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### Preaching in the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod-to the Goal of Stewardship of Money, 1930 to 1970

George H. Rattelmuller

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PREACHING IN THE LUTHERAN CHURCH--MISSOURI SYNOD,  
TO THE GOAL OF STEWARDSHIP OF MONEY,  
1930 TO 1970

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Practical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Sacred Theology

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by  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

#### Introduction

This study is based on 40 sermons on the stewardship of money, taken from selected volumes of The Concordia Pulpit, from 1930 to 1970.

Chapter I sets forth the reason for this study, and the basic theological assumptions on which preaching to the goal of the stewardship of money should rest. The reader may evaluate the findings of this study on the basis of the assumptions.

Chapter II contains the actual analysis of sermons, pointing out by quotations how the malady is developed, the Gospel is applied, and other considerations which bear upon preaching to the goal of the stewardship of money.

Chapter III contains observations and conclusions reached as a result of this study.

The references in Chapters II and III will be included in the body of each page by sermon number and page number of the volume from which the sermon is taken. The sermons have been numbered chronologically. Thus sermon number one is from the first volume, 1930. Sermon number 40 is from the last volume consulted, 1970. Where several



sermons are taken from the same volume, they are numbered in the order of their appearance in that volume. This method enables the reader, at a glance, to determine if a quotation is from an early or late sermon in the 40-year span of sermons which this study covers. The reference for each quotation has been placed in an appendix at the end of this paper.

The terminology of malady; goal, and means, or motive power; is taken from R. R. Caemmerer, Preaching For the Church, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1964.

The term "stewardship" in this paper is understood to mean the Christian's life in the church. The work of the local parish, the work of Synod and missions, the work of charity through church, private, and state-controlled agencies, are dependent upon gifts of money.

Another aspect of the Christian stewardship of money is the responsibility to provide a home, and to care for the physical needs of family.

The Christian's stewardship of money extends also to how he uses his money for other than church or family purposes. It includes how he operates his business, or invests his money in the business world, in terms of exerting a Christian influence for the welfare of people and society. An example would be a Christian stockholder who votes for his company to hire and train unskilled



labor, even though this might result in less profit for the company and for him.

Christian stewardship of money extends also to the influence Christians can bring to bear in society. In a democratic country, such as the United States, Christian stewards have the freedom and responsibility to influence the use of their tax money after it has been paid to local, state, and federal governments. They can influence government and work for legislation that will correct inequities, and they can work to change the structures of society so that the poor and disadvantaged are helped.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Method of This Study

The Word of God comes to people in different ways. It comes through personal Bible reading, formal Bible study in a class, topics in church societies and every member visits, the witness of a brother Christian, and preaching and the sacraments. It can be said with relative certainty that in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, the Word of God

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<sup>1</sup>For further information on this aspect of Christian stewardship, see literature published by the Council for Christian Social Action of the United Church of Christ, New York. "Church Policies and Programs," Social Action, XXXVI (September 1969), 38-41; Roy Gibbons, "Sponsorship of Middle-Income Housing," Social Action, XXXIV (October 1967), 42-48; Byron Johnson, "You Mean Poverty is My Responsibility?," Social Action, XXXI (March 1965), 4-32.



reaches more people more often through preaching than through any of the other avenues mentioned. This makes any study of preaching relevant and important.

1. The goals of preaching are God's goals for man. We can summarize these goals in two words: justification and sanctification. God wants to justify the sinner, that is, to bring man into a state of reconciliation with Himself through Christ, who lived, suffered, died, and rose again to redeem mankind from sin. God wants to sanctify the sinner, that is, to work in Him a new life of obedience and service.

The Formula of Concord describes these goals as follows:

First the Holy Spirit kindles faith in us in conversion through the hearing of the Gospel. Faith apprehends the grace of God in Christ whereby the person is justified. After the person is justified, the Holy Spirit next renews and sanctifies him, and from this renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works will follow.<sup>2</sup>

Sanctification and the fruits of good works are as broad as a Christian's whole life, and touch every aspect of his existence. This study has been narrowed down to just one aspect of sanctification--the stewardship of money. This is a very important part of the sanctified

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<sup>2</sup>"Solid Declaration, Article III. The Righteousness of Faith Before God," The Book of Concord, translated and edited by Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1959), p. 546.

<sup>3</sup>R. R. Casmerer, "Investment for Eternity," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIV (February 1963), 72. This interpretation is disputed.



life, because much of God's work depends on the offerings God's people bring, and how they manage their money.

The goal in preaching stewardship of money, is not merely that people give and give much. The more important goal underlying this is that people love God, love and care for people, and express that love and care in giving money, in managing their money in a way beneficial to society, and in exerting influence upon government and society toward economic policy which will benefit all, including the poor and underprivileged. Thereby God's ministry of love to the world finds expression.

