

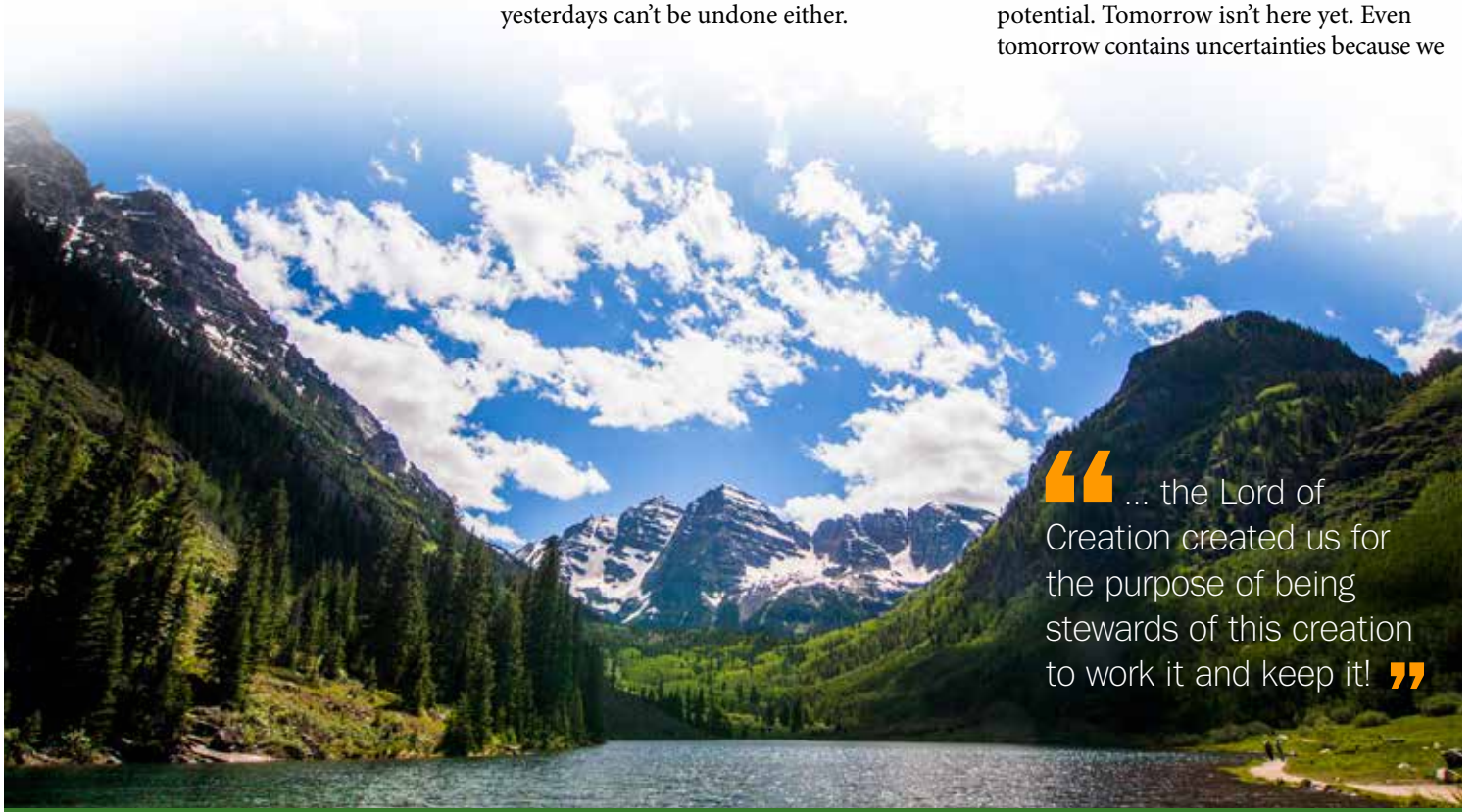


Stewardship of Today

With all due respect to the biblical creation account, there are really only three kinds of days that the Lord has created (This is not a commentary on the literal, six, 24-hour day creation). Our Lord indeed created everything out of nothing simply by speaking. This is one of our Lord's Greatest gifts! The beauty and majesty of this creation, its order and scope are nothing short of magnificent. Then, in a wonderful trust to humanity, the Lord of Creation created us for the purpose of being stewards of this creation to work it and keep it!

However, this task of working and keeping this creation takes place on only one of the three kinds of days which have been created. Those three days are yesterday, today and tomorrow. Yesterday is a wonderful thing. It is filled with all of the memories of past accomplishments. Trips down memory lane often leave us with a big grin on our face, as we remember what was. But yesterday has its limitations. While there are indeed many of our yesterdays that cause us great joy, there are many of those yesterdays that are filled with sorrow and grief. Regrettably, those joys cannot be relived. Worst of all, the failures and heartaches that filled our yesterdays can't be undone either.

