



## CC Teaching Guide for 2015 Stewardship Sunday

### Theme Passage:

*For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God. (Hebrews 13:14-16)*

In this last chapter of Hebrews, the author is exhorting his audience of Jewish Christians to focus their actions not on the suffering they are enduring, but instead to focus on the promised Kingdom that is to come.

Throughout the previous chapters the author has elevated the person of Christ as the mediator of a New Covenant and the one who is ushering in a new Kingdom. And so they are called to fix their eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of their faith (12:1-2). Despite the loss of earthly wealth and safety, they are reminded that they have a “better and abiding possession.” (10:34)

It is in response to these truths that the author of Hebrews exhorts his readers to seek the city that is to come and to offer a sacrifice of praise to God.

Our passage sets forth how we respond in light of the incredible riches of our eternal inheritance as believers.

**1. Do We Have The Right Perspective In Our Stewardship? (v.14)**

A. The Hebrews to whom this was written would most likely have had a desire (and even longing) for the good of Jerusalem. They were tempted to see God's blessing and their own security as connected to that earthly city. The author reminds them that "here we have no lasting city".

B. We are often tempted to see God's blessing and our security in terms of an earthly location or earthly possessions. We too need to be reminded that our primary citizenship is not here.

C. This change of perspective will have a big impact on our stewardship.

D. Consider offering a practical example of how this has worked in your own life or in the life of a friend of yours. (Often, confessing how we sometimes have an unbiblical perspective of our stewardship can help build a bridge with our listeners.)

E. In light of the transient nature of this world and the permanent nature of everything in the world to come, how should we invest the things of this world to advance the agenda of the world to come?

**2. Do We Have The Right Focus In Our Stewardship? (v. 15)**

A. Throughout the Book of Hebrews the author calls the readers to take their eyes off their circumstances and look at Christ. Their sacrifice was to have a focus...the praise of Christ.

B. In the stewardship of our resources, we can be tempted to make it about us. How much do I want to give? How much time should I serve? Where do I want my money to go? We are called, instead, to make it about Christ. Our sacrifice is to be one of praise to Christ.

C. What will be the "fruit of our lips"? Will our weekly actions match the praise we offer in worship on Sunday?

D. Practical Implication Questions:

i. What are some practical ways that we make our stewardship about us instead of the Lord?

ii. How do we practically make it about the Lord?

### 3. Do We Have Freedom In Our Stewardship? (v.16)

A. The exhortation to these Jewish Christians to “share what they have” was no small thing. We learn from chapter 10 that they were facing persecution and the “plundering” of their property. (10:34) The reality was that they did not have a lot to share, but with the right perspective and focus, they truly had a freedom to share.

B. What practically does this look like? Verses 5 and 6 above describe this freedom. Freedom is found in:

- i. Being content with what you have (v. 5)
- ii. Trusting the Lord as your helper (v. 6)

C. There is no greater “wealth” than being content in what God has provided, knowing that you can trust Him for your future. In that context we are truly free to offer sacrifices, and when we experience that freedom, God is pleased.

D. Feel free to use some of these Practical Implications.

Questions/Thoughts:

- i. What are some of the ways that we live in bondage in our stewardship? What is the motivational impulse that frees us for generous, open-handed and open hearted living?
- ii. What is one way in which you would live differently if you sought with more fervency “the city that is to come”?

### Conclusion

This passage concludes with this directive: *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

The implication of this quote is that God’s Kingdom advances through planned sacrifices. C.T. Studd wrote: “If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.”

Yet, the followers of Jesus do not consider what they give and invest in the Kingdom (whether time, talents, or treasures) a sacrifice in light of all that Jesus has sacrificed to rescue us to one day live in the New Jerusalem forever.

This is why John Newton concluded:

*Fading is the worldling’s pleasure,  
All his boasted pomp and show:  
Solid joys and lasting treasure,  
None but Zion’s children know!*