A number of examples come to mind from the New Testament where the discussion of the use of money is coupled with helping people. We think of St. Paul's gathering of a contribution from the churches of Macedonia and Asia Minor to relieve the church in Jerusalem, suffering from famine. This discussion is carried on through St. Paul's two letters to the Corinthians. We think also of Jesus' Parable of the Unjust Steward, Luke 16:1-9, where His hearers are urged to use their money to make friends "who will receive you into everlasting habitation." This statement urges that people use their money so that others become "friends," so that people become and remain members of the Body of Christ, the Church.<sup>3</sup> The unjust steward

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<sup>3</sup>R. R. Caemmerer, "Investment For Eternity," Concordia Theological Monthly, XXXIV (February 1963), 72. This interpretation is disputed.



managed what was in his charge in an unscrupulous way, and with thought only for himself. We can also make the point from this parable that Christians are to manage their business and investments in such a way that not only they, but others in society are benefited.

If the basic goal of preaching stewardship of money is loving and caring so that God's ministry reaches the world, then we must always relate the exhortation to give to this helping and caring. The following statement by Richard R. Caemmerer makes this point very clear as far as giving to the church is concerned:

Christians have to be helped to understand that the money which is gathered in regular contributions provides for the pastoral and teaching ministry to the members of the congregation and community. They have to see why it is important to share with the teacher in all good things, namely, as part of the program of restoring hampered people to spiritual life, and as direct help to the teaching member of the church (Gal. 6:1-10). They are to understand why the congregation equips and maintains buildings, namely, that people, young and old, may be helped to focus their minds on God in worship and be nurtured in the Word of Christ. They have to be given insight into the many treasuries which draw on the contributions of the average parish, insight in terms of human beings who are reached: the needy through the charities of the community, weaker congregations of the area who are being helped to become independent, non-Christians who are being evangelized in American communities or reached with the Gospel in areas overseas, and the many fellow Christians throughout the world who are going to be benefited by the church's workers who are being trained in the educational system of the church.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>R. R. Caemmerer, Feeding and Leading (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1962), p. 65.



George P. Lundy points out that we do not give to institutions, but through institutions, for people.

As a matter of fact, people really do not give to institutions. They give money to these institutions so that they may carry on various activities which the people themselves want to see done. In other words, people do not give to the church, per se, they give money to the church in order that the Gospel may be preached, the sick visited, the bereaved comforted, the young taught the story of Christ.<sup>5</sup>

Lundy goes on to point out that we need to speak about money in such a way that people see what money represents.

There is another phase of this thing we call giving which I think many people do not understand, and their lack of understanding is because they do not appreciate really what money is. Actually it has no intrinsic value in itself. It costs the government about two-tenths of a cent to print a one-dollar, fifty-dollar, or one-hundred-dollar bill. Intrinsically, that is all it is worth. Its value lies in the fact that it is a symbol. It represents a certain amount of effort, either mental or physical on the part of the man who owns it, and when he gives it to any enterprise, he is giving part of himself. You will remember that the definition of stewardship given by the United Stewardship Council says that "Christian Stewardship is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, and possessions . . ." Actually, when a man gives a dollar, he really is doing all three of these things. That dollar represents his time and his ability, for both have been exercised in securing it, and inasmuch as it belongs to him, he is giving also of his possessions.

Presented in this way, it is making the prospect see that he isn't giving money, he is giving himself,

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<sup>5</sup> George E. Lundy, "Raising Money For Church Purposes," Successful Fund Raising Sermons, compiled by Julius King (New York: Funk & Wagnals Company, 1953), pp. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., pp. 5-6.



and that he actually has a part in carrying on and to the activities in which he is interested.<sup>6</sup>

People need to see and understand that through their gifts of money, through their management of business and investments, and through their influence on society; they are helping, and loving, and caring; and God's ministry is being accomplished through them.

2. The malady in preaching to the goal of the stewardship of money, is not merely poor giving, or the management of money without concern for people and society. The deeper malady is not loving God and people, not caring for people in their spiritual and physical needs. The results of not loving and not caring are the failure to give for these needs, the failure to take into consideration the welfare of people and society in the management of money, and the failure to try to influence society for the good of the poor and underprivileged. The malady underlying all of this is that people are cutting themselves off from God's life, so that they surrender to selfishness, greed, and lovelessness.

St. Paul points out that when Christians deliberately fail to care for, and support those of their own household, they "have denied the faith and are worse than infidels" (i Tim. 5:8). But the Christian's responsibility goes

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., pp. 5-6.



beyond his own household to every fellow Christian, and to every man. "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). St. Paul's judgment in 1 Tim. 5:8 would apply also in the failure to live up to this responsibility. St. John points up the malady in this way: "But if any one has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 John 3:17). St. James uncovers the malady in these words:

If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? (James 2:15-16)

Jesus, in the judgment scene recorded in Matthew 25, describes those who are rejected as those who failed to feed, clothe, and visit His brethren. The misuse of money for self, which means not caring for others, is illustrated by Jesus in the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus, Luke 16: 19-31; and in the Parable of the Rich Fool, Luke 12:16-21.

