

Harris Creek Sermon Transcript

“What To Do With What You Have”

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Well, amen. And hello, Harris Creek, wherever you find yourself this morning. It's weird, some of you might be watching from like this neighborhood, literally right back over here. Some of you are all over the country, wherever you might be today, thanks for tuning in and thanks for watching with us this morning. If we've never met before, my name is Jon. I serve on the equipping team here at Harris Creek, and it's a joy and a privilege to get to be here with you this morning. I'm thankful that JP asked me to be a part of this series. You've gotten to hear from some really gifted people over the last few weeks, and I'm honored to be a part of that. And you know, three years ago, I declared, it was maybe four years ago, three or four years ago, I declared myself to be the pastor of holidays for Harris Creek. I just decided to tack that on to my title. And since then, that was like three or four years ago, I've knocked out at least one more Memorial Day, I know I've done a New Year's Eve and a New Year's Day. And here we are, it's only fitting on the July 4th weekend that I'm, I'm your guy today. This is who you get. And, you know, to pull back the curtain even more, I actually requested a different date in July, and it didn't even work out. And so, this is destiny, what's happening right now. And so, I am thankful to be here. And, you know, I had psyched myself up to preach to a room full of people in masks, who I couldn't see their facial expressions. And I kind of tried to brace myself for how weird that might be, and then that didn't even happen. But we do have a few staff members scattered around in here today. So, if you see me looking all around, you're like, wow, this guy's kinda lost it, he's just looking around the room, like there's people in there. There are a few, not a ton, but there are a few. And you know, I was thinking about it this past week and I don't really know when it happened, but at some point in my life fairly recently, I've gotten really interested in old people stuff. And when I say old people stuff, I think you all know what I'm talking about. And this is first off, let me say this is no knock on old people or old people stuff, because as you will soon hear, I'm now part of the club, but I started caring about old people stuff. And when I say that, you all know what I mean, it's investments and smart real estate decisions and retirement accounts. And step one is identifying that you're interested in these things. And then step two is actually having something to contribute to the conversation. That's when you know you're really in, is when you're like, I've got a little something to add here. And so that's where I've found myself lately, you start talking to people about this and it just, it's kind of this gradual shift. I saw a tweet the other day that said, one day, you're not old and the next day you have a favorite grocery store. And when I read that, I was like, Wooded Acres HEB, obviously, no question. And so that's really when I knew. And so now that I'm part of the old people club and the old people stuff club, I decided, you know what? I should invest in some stocks. That's my next play. And so, I took \$150 leftover Christmas money that I had, and when the market really tanked in March, I was like, this is my