In our world today, there is a clamor for tomorrow. Children and youth long for tomorrow to come with all of its excitement and privilege. But it isn't just the youth and children that have this hankering for tomorrow either. Many of us seek tomorrow out, because in our minds, it will be better than our yesterdays. Tomorrows are free of all of the regrets that come with yesterday. There is only hope and promise. Tomorrow will mean more maturity. Tomorrow means more financial stability. Tomorrow means new opportunities. Yet, even with all of its potential, tomorrow has its own limitations. Tomorrow is limited in that it is only potential. Tomorrow isn't here yet. Even tomorrow contains uncertainties because we



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know a day is coming when we will not have a tomorrow in this world. That is why Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, highlights some of this uncertainty of tomorrow when He teaches: “Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble” (MATT. 6:34). St. James also echoes this folly of living only in tomorrow when he writes: “Come now, you who say, ‘Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit’— yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes” (JAMES 4:13-14). In spite of all of its promise, tomorrow is yet another day over which we have no control.



“ This leaves only one day that the Lord has given us to use as steward. That is today. ”

This leaves only one day that the Lord has given us to use as steward. That is today. Today plays such a prominent role in the Scriptures. Today was a great word of promise from our Savior to the repentant malefactor on the cross as He promised him paradise. Today had great effect on Zacchaeus when the presence of Jesus caused a “stewardship transformation,” leading Jesus to say of him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham” (LUKE 19:9). Today is the day carries the greatest joy. The Psalmist proclaims, “This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it” (PS. 118:24). Today also carries its importance too. St. Paul tells the Corinthians: “Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 CORINTHIANS 6:2).

So often Christians focus on the yesterday and tomorrow, when they consider their baptismal role as stewards. Someone who has historically practiced faithful and generous stewardship may dwell on what they have always done rather than seriously reflecting on the opportunities for generous stewardship that the Lord places before them today. Still, other stewards allow their stewardship to be too focused on tomorrow, with all of the worries and uncertainty that might come with it to hinder their stewardship for today. Just as St. Paul would say today is the day of salvation, so also today is the day for stewardship!

Just as the Lord has placed the creation in time, so also the steward of creation is in time. Each steward as a creature is bound by time and space. They are only able to live in the moment. So a steward can only be a steward in the moment. The steward may reflect on what was or what might be, but God-pleasing stewardship can only take place today.

With this in mind, the faithful Christian steward is called to become a faithful steward of today! Since the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, enlightens, sanctifies and keeps the child of God in the faith through the Gospel, the sound stewardship of today can only take place within the presence and under the guidance of the Gospel. The chief item any Christian steward is called to steward is the Gospel. A faithful steward of today will be in the Word on a daily basis. It is this Word that the Lord uses to shape and form the steward for service in the kingdom of God for today!

The Word redefines how the people the steward is called to serve are viewed. The world will see them as beggars that want to get something for nothing. The Holy Spirit uses the Word to cause the steward to see that these people are those for whom Christ was willing to die. The same Spirit uses

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(PS. 118:24)

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LCMS Stewardship Ministry
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122
888-THE LCMS (843-5267)
infocenter@lcms.org
lcms.org/stewardship

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- President of the Synod:
Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
- Executive Director,
Office of National Mission:
Rev. Bart Day
- Author:
Rev. Nathan Meador
*Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church,
Plymouth, Wis.*
- Coordinator:
Robbie Clasen
- Designer:
Lisa Moeller

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the Word to tune eyes and ears to see and hear those who are hurting and in need of the steward’s hands and feet to serve as the hands and feet of Christ. The same Spirit uses the Word to show how lives and skills are to be managed for the sake of building the community that is the Church into one that cares for the individual members of the body for the sake of the weaker brother.

Stewardship of today is not identified or planned on charts and checklists. The faithful steward of today is not worried about the amount or percentage. This kind of stewardship of today will not fit within the flaps of an offering envelope. The faithful steward of today is simply concerned with being in concert with the Lord who created and redeemed him or her. Today’s stewardship will not fit neatly on a commitment card. Yet, this is exactly the kind of stewardship to which the Lord has created and called us.

Today’s stewardship also is not about what the individual steward is able to accomplish in any given day. For just as the steward is not made a steward by choice, neither is the work of the steward of their own accord either. Stewardship is a matter of the Holy Spirit working in and through the child of God to accomplish the purposes for the Lord. Sometimes, that task involves financial stewardship. But more often than not, the stewardship of today is really nothing more than a living, active service shown to the neighbor for the sake of the Lord.

Stewardship of today is not about the individual steward choosing to live and to serve as the Lord calls. Rather, it is about the individual steward reflecting on the tremendous service that the Lord has rendered to him or her in Christ and then being led by the Spirit to serve others in the same way. It is more about open ears, open eyes and open hands than it ever is about an open checkbook.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in — and generous stewards of — it for the sake of Christ!

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