

## Being stewards of God's grace

1 Peter 4:7-11

The end of all things is near. Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. <sup>8</sup> Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. <sup>9</sup> Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.

### 1) Love, the root of good stewardship

- 1 Peter 4:7-8 The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.
- Considering that the persecution of Christians was starting to increase under the Roman emperor Nero, the Christians anticipated the end of all things
  - It is in times of difficulty and hardship that people often panic and make emotional decisions
  - Whenever there's emotionalism conflict between people increases
- In times of pressure, whether personal or as a church, we need to be alert and of sober mind
  - That means we need to be clear thinking in our situations rather than being emotional
  - We need to be alert to what is happening around us and how the enemy would seek to destroy us.
  - 1 Peter 5:8 Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.
- The devil comes to steal, kill, and destroy
  - This includes our relationships
    - Primarily our relationship with God
    - Adam and Eve were divided in the Garden of Eden
    - Racism and ethnic divisions
    - Social divisions
- The reason that we need to be alert and sober minded is so that we may pray
  - Emotionalism causes us to panic and try to figure things out on our own
  - Clear thinking drives us to God acknowledging that we need Him in our circumstances and seeking Him for a clear way forward
  - However, primarily, we run to Him knowing that He loves us and we love Him.
  - It says to the devil that he will never destroy your relationship with God
- The other reason to be alert and sober minded is that we may love one another deeply
  - The Greek word for deeply means to have fervent unceasing love for one another
  - In other words, God expects us to have deep real relationships and not shallow meaningless relationships
  - Relationships where we really care for each other and build each other up
- These are the type of relationships that cover a multitude of sins
  - There are two ways to look at this:
    - 1) Be loving in the way you deal with the sins of others. Don't be harsh with them.
    - 2) If you love others you won't sin against them
- This then brings us to the matter of stewardship
  - If we love someone, we'll want to share with them that with which God has entrusted us for their benefit
  - Withholding something that someone else needs isn't an act of love

## 2) The attitudes of good stewardship

- 1 Peter 4:9-10 Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.
- Showing hospitality is to be welcoming to each other, as well as to strangers.
  - What it means is that we shouldn't be distant from each other, but have warm accepting relationships with each other
  - If someone comes to us, accept them and listen to what they need.
  - Hebrews 13:1-2 Keep on loving one another as brothers and sisters. Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.
- We shouldn't show hospitality out of obligation or duty, but out of an open heart of love and acceptance.
  - We have been given something that we can share with others
  - Freely you have received. Freely give (Matthew 10: 8)
- Whatever gift God has given us isn't for our own use or purposes, but they're to be used to serve others.
  - They don't belong to us. We're merely stewards of what God has given to us. Everything we have belongs to Him and should be used as He wants us to use them
  - He expects us to have the attitude of a servant
  - Mark 9:35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all."
- He's given us what he's given us for the benefit of others

## 3) The outcomes of good stewardship

- 1 Peter 4:11 If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.
- What is meant by speaking the very words of God?
  - 2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:11 Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.
- How should we speak to others?
  - Colossians 4:6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.
- Whatever gift we may have we need to use it graciously to serve others
- The outcomes are:
  - Others are built up in the faith and encouraged in life
  - Know and understand what God expects of them as they are taught
  - Repent of wrongdoing that they knew was wrong as they are rebuked
  - Changed their ways as they are corrected
  - Live righteous lives in every aspect of their lives as they are trained in righteousness
  - Carry out the work that God has called them to do as they are equipped to do so
  - And that ultimately God is glorified through His people