play. This is my time. And so, I took my \$150 and all I know about the market, literally all I know about the stock market is you're supposed to buy low and sell high. So, I thought, hey, this is my chance. I took it. And I decided I was going to invest in companies that I felt confident would make a comeback, companies that would survive, because not everybody's going to survive 2020, but I felt confident that some would. And so, I invested in a couple of airlines, that has not panned out well for me yet, but I took the bulk of my fortune and the bulk of my wealth, my \$150, and I invested it in Chili's. And here's why: America loves Chili's. America loves casual dining. America loves a good \$10 entree. And so, I decided, and the irony in all this is like, I don't even eat at Chili's all that often, but I just thought like, this is the time. And to be honest with you, my investment has worked really well. It's more than doubled. I bought it for 11. Last time I checked it was around 25. And so, the Chili's investment has really paid off for me. But now I'm in this really weird position where clearly, I'm a savvy investor, and my theory that Chili's is invincible has come true, but I don't really know what my next step is. Like, should I buy more? Should I sell it all? Should I just eat at Chili's a lot? Like, does that help somehow? That's kind of where I find myself today. And sadly, I've spent far too much time thinking about this \$150 investment as opposed to everything else in my life. And I think too often, we spend all of our time focused on these really small aspects of stewardship, these really small pockets of our life when really, there's a whole life to be stewarded. Everything in us, everything around us, is to be stewarded. And I spent so much time thinking about this \$150 investment when really, there's a whole lot more at stake. And so right now, we're in this series called "Summer of Stories" and we're looking at the parables of Jesus. And over the past few weeks, you've heard some friends of mine, some men who really love Jesus with all that they are, and you've gotten to hear different parables taught by them, from them. Today, we're going to look at the parable of the gold coins. Maybe your translation says the parable of the talents. Maybe your translation says the parable of the bags of gold, whatever your translation says, today, that's the story that we're going to look at. And when Jesus would teach in parables, he would do so to tell stories that would illustrate a point and he was doing so, trying to reveal this message to the people who were listening that had ears to hear. So the people who would listen to Jesus preach, he was trying to reveal to them that the kingdom of God was coming and that he was the one bringing it, but he had to do so in a way that didn't just explicitly say that or people were going to trap him and try to kill him, which is eventually what happened. And so Jesus would use these stories to illustrate a point to people who were willing to listen, and so that's what we're going to see today. And so today we're going to look at this parable and we're going to talk about what to do with what you have, because we all have different amounts and we all have different things that have been entrusted to us. And so step one for us today is defining a couple words that I'm going to say a lot, that we need to have a good working definition for, or this morning is not going to make any sense. And so the first word, this is kind of a churchy word. You don't really say it a whole lot outside of a church, honestly. And so the first word we're going to define today is stewardship. I think we've got the definition on the screen. So stewardship is management of resources, talents, opportunities, or any other good thing with which

one has been entrusted. So resources, talents, opportunities, or any other good thing with which one has been entrusted. So, if you're sitting there watching this today, and you're like, oh gosh, another money sermon. If this is just another money sermon, then we've missed the point. And so, stewardship is resources, talents, opportunities, or any other good thing with which one has been entrusted. Second word we needed to define this morning is entrust. To entrust is to put something into someone's care or protection. To put something into someone's car or protection. And here's why this is important. And here's why we need to talk about this today. JP let me pick the parable. I picked this parable a couple of months ago because I think stewardship matters. And I think stewardship matters to God. And I think if we don't steward what's been entrusted to us well, we're going to miss out on the life that God has for us. And I think the problem with stewardship and the problem with the way we view stewardship is that we've turned it into this binary choice of, am I wasteful with money or am I not? Do I overspend? Do I not? Do I steward money well? Do I not? And again, I don't think that's it. I think it's way bigger than that. I think it's way more complex than just this one binary thing. And so, I think we haven't even thought about stewardship in the right way. And our approach to stewardship tells us a lot about our faith, how we spend our money, our time, our resources, everything around us, all of that tells us a lot about our faith.

Do we believe that God is who he says he is? Or do we not? And so, as we start to talk about this parable, I think there are three people that I need to address. And here's the deal. We all fall somewhere along the spectrum. Some of you, you're going to hear this sermon and you're going to think, you know what, everything I've earned is mine. It's mine, mine, mine. And you're going to have a really closed fist grip on everything we're talking about today. Respectfully, lovingly, I think you're wrong. And I think God is going to show us that today. Second, some of you, you might have a great deal at your disposal and you're a little more open-handed with it, but you also haven't used it yet. You might be kind of lazy. You might be kind of apathetic, maybe no one's just taught you how to steward well, and so to you, I would say, God has something for us to learn today. And then some people listening, watching this right now, you're thinking, you know, I don't even have that much. I have very, very little. And so, what I do have, I'm going to go into self-preservation mode. I'm going to hold onto it because it's all that I have. And to you, I would say, God has something for you to learn today as well. And so, like I said, we all probably fall somewhere along that spectrum. You might be a college student with little to no income who feels like you can't offer much. You can, and we're going to talk about that. And you might've pulled yourself up by your bootstraps to become the top of the food chain in your organization. And God has something for you to learn today as well. And so, there are three principles that I think we can learn from this text. The first one is that everything's entrusted, everything is an opportunity, and everything will be examined. And so, before we dive into our passage in Matthew 25, let's look at where we are in the story of Jesus's earthly ministry, when this parable happens. This is towards the end of the book of Matthew. There are a lot of parables towards the end of the book of Matthew. And this is Jesus, He rides in on a

donkey on Palm Sunday, triumphal entry, everybody's waving palm branches. They're all, everybody's excited to see Jesus come into town.

