the wilderness with manna that your ancestors did not know, to humble you and to test you, and in the end to do you good. Do not say to yourself, “My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today.”

Devotion

Moses gives us a stark warning in Deuteronomy 8 - doesn't he? The warning is grave because the danger is real. It is the danger of living the entirety of our lives as one long competition to climb to the top of the heap and then defend our position as King or Queen of the mountain.

A few years ago, after I had spoken with a priest at Mepkin Abbey (a monastery in SC) for about an hour, he got up to go and with compassion radiating from his face he said, “You know your

affluence will not make you happy, but it might enable you to remain comfortably in your unhappiness.” And with that ringing in my ears and settling into my heart he was gone. I took that comment from Father Christian and I mulled it over for years. Sometimes my affluence keeps me *just* comfortable enough that I am never motivated to change what I am doing and redirect my energies in a Christlike way. It enables me to remain comfortable in my unhappiness.

Neither Moses, nor Father Christian (what a great name!) were trying to say that God wants me to be poor though there would be nothing wrong with that if I was. What they were trying to help me see is how easily I (we) let prosperity and ease of living get in the way of giving ourselves completely to a life of loving and serving others as Christ has so clearly commanded us to do. The wise and faithful will accept the abundance God provides without attaching too much self-directed pride about it. Rather, they will “remember the Lord” who provided it all and ask, “For what purpose was this wealth entrusted to me?”

Prayer

Lord, help us, who have been so richly blessed by your generous provisions to learn from you to deploy the wealth you have entrusted to our stewardship in ways that build your kingdom and provide for all your people everywhere. Amen.

