

Stewardship is Response.

There is a church in which the pastor stands up after he is done preaching and announces that the offering is being taken. He announces that if you liked what he said then remember that in the sermon offering. And he reminds the congregation that it does cost money to “run” a church. It costs to use electricity, gas, water, to have trash picked up, for telephone service and the like.

It would be a dangerous thing to ask people to respond according to their like or dislike of a sermon, but the comments about the cost of “running” a church are very valid. However, to respond in giving because of either of these reasons is to misunderstand stewardship. Stewardship is not “did I like the Pastor’s sermon or not,” because we never like to hear the Pastor saying bad things about us (about others, okay, but not about us [when the pastor is talking about us and our sins, that’s meddling]). Stewardship is not giving to a charitable organization as if the church would somehow go bankrupt if we did not give.

Stewardship is recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God and then responding to His giving. We respond by giving back to Him what He has given to us to give in the first place and keeping some of what He gives to us for ourselves.

Personal stewardship is important because it is an exercise in faith. Our stewardship is how we show God what is in our hearts. Instead of not giving because we did not like what the Pastor was preaching and instead of giving because, one Sunday out of fifty-two we did like what he said, we give because of what God says to us through His Word and Sacraments. Instead of giving because the church needs my money to keep the doors open, we give because we recognize that God has given us all things and He works through the church to give even more to others. To God be the glory.