And between that Sunday and his crucifixion, just a few days later, Jesus does a lot of teaching. He's trying to explain one final time what it is that it means the kingdom of God is coming and what it means that he's the one bringing it. And so he's trying to, he's got one final chance, one final window of time to make things click for the disciples and for the people that are following him. And so he wants them to understand the magnitude of what's happening. And so we're going to pick up in Matthew 25, verses 14 through 18, it will be on the screens as well. It says, again, it—it meaning in this case, the kingdom of God—it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. To one, he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. But the man who had received one bag, went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Okay, we're going to pause there for a little bit. Jesus is teaching this parable. He's got this crowd of people gathered around him and he's telling them what the kingdom of God is like. And he tells this story of a master with three servants. It says based on their abilities, he gave one of them five bags of gold, one two bags, and one one bag accordingly. The five bag guy and the two bag guy take their money, they go off, they put it to work and they double it. The one bag guy simply buries it in the ground. And as I said earlier, there are three lessons that we can learn from this parable today. The first one is this: it's that everything is entrusted. Everything is entrusted. And here's what I mean when I say everything is entrusted. That means that everything we have, everything, everything we have, yes, everything, everything has been entrusted to us by God. Everything we have is on loan to us from God. And so here's what I want us to do right now. We're going to take 60 seconds. I want you to grab a note card, a piece of paper, it can be a scrap piece of paper. It can be your phone, but don't text, Jesus knows. Whatever is closest to you, I want you to grab it and pull it out for the next 60 seconds, cause we're going to do a little activity. I want you to make an exhaustive list of everything that's been entrusted to you this past week, everything you were responsible for stewarding this past week, make a list of everything that God has loaned you, everything that God has entrusted to you this week. Make an exhaustive list for the next 60 seconds. On your mark, get set, go. Okay, if you ended up needing more time, you can add your lists later. We'll come back to it later on this morning. Now I know how some of, how this went for some of you, because we did this in our sermon run through on Thursday. And some people had a list of three and got frustrated. And some people had a list of 10. So wherever you fall on that spectrum, there's grace there. Let's talk about what some of these things might be out loud that God has entrusted to you. And remember, everything has been entrusted to us. James 1:17 tells us that every good and perfect gift comes from above. So if you believe that that's true, all the things around us have been entrusted to us. First one: resources. Resources, that's the most obvious one that comes to mind when we hear that we all think money, but this is also just anything at your disposal that you

own. So, it could be your house. It could be your cars, whatever resources God has entrusted to you, be it money or whatever else. Those things have been entrusted to you to steward well. Second thing: time. Two things are true about time. One, we all have been allotted the exact same 24 hours a day. That's the one thing that you have in common with everybody else in the world. We all have 24 hours in our day to steward. The other thing that's true about time is that no two people steward that time the exact same way. And so therefore, we have to figure out how do we be the best stewards of the time that God has given us? One of my coworkers this week, said that she thought about this a lot on Monday, and was a really good steward from like five to seven, and then a really bad steward of her time from like seven to nine. And that's okay. We want to work through that. We want to be aware of that. And we want to process through that so we can get better at that. Third one is gifts and talents. These are the unique ways that God has wired you. The unique ways that God has made you, you. And so this could be a spiritual gift. Maybe you have the gift of hospitality, something like that. This could also just be a talent that you have. Maybe you're really gifted with a musical instrument. Maybe you can juggle, and you want God to teach you how to use juggling, whatever it is, a talent, a gift and ability that makes you uniquely you.