The passages cited imply, especially for our day, the use of money. While much of our loving, caring, and the opening of our hearts can find expression in personal words and deeds, much of it in the local congregation and community, and virtually all of it in the world beyond our personal reach, must be done through gifts of money. Love also expresses itself in our use of money when we



manage it in such a way that we influence society to use money for the good of all. The malady is that we do not care, do not love, do not open our hearts. Therefore we do not give, we do not manage our business and investments so that people are helped, we do not exert Christian influence upon the economic policies of government and society. Thereby God's ministry of love through us to the world is stifled.

3. The means, that is, the power to help people overcome the malady and move toward the goal, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news of His redemptive work on the cross which sets people free to live the life of God.<sup>7</sup>

Many passages in the New Testament indicate that this is the motivation and power, not only for giving, but for all we do as Christians.

There are first of all the words of Jesus recorded in John 15, where He pictures Himself as the vine, and those who believe in Him as the branches. Here He holds Himself up as the only source of life and power to bear fruit. The following statement of Jesus in this chapter is especially to the point: "He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). This thought finds a parallel in

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<sup>7</sup>Cf. A. M. Hunter, Design for Life (London: SCM Press, 1953), p. 103.



another statement of Jesus later in this chapter: "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit . . ." (John 15:16). The atonement is not spelled out in this chapter, in terms of Christ's death and resurrection to give men life. However, it is forecast in the idea of love in this statement of Jesus: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:12-13).

In the writings of St. John the atonement is often discussed in terms of love. For example: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). In the first epistle of St. John the atonement is spelled out in terms of love, and is applied as motive power as follows:

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:7-11).

Other statements in St. John's first epistle do the same: "By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3:16). And again: "We love, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).



St. Paul says: "I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship" (Rom. 12:1). Here he bases his appeal on God's mercy, which has been spelled out in chapters one through five of his epistle, in terms of God's justification of the sinner in Christ.

Again St. Paul says:

For the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised (2 Cor. 5:14-15).

And again:

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation . . . (2 Cor. 5:17-18).

We notice in these passages that the Gospel--Christ's love controlling us, His death and resurrection, our being a new creation in Him--is applied directly to the goal as power to live for Him and to carry out His ministry of reconciliation. The Gospel should be applied, not merely as forgiveness for past failures, but as power to overcome the malady of lovelessness, and as power to love, care, and help.

St. Paul applies the Gospel directly as the motive and power for giving in the context of his discussion about the ingathering for the saints in Jerusalem. He says: "For



you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). This brief statement of the Gospel at this point summarizes what St. Paul had been saying all through his epistle, where he set forth the redemptive work of Jesus as the heart of his message, and the one power to produce God-pleasing fruit among them.<sup>8</sup>

Erwin Kurth and Herman Zehnder, in a chapter on the stewardship of money in The Pastor at Work, sum up beautifully the motivation, not only for giving money, but for the whole Christian life as follows:

A man is of more worth than money, and the giver is of more importance than the gift. Christian stewardship embraces all parts and phases of Christian living; it covers the whole area of sanctification. It takes its rise at the base of the cross. It is nurtured in the heart by the Gospel. The motivation is God's love for us in Christ. As Luther states in his classic explanation of the Second Article: "I believe that Jesus Christ . . . has redeemed me." That's justification. "That I may be His own . . . and serve Him." That's sanctification, or the stewardship life. Christian stewardship is the surrendered life, at the base of the cross.<sup>9</sup>

Elements of secondary motivation also need to be considered. We may call them sub-elements of the Gospel. For

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<sup>8</sup>Cf. 1:3-5, 18-22; 2:14-17; 3:3-11; 4:4-6, 14-18; 5:10-21; 6:16-18.

<sup>9</sup>Erwin Kurth and Herman Zehnder, "The Stewardship of Money," The Pastor at Work (St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia Publishing House, 1960), p. 318.



instance, the example of others can be an encouragement to give. St. Paul holds before the Corinthians the example of the Macedonians (2 Cor. 8:2-5). At the same time he encourages the Corinthians to be an example to others. The grace of giving at work in the Corinthians had encouraged others, "Your zeal has stirred up most of them" (2 Cor. 9:2). He encouraged them not to let down, so that they might be a stimulus to others also in the future. St. Paul's entire discussion along this line is recorded in 2 Cor. 9:1-9.

Yet this alone would not be a correct motive. It must be given in the context of the Gospel, as a secondary encouragement which Christians are to give each other. St. Paul immediately returns to the real spiritual source when he says:

And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that you may always have enough of everything and may provide in abundance for every good work. As it is written, "He scatters abroad, he gives to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever." He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your resources and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for great generosity, which through us will produce thanksgiving to God; for the rendering of this service not only supplies the wants of the saints but also overflows in many thanksgivings to God. Under the test of this service, you will glorify God by your obedience in acknowledging the gospel of Christ, and by the generosity of your contribution for them and for all others; while they long for you and pray for you, because of the surpassing grace of God in you. Thanks be to God for his inexpressible gift! (2 Cor. 9:8-15).

