



## SOPC Leaflet, Wednesday, October 8, 2025

### A Message from Pastor Jim:

#### *Maturity in Stewardship*

2 Corinthians 9:6-15, 2 Corinthians 8:1-15

Truit Gannon, pastor of a church in Georgia, tells of an incident in his boyhood. A man named Hugh, who worked for his father, owned a beautiful Harley Davidson motorcycle. It was a beautiful wine-colored machine. One day he asked, "Hugh, can I ride your motorcycle again today?"

Hugh's words have stuck with him ever since. "You can ride it anytime you want to," Hugh said, "anywhere you want to, and as often as you want to. Just remember to ride it like it was mine and not yours." Reflecting on that statement, Gannon says, "God has given us full and free use of this world. All He asks is that we use it like it was His and not ours. That's *stewardship!*"

Today, we want to talk about maturity in stewardship. Whenever the word *steward* or *stewardship* is mentioned, we usually think of money and giving, but giving is only a part of stewardship and the tithe is only a part of giving.

Let's look at some marks of a mature Christian steward this morning. This is a Christian who has the qualities Paul mentioned in II Corinthians 9 and which Jesus mentions in Matthew's Gospel.

FIRST, THE **MATURE CHRISTIAN STEWARD MAKES CHRIST LORD OF HIS OR HER LIFE.** This is really the starting place, the heart of all stewardship, for we are moment-by-moment, day-by-day deciding the question, "Shall I live for God or for myself?" This was the dilemma Adam and Eve faced in the garden and every person must face. Human beings must worship something.

If we do not let God be God, then we will make something else into our god. It may be ourselves, our possessions, another person or some ideal or institution. Something will rule over our lives. Frank Sinatra sings, "I did it my way." It may be unrecognized by most folks, but this is the theme song of their lives. Our way is not God's way. Our way often leads into difficulty and heartbreak, but God's way leads into life and peace and joy.

His way involves our letting Christ control and direct us in all things. He becomes the center of our lives and the One we worship. Making Him Lord means using our possessions, our time, talents, influence and property for His glory. When He is Lord, we recognize that we are stewards of everything not just our possessions. We are stewards of life itself and all of life's experiences.

Lawrence Furgin reminds us, "Christian stewardship is the matching of gift for matchless gift, our life and its whole substance for the gift of perfect love." That is the inexpressible gift Paul speaks of and the grace of God in us. "*Though God's Son and his death are matchless, our gift is made sufficient by Him, my all for His all.*" The Christian steward makes Christ the Lord of all his life, for Christ must be Lord of all.

**THEN THE EFFICIENT STEWARD ACKNOWLEDGES THAT GOD IS THE OWNER AND HE IS SIMPLY A TRUSTEE.**

Psalm 24:1 tells us, *"The earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein."*

Genesis tells us, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*

Psalm 50 says, *"For every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle upon a thousand hills."*

Repeatedly the Bible tells us that God owns the world because He made it. Leonard Sanderson, a Baptist pastor, tells how this was brought home to him by a layman that he came to know. They were visiting together during a revival meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma. As they passed a new office building, Sanderson said, "That's a magnificent building." The young man replied, "Yes, that belongs to my father." "Sure enough?" Sanderson said. "You have every reason to be proud of that." He referred to some other nice property during the afternoon and each time the young businessman said, "That belongs to my father too." It was beginning to get to Rev. Sanderson, so he said, "You're not pulling my leg, are you?" The young man replied, "No, I'm not kidding you, preacher. God is my father, and He owns everything. Because that is true, you and I have no right to say high-handedly, 'That's mine.'"

God's good creation became "not good," and sin began when humanity said of the creation, "It's mine!" When God said don't eat of that tree, that meant it was off limits and was not Eve's or Adam's. It was God's tree. Man's sin involved denying that God owned him and all things. We are renewed in our relationship to God and others when we recognize God's right to us and all our worldly gain. *"You are not your own: you were bought with a price."* The Christian steward knows he is only a trustee. Genesis 1:28 tells us that after the creation God said to man, *"Be fruitful and multiply and subdue the earth and have dominion."* We're not owners but trustees.

In the parable of the talents, Jesus showed that God has given us the resources of our world, and He expects an accounting for them. He who supplies seeds to the sower, and bread to the eater expects us to use them and other gifts to glorify His name and minister to others.