Relationships are another thing to be stewarded. If you are married, the covenant of marriage, the covenant that you made to your spouse before God, that covenant is something to be stewarded well. If you're not investing a lot of time and effort and energy into your marriage, we're missing it. Your children, that's a relationship to be stewarded. We say all the time in our kids' ministry that parents are the primary faith influencers in the home. If you, as the parent are not primarily influencing your kids, we're missing it. That's a missed stewardship opportunity. If you have roommates, if you have coworkers, if you have neighbors, every relationship, your best friend of 50 years, or the person that just moved in next door, those are all relationships that need to be stewarded. Another one is your story. And sadly, this is one that I don't think we talk about enough, but God has given each one of you a story. If you're a follower of Jesus, you have a story. God saved you from something. You were something before God saved you. You're different now. That is a story. So every single person that's a follower of Jesus watching this right now, you have a story and you need to share it with the people around you. Another one, this is the last one for our list right now, is influence. And this is another one that I think we probably honestly don't think about enough. Influence could be power. It could be authority. It could be a leadership position that you have. God has put you in positions strategically to use your influence to lead and to impact others for the kingdom. JP preached a sermon on leadership a couple of months ago. I thought it was like a year ago. I looked yesterday, it was May, it just feels like it was a year ago. But it was about leadership. And I thought this line was really helpful, that if you're trying to discern if you're a leader, look behind you and if there's somebody following you, you're therefore a leader. And so you need to steward that leadership role well. And there are two ways a leadership role can go: it can be a power grab for you, or it can reveal the kingdom to the people walking behind you. And so, we need to be constantly aware of that. And all of these things are from

God. And if we really believe that God is sovereign, and we really believe that God is in control, then that's not really something that's up for debate. And you may have worked really hard to make your fortune. You may have worked really hard to ascend to the top of the food chain. And if you did, then thank God for your work ethic, right? That's all something to be stewarded. In 1 Corinthians 4 chapter 7, it says, What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? So we have to understand that everything truly has been given to us and entrusted to us. And so, once we understand that, that leads us to our next point, and that's that everything is an opportunity. Everything is an opportunity. Because once we understand that all around us, there are opportunities to leverage our gifts, our talents, our resources, our money, our time, once we realize that all of those things are opportunities, that's when we get to partner with God to further the kingdom. But here's the danger in this. And I'm going to go out on a limb and say 100% of us watching this have done this at some point or another. Sometimes we get in this mode, in this zone, where we feel like we can't really use what we have, because it's not as good as what somebody else has, and that's crippling and it holds us back. But 100% of us at some point or another have been poor stewards because we've been so obsessed with what we don't have, that we don't focus on what we do have. And I think that this is a trick from the enemy, and I think it works. I think it works really well so that we don't get off our hands and do something. We think if I just had her money, God would really use me then. I would be so generous if I had what she had. Or if I had his abilities, wow, think about how God could use me in so many different ways. But back to the text, we see in verse chapter 15, it says to one, he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags and to another one bag, each according to his ability. But the very next verse isn't the two bag guy complaining that he didn't get five like the five bag guy. They just took what they had, and they went and put it to work. And to be honest with you, I feel this way every time I'm on this stage. Every time I preach up here, even this week, writing this sermon, I'm very aware of the fact that there are better preachers, teachers, communicators on our staff than I am. And I'm sitting there thinking, man, if somebody else preached this sermon, it'd probably go a lot better, but that's not for me to decide. It's my job to take my gifts, my abilities, my talents, my time, prepare well and use this opportunity that God has given me. And to let everybody else use theirs as well, because comparison is the thief of joy and the goal isn't to be like somebody else, but it's to be faithful with the opportunities that God has put in front of you and to steward those really, really well.