Third, Jesus clearly repudiates the doctrine of "merit"—any suggestion that man could have a



Another secondary encouragement for giving is reward. It is not a motive, but it is an encouragement, and can be rightfully used when presented in the context of the Gospel. The following statement by A. M. Hunter points out how reward should fit into the picture of motivation.

A true man, says the objector, should believe in virtue for virtue's sake. All talk of reward, here or hereafter, savours of the quid pro quo morality--the "contract" idea of religion--which disfigured Judaism at its worst and from which Christians have not always kept themselves free.

Yet that does not mean that we should wholly reject the idea of reward. Indeed, in a universe directed to moral ends good action and character must issue in some kind of satisfaction; and in the highest ethical systems it is arguable that there must be satisfactions.

The rewards offered by Jesus to the righteous are simply the inevitable issue of goodness in a world ruled over by a good God. Those who have attained to the Beatific Vision know that it is no mere bribe but simply the fit consummation of their earthly communion with God.

We cannot then allow the word "reward" to disappear from our Christian vocabulary. Jesus does say that God does not allow himself to be served in vain. On the other hand, his doctrine of reward is utterly un-mercenary:

First, Jesus does not say, "Do this, and you will gain a reward," but "a certain disposition will bring happiness here and hereafter." Indeed, in the parable of the Last Judgment (Matt. 25), sometimes called "the parable of the Great Surprises," those accounted worthy of eternal life are amazed to find it so, so completely unaware are they of having done anything to deserve it.

Second, the reward Jesus offers is purely qualitative and is the same for all--the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 20:1-16).

Third, Jesus clearly repudiates the doctrine of "Merit"--any suggestion that man could have a



claim, as of right, on a divine reward. See the parables of the Master and Servant (Luke 17:7-10) and of the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. 20:1-16). Reward is a gift of God's grace.<sup>10</sup>

Now a word about man's own love for God and for his fellow man as motive and power. These are not to be regarded as motives at all. Love is not a motive. It is  $\lambda$  that to which people are motivated. Love is the action to which we are motivated by the grace and love of God, as action that will express itself in giving. "Herein is love," says St. John, "not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10). Our giving will certainly be surrounded and permeated with love. But both the love and the giving are the result of the one motive, God's grace and love toward us.

Closely related to this is the concept of gratitude. When gratitude for God's goodness and love is made the motive for our giving, then we are directing people to look within themselves for power and motivation. Our gratitude is imperfect, and is therefore a weak motive. What is even more serious, it directs our attention away from God Who is our only source of power, to ourselves who are powerless without God. Gratitude, like our love for God and people, is not a motive. It is a fruit of the power of God's redeeming love toward us in Christ.

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<sup>10</sup>Hunter, pp. 37-40.



There are many other "motives" which may be suggested. They may be acceptable as encouragement in the context of the Gospel, but in and of themselves they cannot be regarded as motive power for any goal that God has set before us.

We now examine how preaching malady is developed. A number of different themes emerge, some of them only several times, others quite frequently. We shall simply cite those that appear infrequently, and examine more closely those that are predominant.

The themes of malady that appear infrequently are as follows:

1. The hearer does not appreciate Gospel privileges such as the word of truth; doctrines, creeds, confessions of the church; hymns; worship; and God's past blessings of achievement in missions and benevolence (3, p. 445).
2. The hearer does not consider God in the planning of his life (7, p. 221).
3. The hearer thinks God expects too much of him. Therefore he does little or nothing (14, p. 313; 8, p. 393; 19, p. 304).
4. The hearer lacks the courage to do God's work. He is hampered by worry, and half-heartedness (4, p. 372).
5. The hearer is guilty of deceiving God if he makes a sealed pledge with no intention of keeping it (22, pp. 458-459).
6. The hearer is giving out of the wrong motive when he gives for self-glorification, or for reward (21, p. 245; 34, p. 303).
7. The hearer fails in his giving because he doesn't trust God to keep promises attached to giving and promises to provide (24, p. 460; 34, p. 307).



## CHAPTER II

### THE ANALYSIS OF SERMONS

#### The Development of Malady

We now examine how preaching malady is developed. A number of different themes emerge, some of them only several times, others quite frequently. We shall simply cite those that appear infrequently, and examine more closely those that are predominant.

The themes of malady that appear infrequently are as follows:

1. The hearer does not appreciate Gospel privileges such as the Word of Truth; doctrines, creeds, confessions of the church; hymns; worship; and God's past blessings of achievement in missions and benevolence (5, p. 445).
2. The hearer does not consider God in the planning of his life (7, p. 221).
3. The hearer thinks God expects too much of him. Therefore he does little or nothing (14, p. 313; 8, p. 393; 19, p. 304).
4. The hearer lacks the courage to do God's work. He is hampered by worry, and half-heartedness (4, p. 372).
5. The hearer is guilty of deceiving God if he makes a sealed pledge with no intention of keeping it (22, pp. 458-459).
6. The hearer is giving out of the wrong motive when he gives for self-glorification, or for reward (21, p. 245; 34, p. 303).
7. The hearer fails in his giving because he doesn't trust God to keep promises attached to giving and promises to provide (24, p. 460; 34, p. 307).



