



CAYMAN ISLANDS REGIONAL MISSION COUNCIL

WEEKLY UPDATE

September 02, 2020

VOLUME 5 ISSUE 35

STEWARDSHIP & THE DISCIPLE

All We Possess is a Trust from God

by Mr. Bryan Bothwell

Please read 1Chronicles 29: 10 -18

The theme we have been invited to delve into today, should be but a reminder to all people, **“All we possess is a trust from God.”** However, many refuse to accept that, despite the irrefutable evidence that truly we bring nothing into this world and we take nothing with us when we leave. Another irrefutable fact is that no matter how much you multiply nothing by, the outcome is always nothing. Zero multiplied a million times is still zero. So regardless of how hard you worked or how brilliant you are, think carefully before claiming ‘I did it all myself’. As Christians we accept that unless it had come from God, we truly would have nothing. But does God, and do our families and others, see the conviction of that in our lives? If not, we have a problem. That is why we need to carefully and frankly examine our faith through the lens of this morning’s statement, for the Christian must endeavor to ensure that our confession of Christ as Lord of our lives remains true – the only way we hold on to our salvation.

Today’s lens is more than even those core words, **“All is from God”**. The concept of “All we possess” can also be dangerous. And the third facet of this lens is that, if it is a “trust from God” it means God has entrusted us with it. That requires us to each examine, very personally, “what has God ‘entrusted’ me with?” And clearly that means, using even the Concise Oxford Dictionary, that God has “given responsibility for [duty, person, thing, its safety] to” me as the “person in whom (God) has confidence” and “made [me] responsible for (that) duty, object of care”, etc. Hmm... That certainly emphasizes the added dimension to what the Bible teaches us repeatedly about God having chosen us, instead of us having chosen Him; that it is not only for the unique and wonderful gift of my personal salvation through Christ. But we all knew that. For Christ Himself stated quite frankly that his followers were chosen “to bear fruit”, and each person would be “known by the fruit you bear” and any branch that does not bear fruit will be cut off.



So God has chosen me, and each of you, not only to be saved, but also for particular responsibilities for “all we possess”. And it is clear from the definition of ‘entrust’ that “all we possess” means a lot more than what we call “possessions” – and in our examination we cannot limit either of those or confuse the two.

Earlier in that chapter King David listed gold, silver, precious wood and stones, etc., that he had “provided” for the building of the temple, and, in addition, now gave “my personal treasures of gold and silver”. Then he challenged the others present, “who is willing to consecrate himself today to the Lord”? And those people gave more than King David had personally given. People calculate those amounts of just the gold and silver would now be worth billions of dollars! Whatever it was, it was certainly a tremendous amount. But as we read, David then thanked God, marveling over how he and his people could have been so blessed by God to be able to give so much, and publicly acknowledged, for himself and his people, that it had all come from God in the first place.

Do we remind ourselves of that often enough? Consider one example, whether the world would have the wealth it has for us to share in now if God had not provided, millions and millions of years in advance, the creatures and trees whose remains became the coal and oil that powered the industrial revolution. From a more personal angle, those dead carbon sources became the diesel that powered the engines that my father could work on to feed the family God had blessed and entrusted him with, and to enable his children to in turn be equipped to be productive in the world in which they found themselves. Before that, his generation harvested the Red Mangrove bark, for its dye, and Silver Thatch; and, by God’s grace, on such thin scrapings our people over time were able to build up all that we now possess. Obviously we

could go on and on about all the things that had to come together and all the generations that contributed cumulatively to all King David’s people were able to give, or what we have today. Of course it is much more than physical possessions. There is life itself, health, following the right precepts, the great creativity of the human mind by which each generation builds on prior discoveries to better harness all God put in place. Some individuals are better than others in harvesting and harnessing; but have any of us done any of this from nothing?

Undoubtedly, though, David and the people of Israel on that occasion set a tremendous example that continues to remind us to pause and reverently recognize how much God has given us, and then to respond with thanksgiving by giving mindfully, generously and joyfully, for God’s purpose. For God wants us

to do as the Israelites did with that magnificent temple. Not house Him! But mightily proclaim that God is Lord! And God was pleased with what they had done.

However, the fact that we may never have the material possessions to give in such quantities is no reason to not give in the same way of whatever we have. Just remember how Jesus admired the widow giving her mite, or the miracles stemming from another widow's last drops of oil and flour, or from one boy's small lunch. Remember also what God declared when God wanted that temple rebuilt many generations later, so the people would draw their focus back to Him after many years of captive exile. Rather than starting work, the people grumbled about the modesty of the plans for the rebuilding. So in Zechariah 4: 10.

God admonished them in words left also for us who would follow: "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin".

But perhaps the most important example for us to remember is that David himself would not have been King if it had been left to his father, who presented only the older, stronger, more handsome sons for God to choose from. I have long wondered guiltily if we do not hear God's question to Jesse echoing in our sanctuaries, "Are these all the sons you have?" Of course, in our case it would also be, "Are these all the daughters you have?"

Children are never possessions; no human is. But make no mistake about it, we possess a God-given responsibility for the children, both our children biologically as well as generally. When God was allowing the Israelites to enter, finally, the Promised Land, He did refer to giving it to them "to possess". And certainly God wanted them to enjoy this bountiful new land, and prosper in it – He said so.

But it was being entrusted to them subject to the responsibility of living righteously in accordance with God's precepts. Therefore, God, Who always provides all we need to do what He requires, also entrusted them with the faithfulness to do that, as well as a lot of other virtues that would enable them to live right, live joyfully, and prosper.

Of course virtues, like any kind of wealth, always come with accompanying responsibilities. One of the abilities and responsibilities with which they were explicitly entrusted (which in our circumstances we must particularly heed) was to teach God's precepts thoroughly to the children, and to always act to ensure that future generations grew up in that righteousness of life and that love for one another that would remain a condition for all the riches and blessings to remain theirs to "possess". Jesus renewed that command to us in His commission to go and help everyone to follow Him - and had very forcibly made it clear that must include the children, all of them.

So may we go forward now truly acknowledging that "all we possess is a trust from God", and committed particularly to those two final sentences of David's beautiful prayer:

• to know that God focuses on what is in our heart, the integrity in both our intent and action; and,

• to seek God's help to keep our hearts loyal to God and filled with desire to serve Him in thankfulness.

Service of Appreciation for Rev. Alice Blair

Last Sunday the leadership and representatives of the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council joined the members of the East End/Gun Bay Charge to bid farewell to Rev. Alice Blair as she prepared to return to her native Jamaica following four years of pastoral ministry in the Cayman Islands. We all wish God's continuing and abundant blessings on Rev. Blair as she embarks on the next phase of her journey in life and ministry.



on Radio Cayman 89.9
every Sunday at 7:45 am

September 6.
Mr. Bryan Bothwell

Published by the Cayman Islands Regional Mission Council of the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands
292 Prospect Point Road
P.O. Box 1700 Grand Cayman KY1-1109 CAYMAN ISLANDS
Tel: 1 345 947 1963 Email: rdgs@cicucjci.com or cirmcinfo@gmail.com
Website: unitedchurch.org.ky