There's a book called David and Goliath by Malcolm Gladwell. I'm a Malcolm Gladwell apologist. I think he's the greatest author of all time. He could write a book of nursery rhymes and I'd be like, that's a top five book, you would love it. And he wrote a book called David and Goliath a few years ago. And in it, he tells the story of a guy named Vivek Ranadive, and Vivek was born in India, immigrated to the United States a while ago, lives in the Bay Area, worked in the tech industry. And he had two daughters, a 9 and 10 year old daughter, who wanted to play basketball. So he signs them up for this basketball league. They join this team, and this team has no coach and none of the other parents wanted to do it. And so Vivek was like, fine, I'll do it. And the interesting

thing about Vivek that you probably need to know is that he had never played basketball. He'd never watched basketball. He'd never held a basketball in his hands when he signed up to coach his daughters' basketball team. And some of you are watching this and you got roped into coaching your kid's team, too, but at least you've probably watched the sport before. And so he signs up for this and he starts watching basketball and he takes what he knows, which is statistics and probability, he's a math guy. He takes that, and he says, you know what, why do so many people take low percentage shots? It seems like it's far more likely to go in if they take a layup than if this 10 year old girl tries to shoot a three. And so he decided what we're going to do is we're just going to press. We're going to play maniacal defense. Every time we score, we're going to press, we're going to try to steal the ball. We're just going to try to overwhelm the other 9 and 10 year old girls, steal the ball, go make a layup. And so that's what they did. And it worked, and they ran the table. They just demolished everybody in sight that year. And the compelling thing about Vivek's story is that he then went out and bought an NBA team, which is just what we all do, right? He went out and bought the Sacramento Kings because he fell in love with this game of basketball. But I think Vivek's story is so interesting because he took what he knew. He didn't care that he didn't know basketball. He took what he knew, which was statistics, probability. He took his time. He took his relationships with his daughters.

He took all of these different things and he made an impact because of it. So think about it this way. You might be quarantined still. You might be working from home. You might've been laid off. And if that's you, I'm incredibly sorry, but you've been given the gift of time in a really unique way that we may never experience again for the rest of our lives. We may not ever have this much time on our hands and this much time at home. And so, you can squander that. You can waste it. You can Netflix yourself into oblivion, or you can steward that time to invest in the people in your household, to spend time reading Scripture, doing the Bible Reading Plan, to spend time investing in your children, to spend time working on your marriage, to spend time investing in your neighbors and your Life Group, trying to point other people to Jesus. That's the opportunity that we have, that we never would've had before. It's all about stewardship of our time and making the most of these opportunities before us. N.T. Wright is probably the leading New Testament scholar alive today, or one of them, and he says this about this parable: "Each of us has been put here with a particular purpose and calling, which only we can do. Our task is to find out what that is and to do it. That remains true whether the purpose is playing the trumpet, cooking meals, planting trees, performing heart transplants, or even preaching sermons." So, your calling doesn't have to take you across the world, it might, but it also might keep you exactly where you are. Calling doesn't always mean your profession, either. For us, I think our calling is just to be faithful where we are and to make the most of the opportunities that God puts in front of us.

So we need to look outside the box, focus on what we've been entrusted with instead of what we don't have, because we're all going to be accountable to the master, which that leads us into our third point. But before we get there, let's finish reading, picking up in verse 19. It says, "After a long time, the master of those servants returned and