8. The hearer is giving the left-overs, instead of the first fruits. He is not backing his prayers and intentions with the necessary gifts (26, p. 378; 36, p. 344).

Now we examine themes that recur more frequently.

The malady of not acknowledging our stewardship

The hearer's malady is diagnosed as his failure to realize or acknowledge that he is a steward under God.

The following examples illustrate this point:

Will the average thinking man admit the truth of God's ownership? No; natural man hates to give God credit for anything (1, p. 153).

Again:

Many people have the misconception that they actually own everything they have--the land, the business, the house, the bank account. Since they think they own all this, they also feel that they are in complete control over it and can use it just as they deem best (28, p. 249).

The word "stewardship" is not used in the quotation below, but in tracing how the hearer may think that some are excused from giving, the author is suggesting that people fail to realize that all without exception are stewards under God.

We cannot help but wonder what Jesus would have said, had he taken part in an every-member canvass and heard such things as these: "My boy is only sixteen. Surely, you do not expect him to contribute." "You need not see anyone else in this house. I give for the whole family." "My mother has to depend on her income from a small piece of property. You can't mean that she is to get contribution envelopes." Need I go on? You can think of many more statements like these. But Jesus took for granted that even a widow who



owned only the value of a few tax tokens would want to give a contribution (15, p. 267).

The author of the following excerpt suggests to his hearers that they consider to whom their possessions really belong. The implication is that the hearers really do not understand that their possessions belong to God.

When we think upon our material possessions, well may we ask ourselves: "To whom do these things really belong? Are they really my property, my possessions, my money? Or has God, who has given me the ability to secure them, who has blessed my efforts, entrusted them to me as His steward?" (17, p. 265).

Everything depends upon how you answer the question. If you believe that all you have is yours, that God has had nothing to do with it, then, of course, you are of the opinion that you are not accountable to Him, and you will use your possessions as you please. But if you realize that you are the caretaker, the steward over them, then you will, for your Savior's sake, practice faithful stewardship over all that you have (17, p. 265).

#### Malady of failing to exercise good stewardship

A second theme that appears frequently is closely related to the above, namely, that the hearers fail to exercise good stewardship in the use of money.

A sermon on Luke 16:1-9 makes this point.

A manager who uses the property entrusted to his care as his own, for his own benefit, is an unjust steward, who will be called to account (13, p. 207).

In a sermon on John 12:1-8 the author speaks of the hearer's use of what is God's.

The stewardship of our earthly possessions is a sacred thing between us and our Savior, who bought us. Also now, during the solemn days of



this week before Easter, we shall do well to make a prayerful study of the dozens of passages, paragraphs, and parables by Jesus and His Apostles on the subject of the Christian and his money. Here it is not a question of how much we have left over to give God, but of how much of what is God's we may keep for ourselves! (16, p. 145).

The mismanagement of our trust as stewards is discussed as follows in a sermon on Gen. 14:17-24.

Hence we should gladly and willingly follow Abram's example and prove ourselves faithful stewards by cheerful generosity towards the Lord's treasuries. To do otherwise means to rob God of that which is rightly His, it means to be unjust stewards who are violating their trust and mismanaging the funds which have been placed into our hands for the carrying out of God's plans (18, p. 267).

In a sermon on Rom. 11:36a the author analyzes how poor stewardship manifests itself, and the fleshly impulses which contribute to it.

It goes without saying that it is not used for God when it is hoarded, or squandered, so that very little or nothing at all is left for God (20, p. 444).

To give the same amount from year to year, when the Lord has granted a greater measure of prosperity, is not giving as God prospers. . . . If we find it easy to spend a considerable sum for an evening's pleasure, well and good; but if we give God a mere mite in comparison, we rob Him (20, p. 445).

Shall we attain to this ideal which God requires of us as His stewards? Of ourselves we cannot even begin to reach the goal. Our Old Adam is against us. The Old Adam is selfish and stingy, and loveless toward God and men. The world, with its greed for gain, is also against us, and the devil certainly does not want us to be faithful stewards of God (20, p. 446).



## The malady of yielding to fleshly impulses

A third theme that recurs quite frequently, is that failing to give is a sign of the fleshly impulses of greed, covetousness, selfishness, love of ease, and the like.

In a sermon outline on Mark 12:38-44, the author raises the question of greed.

Guard against greed. . . . Is greed the reason why some do not pay their church dues? Let them take to heart Matt. 6:24, Eph. 5:5 ("covetous man") (2, p. 118).

In a sermon based on Luke 12:16-21, the question of covetousness is raised.

Covetousness is always in man's heart. . . . The Christian's Old Adam is no better than that of the wicked world (7, p. 220).

The same point is made in a sermon on 1 Cor. 15:57-16:2.

