

## 10.03.2018 THE ROLE OF STEWARDSHIP

***“For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life.” 1 Thessalonians 4:7.***

As stewards and sons of God, we are called to be stewards of God’s grace. We are also called to reveal the character of our Heavenly Father. It is not enough to share His name; we must also reflect His character. By our godly love and holy life, we must create in men and women who are estranged from God a hunger for Him. We must be God’s ambassadors, reconciling mankind to the God who loves them unconditionally (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

### **The Centrality of Christ**

A true steward of God is one who recognises that the highest priority in his life is Christ Jesus:

*“Whom have I on earth beside Thee?” Psalm 73:25.*

*“For me to live is Christ...” Philippians 1:29.*

*“It is no longer ‘I’ but Christ...” Galatians 2:20.*

*“Christ is all...” Colossians 3:28.*

Christ is the Word, the Logos of God. Every faithful steward will search the Scriptures to learn of Christ and to know Him personally. He must be the centre of every doctrine. If we cannot see Jesus as the centre of any doctrine we believe, we must go back to the Word and fall on our knees and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ in the doctrine.

In coming to Jesus, we receive the Sabbath rest of God, rest for our souls (Matthew 11:28, 29); ceasing from our own works (Hebrews 4:9-11) and accepting His completed work for us. He is the Resurrection and the Life; we who believe in Him shall never die (John 11:25, 26) for we have passed from death to eternal life (John 5:24).

### **Christ our Sanctuary**

The Old Testament sanctuary service foretold the work of Christ Jesus, our sanctuary. He came to tabernacle among men (John 1:14) and by His death and resurrection, gained the right to dwell in them (John 14:17) and produce in them the glory of God (Colossians 1:27, 28), which is His righteousness. He is the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8), to take away the sin of the world (John 1:29). He is the Light of life, the Bread of Life. He is the heavenly High Priest of the order of Melchizedek who ever lives to intercede for us (Hebrews 7:25). He is our Advocate (1 John 2:1); in the judgment no-one who believes in Him will be condemned (John 3:17, 18; 5:24).

### **The Three Angels’ Messages (Revelation 14:6-12)**

We are a people and a movement raised up to proclaim Christ in the three angels’ messages. It is the message of the everlasting gospel. The everlasting gospel is the good news of the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Timothy 1:10).

In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have been set in the world as watchmen and light bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels’ messages. There is no other work of so great importance. They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention. *Testimonies 9: p.19.*

The third angel’s message *‘is the message of justification by faith in verity and its fruit is unto holiness’*. In and of ourselves we are totally incapable of producing the righteousness of God, which is the only righteousness that attains to eternal life (*Matthew 5:20*). But the gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed in us as we live in a faith relationship with *God (Romans 1;16, 17)*. This righteousness is the glory of God that lightens the whole world (*Revelation 18:1*).

Some of our brethren have expressed fears that we shall dwell too much upon the subject of justification by faith, but I hope and pray that none will be needlessly alarmed; for there is no danger in presenting this doctrine as it is set forth in the Scriptures. If there had not been remissness in the past to properly instruct the people of God, there would not now be a necessity of calling especial attention to it. Some of our brethren are not receiving the message of God upon this subject. They appear to be anxious that none of our ministers shall depart from their former manner of teaching the good old doctrines. We inquire, *“is it not time that fresh light should come to the people of God, to awaken them to greater earnestness and zeal?”* The exceeding great and precious promises given us in the Holy Scriptures have been lost sight of to a great extent, just as the enemy of all righteousness designed that they should be. He has cast his own dark shadow between us and our God, that we may not see the true character of God. The Lord has proclaimed himself to be *“merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”*

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, *“It is the third angel’s message in verity.”* The prophet declares, *“And after these things I saw another angel*

*come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.*" Brightness, glory, and power are to be connected with the third angel's message, and conviction will follow wherever it is preached in demonstration of the Spirit. Review and Herald: April 1, 1890.

This faith relationship with God is the same relationship Jesus had with His Father as the Son of Man. He lived in total dependence upon His Father. He lived by every word that proceeded from His Father's mouth. He did nothing (John 5:19), said nothing (John 14:10) and judged nothing (John 8:15) of Himself. In all these things, He waited to know the Father's will. Before He went to Calvary He made two statements about Himself with regard to sin and righteousness. With regard to sin, He said *"The prince of this world comes, and has nothing in me (he has no hold over me)."* John 14:30. With regard to righteousness, Jesus said, *"I always do the things which please the Father."* John 8:29.

When we love God and live lives of total dependence upon Him, as Jesus did, then we will be known as the people who have the faith of Jesus and the obedience of Jesus – the obedience of faith which seeks to continually do the will of God only by the power of the Spirit... *"here is the patient endurance of the saints; here are they who keep the commandments of God and have the faith of Jesus."* Revelation 14:12.

### **Conclusion:**

Noah was a preacher of righteousness who warned of judgement to come. Jesus was a preacher of righteousness; His life revealed to mankind the glory of the Father and condemned self-righteousness and evil. We are stewards raised up by God to reveal to mankind in the last days of earth's history, the glory of God, His character. That is the goal of the gospel – the glory of God.

We are also to warn men and women that condemnation will come not only to those who have persistently and wilfully refused the gift of God, but also to those who refuse to exchange the filthy rags of their self-righteousness for the glory of God's righteousness.

Are we faithful stewards of the mysteries of God in the end-time? Do our lives vindicate God's righteousness and justice in the Judgement? Are we daily allowing ourselves to be channels through which Christ and His glory is revealed to the world? Do we long to see Jesus face to face because He has become dearer to us than anyone on earth?

God is waiting for such a people. He will say to them, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" Matthew 25:34.

A rule I have had for years is: to treat the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal friend. His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is He Himself we have.

*DL Moody*

Make sure of your commitment to Jesus Christ, and seek to follow Him every day. Don't be swayed by the false values and goals of this world, but put Christ and His will first in everything you do.

*Billy Graham*

There is always the danger that we may just do the work for the sake of the work. This is where the respect and the love and the devotion come in - that we do it to God, to Christ, and that's why we try to do it as beautifully as possible.

*Mother Teresa*

The life of Christ was a life of humble simplicity, yet how infinitely exalted was His mission. Christ is our example in all things...only the love that flows from the heart of Christ can heal. Only he in whom that love flows, even as the sap in the tree or the blood in the body, can restore the wounded soul.

*EG White*

Take Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding and my entire will; all I have and call my own. You have given all to me. To you, Lord, I return it. Everything is yours; do with it what you will. Give me only your love and your grace; that is enough for me.

*Ignatius Loyola*

God Bless

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