settled accounts with them. The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.' His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more. His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You've been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. 'Master,' he said, 'I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and I went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.' His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed. Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" So at the end of this parable, we see that everybody has to give an account for what was entrusted to them. For the two of them that did well, the master invites them to come rejoice with him and in his happiness. And we see that they're put in charge of many other things. But the one who did nothing and buried it, on the other hand, he faced condemnation. And when Covid first hit, we had a staff meeting—we actually had a lot of staff meetings—but then we had one, I remember this was kind of the one where it was like, all right, this is where we're headed. JP asked the question, "If this is a test from God, how do we ace the test?" And that was a really thought-provoking question. If we are to be faithful with this season of ministry, this really unique time in our lives that we may never get to do anything like this again, how do we be faithful with this to where if we were standing before God, we could honestly say, we think we aced it, we did our very best. And so how do we pool our staff's gifts, abilities, and expertise together in a way that we can give an account to God. And so, roles got shuffled around and new teams got formed and new projects got started and really any semblance of a work chart got blown up and reshuffled. And it was this really interesting experiment to see what would happen while we waited on "normal" to reappear. Because what we didn't want to do is just take this season and bury it and sit on our hands and hope that someday things got normal again, whatever normal even means anymore. And so out of this season, we've seen things like the Bible Reading Plan come to life, where we see people engaging with scripture for the first time in their lives, in some cases, consistently reading God's Word. And what's happening is God's Word is changing them, which is really, really exciting. We're able to live stream services today, like the one that you're watching right now, because of the efforts and the expertise and the gifts and the abilities of a handful of people who worked really, really hard to make this accessible. Our family ministries have gotten really creative with what it means to disciple our kids

and our students, but also how to equip parents to do the same during this really unique season.

And the goal for all of us as a staff was to do everything we could to be faithful and to give an account to God that we did our very, very best to steward the season. And the goal for all of us who are Christ followers, is that at the very end, when we stand before God, we hear those exact same words of, "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Come and share your master's happiness!" Now, again, think about where this story comes in the life of Jesus. This is towards the end. Jesus is about to leave. He's about to be crucified. He's about to be resurrected, and he's about to ascend. And he's going to entrust this message, the story of his life, the story of his ministry, he's going to entrust this message to his disciples, to the people who've been following him while he was here on earth. And he wants to know that they're going to take this message forward and multiply it and spread the gospel everywhere that they go. And so here we are, 2000 years later with this exact same message entrusted to us, to where we have to creatively leverage our lives to take that message forward. And the interesting thing about this parable is that it doesn't mean we get to kick our feet up once we're saved. It doesn't mean that we just get to coast once we have that assurance that we're going to be in heaven. In fact, it tells us that the reward for a job well done is more work. The guy with the 10 gets one more because he's proven to be faithful with what he has. And so, there is no opportunity to coast or relax, or just put it on cruise control as we go forward. Because once you've proven to be faithful, you'll be entrusted with more. And so in summary, let us remember that everything's entrusted, everything is an opportunity, and everything will be examined. My wife and I have an almost two year old son named Micah. We have a six week daughter, a six week old daughter named Elsie. And so, if at any point you've been like, wow, this guy's face looks really tired, that's why. We have two small children. And prior to Micah being born, we struggled through a couple of years of infertility and miscarriage. And it had a big impact on us both, Amanda and I both as individuals, but also just us as a couple. And so, I remember when we saw Micah's heartbeat on an ultrasound for the first time, when I saw his face for the first time, just that burden of stewardship hit us maybe differently than if we hadn't gone through that.

And so, I remember from the very first time I saw him, I was like, okay, I'm responsible for this life, responsible for stewarding this life. And then when Elsie was born, just six weeks ago, she had some extra fluid in her lungs, and she was in the room with us and they were trying to get the fluid out. And eventually they said, we are going to have to take her to the NICU. We're sorry, but we don't really have another choice. And it was extremely disorienting for Amanda and I because it was this really joyous moment. But then they took our daughter from us and they put her in this little cart and wheeled her out and put her on an elevator, took her upstairs, across the hospital. And we were just left there by ourselves. And it was this really weird feeling that I'll probably remember for the rest of my life. But the only peace that we had was that we had just entrusted her to somebody that could care for a lot better than we could. And so I didn't have time to check the doctor's credentials and to make sure the nurses all graduated top of their class. We just had to trust that they were going to care for our daughter. But