The Bible speaks quite sharply against the attitude that withholds from God. In the Old Testament, God said that withholding from Him was equal to robbing Him. In His day, Jesus warned the people, "Take heed and beware of covetousness" (Luke 12:15). Writing to the congregation in Colosse, Paul said covetousness is the same as idolatry (Col. 3:5). Writing to young Pastor Timothy, Paul notes, "The love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10). God's people need to be reminded, "Now concerning the collection . . ." lest they become guilty of idolatrous covetousness (27, p. 481).

Love of ease and worldliness is the diagnosis in a sermon based on Jonah 1:1-3a.



Not that we necessarily try to remove ourselves locally from the Lord as Jonah did. We might remain where we are and still go to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. We are to preach repentance and salvation through the only Savior Jesus Christ wherever we have an opportunity. How much of it do we do? Are we not often disobedient to the mission commands of our Lord? (8, pp. 392-393).

Why? As in Jonah's case (a) love of our ease, love of the world . . . (8, p. 393).

Self-indulgence is pinpointed as a malady in a sermon on Gen. 28:20-22.

We would be ashamed to make a pledge to God which would amount to no more than perhaps one per cent of what the good Lord has given us. We certainly would be ashamed to make a pledge to God equaling that of the average American citizen who spends six times as much for liquor as he gives to God and three times as much for tobacco as he gives to God. When we make a pledge to God, we should not withhold from Him what we ought to be giving (24, p. 458).

Materialism, love of pleasure and comfort, is the malady of the Corinthians which the author of a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:13 applies to his hearers.

The Corinthians were a materialistic-minded people. The substance they had they used freely for their pleasure and comfort. But when they were asked to offer a portion of it out of love, they hemmed and hawed and postponed the collection for a year (29, p. 464).

Again, materialism is the malady in a sermon based on Luke 12:15-23.

We seem to live as though Jesus had been wrong when He said: "A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." Our whole way of life is geared to the assumption that the more things one has the happier he will be (35, p. 310).

The materialistic mind-set is further illustrated in the following quotation from a sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1-9.



Dare to turn your love loose! Look squarely at the problems that pervade your life and make you clutch so tightly when God is calling you to loosen the grip. Recognize that security-conscious people finally can rationalize away every last nickel of what God gives them in the paycheck, the social-security check, or the bank account. They say, "God calls upon me to know my own security. I have a family to educate, I have children to bring up, we can't drive a car that's ramshackle for 20 years. What will we do when we get old?" As we look the Macedonians straight in the face and sense the glory and the sonship that they knew, it is possible for God to help us break loose to the level of hilarious, loving, insistent giving (38, p. 251).

The malady is selfishness and self-centeredness in a sermon based on Luke 12:15-21.

Convinced that we are rich in comparison with others in the world, our nation, and in our personal acquaintances, the problem arises when we are unwilling to share what we have. We are then acting contrary to God's will, purposing to keep all we have to ourselves. We are acting just like the rich man in our parable who said: "I will pull down my barns and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods" (39, p. 250).

But often it's more than greed that grips us. For now we feel is the time to selfishly "take our ease, eat, drink, and be merry," keeping everything we have and using it for our own fun and pleasure, ignoring everyone else! (39, p. 250).

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the only one at all? And the answer comes back, You are, O you are! In this self-centered arrangement there is no room for God. There is no faith in God as Lord. The individual may be rich, but he "is not rich toward God." More and more this attitude of self-centeredness pervades the thinking of the average American. Not only does he damn his fellow human being, but he disregards his obligation to God. He couldn't care less. He's too busy having himself a ball (39, p. 250).



**The malady of not loving and not caring**

A malady that goes deeper than the previous types of maladies mentioned is a lack of love and consideration for our fellow man in his need.

A sermon on Luke 12:16-21 speaks to this point.

The man in our text is a materialist because he has no thought for his fellow-man. Count the I's and my's in our text. So long as he is taken care of, there is no need of thinking about the neighbor. His selfishness is evident from his monolog in v. 19. He takes no interest in the kingdom of God, but his thoughts center exclusively in the carnal things, such as eating, drinking, being merry (not necessarily in an evil sense; euphraino is used in Luke 15:23-24). His life is self-centered, and he moves only in the little circle circumscribed by his own personal interests. Naturally he is not interested in helping others. He believes that the possession of the abundance of goods constitutes his life and therefore never considers that he might do some good with his money (7, pp. 221-222).

A sermon on Rom. 2:17-24 points out that when we do not care enough to back our prayers for missions with our offerings, we are guilty of the blood of those who are lost.

Can we wash our hands and say we are innocent of their blood if we do not pray the Lord to send more laborers into the immense harvest, to bless our foreign missionaries and missions if we deny them adequate financial support? (10, p. 401).

A sermon on Matt. 29:19 and 1 John 3:16-18 describes "not caring" as the malady.

In the question of mission work, cheap grace asks, "Who cares? Am I my brother's keeper?" Costly grace says, "I care. I am my brother's keeper. I have a gift that I will never deserve, a love that I want to share, a Gospel that truly saves" (30, p. 302).



We are not always on the mission fronts because we are not often interested. With a shrug of the shoulder we might even say, "Who cares?" (30, p. 305).