In Romans 14:12, Paul says plainly, *"So each of us shall give an account of himself to God."* Some of us will be like Adam, though, and seek to avoid taking the responsibility God places on each of us. Adam, you will remember, tried to place all the blame for his sin on Eve. He was like an old man in the hospital who had been married 45 years. His wife was sitting next to his bed. He turned toward her and said, "You know, Martha, I've been thinking," and she said "Yes." He said, "You know, we've been married 45 years now," and she answered, "Yes." He said, "You remember that first year we were married. We had a bad crop and lost half the farm, and there you were, right by my side." She responded, "Yes." He said, "That second year, we had another bad crop and lost the other half of the farm. And there you were, right by my side." She nodded, "Yes." He said, "Then we started five businesses and all five of them failed. And there you were, right by my side." She agreed, "Yes." He said, "And then we had ten kids. All of them wanted to go to college. Not one of them got a scholarship. And there you were, right by my side." And she said, "Yes." He said, "Now here I am in the hospital. The doctors tell me I'm terminally ill. They don't expect me to walk out of here alive. And here you are, right by my side." And she said, "Yes." He said, "You know, Martha, I've been thinking...you're bad luck!" This old man couldn't possibly imagine that part of the responsibility for his failures lay at his own door. So it is with us. We are held responsible for our stewardship of all of life.

### **THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD ALSO TRIES TO DISCOVER AND FOLLOW GOD'S PURPOSE FOR EVERY MATERIAL POSSESSION IN HIS LIFE.**

The key scripture for understanding the Christian view of material things is Colossians 1:16 where Paul says, *"All things were created by Him and for Him."* God made us for Himself and gives us material things to fulfill His purpose and plan for the world. His purpose is that all persons come to know Christ and find fullness of life through Him and in the church. Whatever we have should be spent ultimately for that purpose. Christians must discover and follow God's purpose in getting and spending. We have let materialistic values squeeze us into their mold.

When Clare Booth Luce was appointed U.S. ambassador to Italy, she rented a 17th century Italian villa. Soon she noticed she was not feeling well. She was tired, lost weight and had little energy. She got worse and worse. After intense medical tests, doctors determined that she was being poisoned by arsenic. All the staff in the villa were found to be trustworthy. Where was the poison coming from? Finally, the cause was located. The ceiling of her bedroom had the carvings of roses, and those carvings, it was discovered, were painted with arsenic lead paint. A fine dust fell from the roses. Completely unaware of what was going on, Mrs. Luce was being poisoned in her bed by this fine dust falling from the roses.

We too, completely unaware of it, are in danger of being poisoned by a materialistic outlook. We can be tainted by materialism all about us without being aware until it is too late. The Bible says we are not to covet, not to be greedy, not to live just to for wealth alone.

### **FINALLY, WE NEED TO REEVALUATE OUR ATTITUDE TOWARD OUR STANDARD OF LIVING.**

By and large we have followed the world's values regarding wealth. "We assume," says A. R. Fagin, "that everything is all right with God as long as we make an honest living, pay our debts, give our tithes and offerings and spend what's left as we please."

When Americans, with some four or five percent of the world's population, have one-half of the world's income and one-seventh of its food, plus a lead in almost every category, it's time to look again at our Christian responsibility. "Is it right," asks Cecil Rhea, "for every family to reach the highest level of abundance it can reach? Is it right to give the highest priority to profit in all of our dealings? Should every person make all that he can and buy all that he can? Is it right for us to have all that we want? Does the Bible really teach that the reward we get for being a faithful Christian is increasing material prosperity?" All these questions take on a new light when we remember what Paul said about Jesus. *"For your sake He became poor so that by His poverty you might become rich."*

Here, Paul is speaking of our spiritual enrichment. If this is what Jesus did for us, and he is our example in all things, how do we stand with our fellow human beings? Are we willing to do with less so that Christ can do for them what he's done for us?

Following God's purpose in material possessions certainly involves giving through His church. We may argue about the tithe. The New Testament simply assumes that a redeemed person will start with the tithe and go beyond that. If those that lived under the Old Testament law gave up to 25 percent of their income to God's work, can we who know the eternal love of God in Christ, who live under Grace, do less than the tithe?

"Freely we have received, freely we are to give." We give out of love and thanksgiving to the glory of God, as Paul points out. God loves a cheerful giver, he says, and a cheerful giver loves God and his fellow men more and more.

"Our giving and our lifestyle ought to reflect," says Dr. Rhea, "that Christ is Lord." Our lifestyle should reflect that we can tell the difference between necessities and luxuries. A Christian steward's lifestyle and giving will reflect the responsibility he feels for the blessings God has bestowed upon him. And his lifestyle will show that he seeks contentment in doing God's will and fulfilling His purpose for the world.