imagine, hypothetically, if the next day I had gone upstairs to check on Elsie and I said, "Hey, how's she doing?" And they said, "Actually, we just left her. She's actually right there. We didn't do anything cause we didn't wanna mess it up. But she's right there. She's the same as she was yesterday." We would have been livid. But instead they cared for her, she got better, way better than she would have been with us. And so they gave her back to us better than she was. And so, imagine the joy that we felt when we got to take her home and be a family. And I think if we think about it, God has us here on earth to be the nurses and to be the doctors. We have this mission to help restore sick people, people who are broken, people who are far from Jesus. We have the opportunity to partner with God, to help those people become whole again, to help those people be restored fully to full health. And I think if we're followers of Christ, like, that's the mission that we have. And we get to partner with God in that mission. And the gospel changes everything. And if we let the way we steward everything impact our lives, think about how different our community would be. Think about how different Waco would be. Think about how different McLennan County would be. If Harris Creek was full of people who were intentional with how we steward what's been entrusted to us by God. Things would never look the same. We have a group of six summer residents this summer. And if you want to talk about a group in our church that's really getting after it and using their time and their efforts and their abilities and their stories and leveraging those for the good of the kingdom, this is a group that's doing that. And I have spent a lot of time with them this summer, and they ask really good questions, really thought-provoking questions.

And a couple of weeks ago, one of them asked me, "How are you different now than you were a few years ago?" And I don't think he thought that I would be thinking about this question for like the last two weeks, but I have been. And my answer then is still the same now. I think I care about the right stuff more. I think I care less about the wrong things. And now this is not me trying to say that I've mastered this because I, by no means have. Literally four days ago, my wife told me that I sounded too greedy. And so I'm a work in progress with this, but I do believe that God has changed my heart and chipped away at some of the things that I used to idolize and some of the things that I used to hold up and some of the things that I used to prize above other things, I think God's chipped a lot of that away, and it's helped me be a better steward of what has been entrusted to me. So here's what I want us to do this week. Here's what I'm gonna ask you to do this week. To really flesh this out, to really make this practical is take that list from earlier. All the things that you steward in a given week, if you've thought of more while I've been talking, add those to the list. And every day this week, I want you to revisit that list. I want you to give yourself a letter grade each day for each one of those categories. And be honest, because it only helps you, but we're going to ask God prayerfully to show us where we need to be better stewards of what he's entrusted to us. And so if you were really wasteful with your money on Tuesday, mark it down. If you're really wasteful Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, I think we picked up on a pattern. But steward those things well and keep an account of how well you're doing. If you steward your marriage really, really well on Thursday, give yourself an A, and be really excited about that. But let's ask God to show us where we need to grow

this week, where we need to be better stewards of what's been entrusted to us. If you're having a hard time evaluating yourself, cause sometimes when you're too close to it, it's really hard to do, ask the people around you, ask your Life Group. And then don't get defensive, but ask your Life Group, "Hey, where am I missing it? Where do I need to be a better steward? Where do you see patterns of good stewardship? Where do you see patterns of poor stewardship?" Ask them to be a mirror into your life in a way that maybe you could not do on your own.

Ask your family, your spouse, your kids, the people who know you best, ask those people to help you discern where it is that you need to be a better steward of what God's entrusted to you. But I'm going to pray. I'm going to ask God to help us in this effort to help us be the best stewards so that we can do everything we can collectively to further the kingdom of God here on earth. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we love you. And we are thankful for the opportunity to sit around your Word today, to open your Word, to see what it says, to see how the story that Jesus told 2000 years ago directly applies to us and directly applies to our own spiritual walks. So God, I pray for every single person watching this, every person in this room right now, myself, that we'll all be good stewards of what's been entrusted to us. That we don't ever have too tight of a grip on the things that you've given us. We don't ever falsely convince ourselves that these things are ours, they're ours, they're ours. But instead God that we open handedly, ask you to use us and to use these things to further your kingdom. So God, we're thankful for the good news of Jesus Christ. We're thankful for the message, the hope that we have. And as we've been entrusted with that message, I pray that we'll be good stewards of that message as well. And that we'll look all around us at a world that's confused and broken and hurting, looking for hope. And we'll take that message with us there as well. We love you and we thank you. It's in Your name we pray, Amen.