It is awful to think that God is giving us great opportunities and that we are often neglecting them! It might as well be said that we often have enough for things around the house, for season tickets, for earthly investments, but somehow we feel often too hard pressed to invest in the Kingdom causes of Christian missions. We fail to think in terms of Christ's command, to react in terms of brotherly love. Our text says, "Whoso hath this world's good and seeth his brother have need and shutteth up his heart of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (30, p. 306).

The failure to love God is cited as a malady in our stewardship. A sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1-9 speaks in this way.

God wants you to have this grace of liberality also as "an evidence of your love to Him." . . . "Prove the sincerity of your love." You say that you love God. . . . Do you prove your sincerity by your contributions? . . . Many a church-member says that he loves God, but his contributions prove him to be a hypocrite. If he freely spends for other things, buys the very best of clothing, surrounds himself with all kinds of luxuries, squanders money for sweets, theaters, and other pleasures and amusements, but gives nothing or ridiculously little for his church and for the work of the Lord in general, and gives this little grumblingly, he is not sincere, he is a hypocrite (6, p. 418).

The malady described as hampering God's work

A sermon outline on Luke 16:1-9 discusses how God's work is hindered.

Our mission-work is hampered, the treasuries of our Synod and of our congregation are like old Mother Hubbard's cupboard, our missionaries and ministers are underpaid, because the members of our churches are afraid that God will not keep His promises vouchsafed to great givers (1, p. 155).



A sermon outline on Heb. 13:16 indicates that to give nothing is to despise the work for which we do not give.

Now, he who despises such work will give nothing. Thereby he shows that the grace of God and salvation through Christ mean nothing to him (3, p. 520).

A sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1 points out how being behind in the budget is a hindering of the work of Synod.

Need I say that this, too, has its application to us? Having contributed well toward the building program, we find ourselves far behind as far as our congregational and synodical budget is concerned. And this in spite of the repeated pleading of our officers, who asked us, if at all possible to increase our individual contributions by one-fourth in order to make up for the sharp rise in our budget. Now comes the final appeal. What if this, too, goes unheeded? It is not difficult to foresee what will happen. Synod will receive not the promised amount but only a meager portion, with the result that its vital soul-saving work will have to be curtailed by as much as we failed to give (25, p. 327).

A sermon on Ex. 20:16 points directly to the damage of not giving, in terms of hampering God's activity.

Our failure to do this proportionately, regularly, and promptly is not only to deprive ourselves of a sense of sharing in God's creative activity, but also to refuse to share in His redeeming work (32, p. 507).

The malady of cutting ourselves off from God's life

Several sermons out of those surveyed brought out the underlying malady beneath the surfact symptoms, namely, that we cut ourselves off from the life of God.

A sermon outline on Heb. 13:16 points in this direction in the following statement.



Now, he who despises such work will give nothing. Thereby he shows that the grace of God and salvation through Christ mean nothing to him (3, p. 520).

In a sermon on Matt. 25:14-30 this point is illustrated clearly.

Where the profit is lacking, it is evident that the relation of faith and grace does not exist, Matt. 25:41-46 (9, p. 263).

In a sermon on Ex. 20:15, the seventh commandment, this point is implied in the statement that this age worships mammon instead of God, and that this age wants nothing of God.

In our day all pretense is removed, and Mammon is openly declared to be the god of our age (40, p. 68).

The church is the visible demonstration to all who will look that God has mercy (that's what Lazarus means), but it is pushed out into the backyard, where it cannot spoil the fun or condemn our day as the age that wants nothing of the mercy of God (40, p. 68).

#### God's judgment upon poor stewardship

A sermon outline on Heb. 13:16 calls attention to God's threats of judgment.

God shows that giving is Christian conduct "By threatening those who refuse to give: Mal. 3,9; Jas. 2,13; and others" (3, p. 520).

By telling us that our attention will be called to it on Judgment Day: Matt. 25:31-46 (3, p. 520).

A sermon on Jonah 1:1-3a speaks of destruction, in this case a punishment already in this life.

But disobedience brings destruction. So in Jonah's case. In our case: the depression. Have we learned our lesson? (8, p. 393).



A sermon outline on 1 Cor. 29:9 points out that our salvation is endangered by failure to give.

Member who refuses to give jeopardizes soul's salvation (11, p. 414).

A sermon on Luke 16:1-9 calls our attention to the final accounting.

A manager who uses the property entrusted to his care as his own, for his own benefit, is an unjust steward, who will be called to account (13, p. 207).

The day will come when we shall be called to account, and if we are then found to have wasted our Master's goods, we shall be put out (13, p. 207).

A sermon on Luke 19:11-27 speaks of judgment upon the unfaithful.

The lazy one is also rewarded but only according to his laziness and stubbornness. His pound is taken from him, and he is cast into hell. And with him are cast out all those wicked citizens that refuse to acknowledge the King. For them there is now eternal wailing and gnashing of teeth (14, p. 314).