Whitney Yeaple has paraphrased a favorite verse in two ways. Which applies to all of us? "Mr. Blank of the blank congregation so loved the world that he gave up what was dear to him so that the work of the Lord in his church might go forward. This he did that men might know of the eternal life and not perish." Or "Mr. Blank of the blank congregation so loved himself that he withheld all but a trifling amount of his money (and we might add his time talents, and witness) that he might gratify his own whims, caring little whether his Lord or his church could carry on. This he did in spite of the fact that he knew men would perish without the word of eternal life."

*Lay up not treasures on earth, but treasures in heaven through lives of redeemed men and women, boys and girls. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Amen.*

- ❖ **This Sunday's Guest Preacher: The Rev. Dr. J. Eric Skidmore**
- ❖ **This Sunday's sermon: They Work for God.**
- ❖ **This Sunday's Scripture: Exodus 3:1-12; Romans 13:1-7**
- ❖ **THIS SUNDAY is First Responder Appreciation Sunday. We will have a Blessing of the Badges during worship and welcome our guests to eat with us afterward.**





- ❖ Our churchwide Fellowship Meal will be in conjunction with our 1<sup>st</sup> Responders' Appreciation Service **THIS SUNDAY, October 12<sup>th</sup>**. Stay after worship for a yummy Greek chicken dinner at which the First Responders and their families will be our guests! If you get a chance, please let Liz Harris know how many plan to attend. If you forget, come anyway!



Time: 11 am - 2 pm

Date: October 11 (Saturday)

## Fall Festival

Seven Oaks Presbyterian Church  
530 Saint Andrews Rd., 29210 (803) 772-1761

**RELAY, GAMES, PRIZES AND MORE...**

**PETTING ZOO**  
11:30-1:30

**FACE AND NAIL PAINTING**

**FREE HOT DOG LUNCH FOR CHILDREN**  
-Tickets at Registration Table

**HAY RIDE**

In case of rain, event will be held in the Fellowship Hall.

Children **MUST** be accompanied by adults!

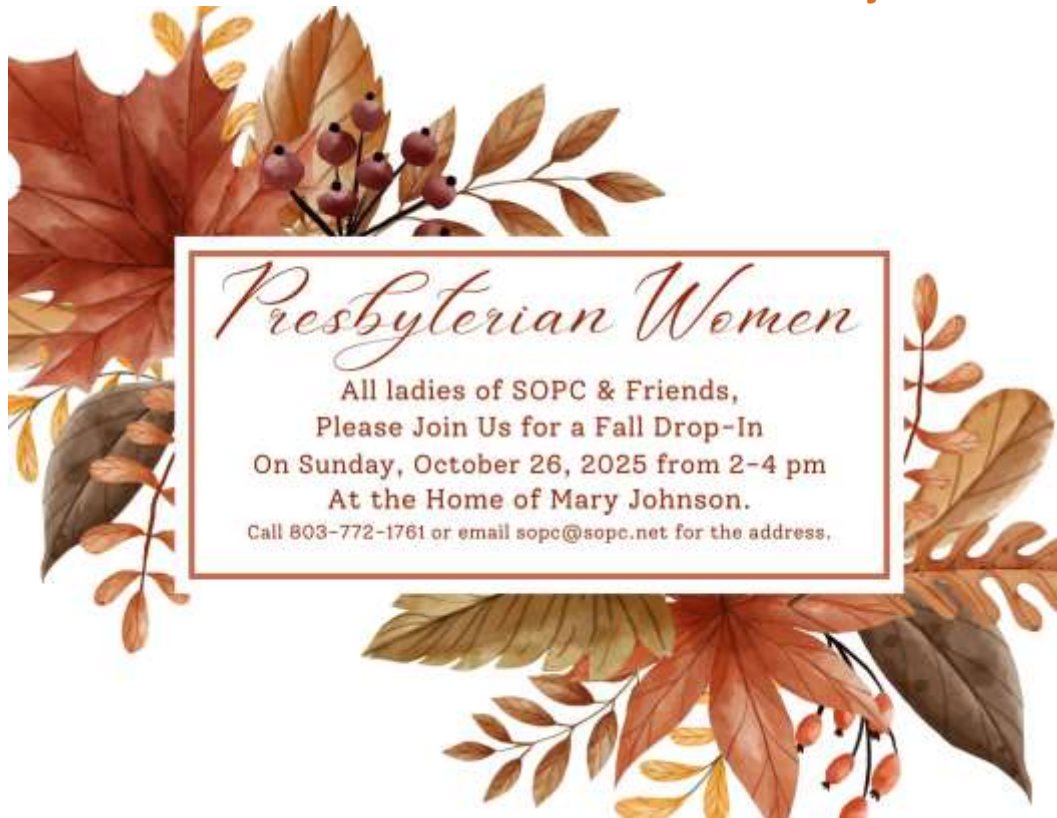
- ❖ **THIS SATURDAY** is our Fall Festival! Please share the flyer above with any families with children you know! Or, you can direct them to: <https://sopc.net/events/fall-festival/>.



