

Stewardship is Choice Recognition.

People are big on choice in our world today. Everything is up for our choosing. Choose “A” or choose “B,” the choice is up to you. Choose “good” or choose “bad,” the choice is up to you.

When it comes to choosing God, we as Lutheran Christians understand that “[we] cannot by [our] own reason or strengthen believe in Jesus Christ [our] Lord or come to Him.” That is why the “Holy Ghost has called [us] by the Gospel, enlightened [us] with His gifts,” the means of Grace (Word and Sacrament), “sanctified and kept [us] in the one true faith.”

Jesus, speaking to His disciples reminded them, “You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last” (John 15:16).

Paul reminds us, in His letter to the Romans, that if the choice were left up to us, we would naturally, because of our sinful state of birth, choose the wrong thing. Thus, in the area of stewardship, if we were to choose and to act according to our own choice, we would not be good stewards, instead, we would be bad stewards. That translates into our putting ourselves and our own interests first. Bluntly, that means that our first fruits check is not given to the Lord, but is given to some other personal favorite interest.

Stewardship, then, begins with realizing that it is God who chooses us and, as Jesus says, He chooses “to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” Being chosen by God, by the power of the Holy Spirit, working through the Word and the Sacraments, He moves in us to be good stewards, to practice first fruits giving. And we give according to what He first gives to us. To that we say, to God be the glory.