



Series Title: Stewardship – Making our Whole Lives Count for Jesus!

Weekly Title: Stewardship of Grace

Date: Sunday September 4

Bible Passage: Philippians 1:18-21

Purpose of Preach: To challenge and inspire us to be totally dependant on Jesus, to be radically available to Jesus, and to know our steadfast hope in Jesus.

Introduction:

This week we are kicking off our new series “Stewardship – making the whole of our lives count for Jesus”. How can we steward the life we have to make it count for Jesus? How can we organise and align who we are and what we do and run into all that He has for us? This week is a foundational week, and it is how can we steward God’s grace in our lives. How should we respond and live our lives in the truth that we are forgiven and eternally accepted by faith in Jesus? Or to put it another way, how can we steward God’s Grace. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul whilst in prison not knowing whether he was going to be set free or executed, wrote to encourage them to live for Jesus and steward His grace. In chapter 1:18-21 we see three ways we need to steward grace in order to make the whole of our lives count for Jesus.

#1: v.19-20. TOTAL DEPENDENCE

Paul was totally dependent upon the grace of Jesus.

a) Paul knew his need for prayer and the power of the Holy Spirit. As he sat in his prison cell Paul knew his only hope was to be empowered by Jesus to live for Jesus. Paul says that this is a power received through the prayer. He trusted that he would enjoy this power of Christ as they prayed for him. This is such an important truth: we all need prayer.

b) Then Paul says that this power is the “help of the Spirit of Christ.” The word “help” literally means “to supply or provide”. Paul uses the same word in Galatians 3:5 where he writes “he who supplies the Spirit to you”. Paul knew that there was more of God to experience and enjoy. He longs to be empowered to keep running with Jesus. Paul is saying: “I live in the expectation that no matter how much of the Spirit I have now I can get more, there can be in response to prayer a greater, more intense and expansive and abundant provision of the Spirit Himself.”

c) It is the power to patiently endure and not give up.

Paul says in v.20 that whatever happens, through His power I will not give up or be ashamed, I will keep trusting in Him whether I live or die. His power will enable me to honour Him, to live or die in such a way that magnifies His name, His glory and His worth.

Application

How are we stewarding the grace of God in our lives today?

What or who are we relying on?

To steward God’s grace in our lives begins by being totally dependent on Jesus.

#2: v.20-21 RADICAL AVAILABILITY

Paul was radically available to Jesus.

a) *Paul writes in v.20 "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain".*

Paul ultimately had one single passion in life: to live for Jesus. The whole of his life, every decision, every word, every action and every dream was all dominated and driven by this one goal: to live for Jesus. For Paul his life was about Jesus, to Jesus, for Jesus and through Jesus.

b) *It is so important that we see the personal and relational focus of this availability.*

It is Jesus Himself that Paul lives for. This is not a life driven by religious duty or formulaic rules and regulations. This is life driven by the joy of knowing Jesus, enjoying Jesus and treasuring Jesus. And from tasting and seeing the beauty and the worth of Jesus Himself Paul knows there is nothing and no one else that comes close. He is not living for Jesus to get some reward in heaven outside of Jesus, in a very real way the reward is Jesus.

c) *Paul's radical availability was because he had resolved, determined and decided heart.*

In v.20 Paul says "now as always". Literally this reads "as always, also now". Paul had a settled conviction and passion to live for Jesus. Ever since his conversion on the Damascus road he had surrendered his whole life to Jesus. He made a life defining decision to be sold out for Him, to run with Him, to live passionately and supremely for Him.

Application

How are we stewarding God's grace in our lives today?

Are we genuinely radically available to Him today? Is every area of your life open to Him, surrendered to Him and for Him?

#3: v.21 STEADFAST HOPE

Paul had a steadfast hope in Jesus.

a) *Paul states "for me to live is Christ and to die is gain."* Paul said that death is gain, something or someone better is awaiting him that is far greater than anything this world has to offer. If I physically die then it is far better, for it means I go and be with Him and enjoy Him in a way that is far greater than we can experience now. It is so important to be clear on what Paul is saying here: Paul is not wanting to kill himself, he is not wanting to get away from life itself, he loved the life that God had given him. This is not a suicidal thought but a relational one. The joy of knowing and experiencing Jesus face to face is infinitely greater to Paul than anything he could experience now.

b) *Paul had a steadfast, secure and certain hope in Christ.* When he physically died he knew he would see Him face to face and be with Him. It means to see Him, there will be no more need for faith as we shall see him as clearly and as closely as we see someone in the physical now. To be with Him means to feel Him, to touch Him and to hear Him. It means to worship Him and enjoy the intimacy and unbroken friendship that is limited now, because we live by faith and not by sight. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12 "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." This is why for Paul death is gain: Because to be with Christ is going to be infinitely more fulfilling, more life giving and more enjoyable than living for Him today.

Application

a) How does our future in Christ determine and shape our lives for Him now?

b) This is secure, this is certain. He will never give up on you or reject you.

Closing Applications.....a) Maybe you need to receive this grace for the first time? b) if you are a Christian then how are you stewarding God's grace.