- ❖ Our SOPC & Westminster Youth Groups will gather at 10:30 am this SATURDAY here at SOPC to help their church and serve their community at our Fall Festival from 11 am until 2 pm! There will not be a regular youth group meeting this Sunday. We will be collecting new or gently used /clean, lightweight, fleece blankets. , we will deliver them to our neighbors at Love Revolution and the Clothing Closet. Please check your closets for all those throws you have received as gifts so many times!!



- ❖ Our Missions Ministry is partnering with Ashland UMC to help provide CANDY for Seven Oaks Elementary School's community outreach Trunk-or-Treat on October 30<sup>th</sup>. If you are able and feel led to provide a bag of individually wrapped candy, or two, please bring your donations by the church office or to the large baskets in the narthex on either side of the entrance to the sanctuary.



- ❖ Our next Ladies' Luncheon will be Monday, October 20<sup>th</sup>, at noon at BJ's Restaurant on Harbison Blvd. If you plan to attend, please notify Margaret Royals at 803-608-1434 or mroyals052@gmail.com. Thanks!

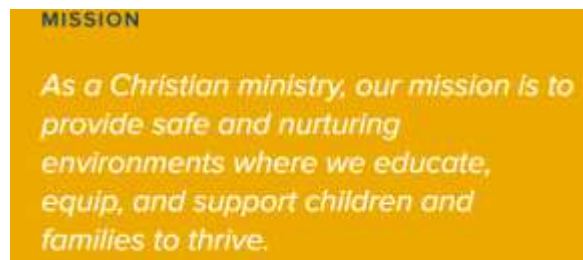


- ❖ Our SOPC Book Group is currently reading The Tears of Things by Richard Rohr. They will meet to discuss it at Loveland Coffee shop on Carlisle St. in Irmo on Thursday, 10/23/25, at 3 pm. Next, they will read The Woman They Could Not Silence by Kate Moore and meet to discuss it on 11/20/25--same time and place.
- ❖ SOPC will host a meeting of Trinity Presbytery on Tuesday, November 18<sup>th</sup>. VOLUNTEERS are needed to greet, direct parking, serve lunch, etc.
- ❖ If you would like to volunteer in the sanctuary's sound booth occasionally, please contact the church office. Training provided!
- ❖ Parents of Young Children: Please grab a "Wiggle Bag" from the coat rack just inside the sanctuary entrance doors before worship starts and remember that the little ones go to the Children's Corner after the Children's Message during the service. Thanks!
- ❖ We're Collecting: These items may be placed in the large baskets in the narthex or brought to the church office.
  - Bags of individually wrapped candy for Seven Oaks Elementary School's community Trunk-or-Treat.
  - New or gently used lightweight fleece blankets for a youth group service project.
  - Travel-size toiletries to hand out from our Clothing Closet weekly. Travel size are best for those experiencing homelessness or housing instability. We can always use small soaps, shampoos, lotions, conditioners, deodorants, toothpastes, and pocket packs of Kleenex. We have plenty of toothbrushes, disposable razors, combs, feminine hygiene products, and incontinence products for now. If you travel, please save the hotels' provided individual toiletries for us! Thanks!!
  - We collect used crayons in the church office for [www.thecrayoninitiative.org](http://www.thecrayoninitiative.org). They sort them, melt them down, and make them into free, ergonomic crayons for pediatric hospital patients. We have collected 397 pounds so far!

- Please save your cans' pop tops and bring them to the church office. So far, we have donated 4 gallon-sized Ziploc bags FULL of pop tops to the Ronald McDonald House in Columbia.



- ❖ All Saints' Sunday: On November 2<sup>nd</sup>, we will honor those who have gone before us to join the Church Triumphant in the past year. Please submit the names and years-of-life of loved ones who have passed since last year's service so that we can include them in the bulletin. Thank you.



- ❖ We will collect our annual Thornwell Offering on Sunday, 11/23<sup>rd</sup>. For more information about Thornwell, visit: <https://thornwell.org/>.
- ❖ Save the Date:
- October 17-19: PW Synod Triennial Gathering
  - October 26: SOPW Fall Gathering
  - November 2: All Saints' Sunday
  - November 18: SOPC will host the meeting of Trinity Presbytery.
  - November 23: Thornwell Offering
- ❖ If you have information to go out to our church family in the weekly Leaflet newsletter, please get it to Annah in the church office by Tuesday of the week you want it to go out. Thanks!