A sermon on Luke 16:1-9 pictures the judgment as death and loss of the stewardship.

Note that our dismissal from the office of steward over God's possession is a result of sin. When God created the world, He placed man into it and gave him charge over all things (Gen. 1:28). Thus it should have remained forever. But man sinned, and the wages of sin is set at death. Through death man loses his stewardship (28, p. 250).

A sermon on Ps. 97:8,7b,1 speaks of the judgment as forfeiting God's mercy.

Therefore as people who enjoy the mercy of the Lord we must accept the responsibility of sharing that mercy with others, of glorifying the Giver of mercy in missions of mercy. As soon as we fail to accept and to carry out this responsibility, so soon are we traveling on the road that takes us



away from the mercy of the Lord. The wicked servant whose lord had forgiven him a debt of 10,000 talents discovered that the failure to forgive a fellow servant a debt of 100 pence forfeited his enjoyment of his lord's mercy and forgiveness (33, p. 70).

A sermon on Luke 12:15-23 speaks of God's approaching judgment, when life will be forfeited.

Our Lord's warnings and promises usually dealt not with sudden death but with the swift, sure coming of the kingdom of God. At the heart of His message were the words: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the Gospel." Riches cannot prolong life not only because each man might die unexpectedly but especially because God is at the gates of His world, ready to execute judgment and call a halt to the world as we know it, in order to usher in His new age. It is in this perspective that all possessions --and life itself--are to be viewed . . . (35, p. 311).

A sermon on Luke 12:15-21 speaks of the hopelessness at death of those who are not rich toward God.

Bent on this course, rich men are fools who will lose their own souls. With their inevitable death there will come an end to the "sound and fury signifying nothing." At death, self-centered men will leave behind them a poor remembrance and can look forward to no rich hope in God. Having laid up treasure for himself alone, the death of the greedy, self-centered, pleasure-seeking person will gain a line in the obituary column, but not much more (39, p. 250).

A sermon on Ex. 20:15, the seventh commandment, speaks of God's judgment upon all who are flesh-people instead of spirit-people.

If there is any one thing that we should learn, it is that our judgments are only tentative at best. God's judgment is final. And His judgment does not always agree with ours. God is still the Lord, our God, who makes us reap the whirlwind if we sow to the wind and not to Him, who makes us gather a big crop of corruption for ourselves if we insist on being flesh-people instead



of Spirit-people. We either live as children in the Father's house, as the family that is totally dependent on God, or we live as if mine were mine alone and thine were fair bait for becoming mine and so consign ourselves to the hell we make for ourselves (40, p. 69).

### The Development of Motivation

A number of different themes are set forth as motivation for giving. Sometimes several different themes appear in the same sermon. We quote from sermons illustrating each theme, and also indicate which other themes are given in the same sermon. We begin with the themes that appear most frequently and go down to those which occur the least frequently.

#### The motivation of the Gospel

The motivation found most frequently is the Gospel, the good news of God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ.

In a sermon outline on Acts 4:31-37, the motive is set out as follows.

**The Motives for Stewardship.** (A) "The Holy Spirit." You must be a Christian to be a Christian steward. Must know that God purchased you with the blood of Christ, holds title to you and yours, before you will be ready to administer yourself and yours for Him in return. The stronger this faith, the greater the gift of the Spirit, the better the stewardship (4, pp. 372-373).

In addition to the Gospel as motivation, this sermon outline suggests as motive, love for people in their bodily and spiritual needs (4, p. 373). Further encouragement is the good example of other Christians (4, p. 373).



In a sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1-9 the Gospel is given as follows.

"Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Corinthians knew this grace, and you know it. You have heard it oftentimes. You are being told of it again during this coming Advent and Christmas season. It is this: "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich" (6, p. 418).

The author goes on to spell out the poverty of Christ in terms of His life, suffering and death. It is applied as "for you." However, the Gospel is applied as giving forgiveness and heaven, and is not applied directly as power for loving and giving for others.

Other motivation for giving is cited as the example of others (6, p. 416).

In a sermon on Luke 12:16-21, the Gospel is applied as follows.

Let us become rich toward God (better: rich in God). God's peace and pardon for Jesus' sake must be our only treasure. Then we shall gladly commit our soul into the Father's hands and remain immeasurably rich throughout eternity (7, p. 222).

The Gospel is not spelled out too explicitly, and it is not applied directly to the malady of covetousness and materialism, but more to the concern of justification of the hearer.

In a sermon outline on Matt. 25:14-30 the Gospel is expressed as follows.

How can this faithfulness be preserved? It is not the business of our text to answer this question; the Gospel not only proclaims and conveys to us forgiveness of sins, but it also



works in us the readiness to follow and serve Christ; this readiness is the gift of the Spirit through the Word, Rom. 6:16-18,22; 1 Pet. 1,13.22. 23 (9, pp. 263-264).

The Gospel is well applied not only as forgiveness, but as power.

In a sermon on Luke 16:1-9 the Gospel is applied first to the justification of the hearer, and his sanctification flows from this.

But do not think that the proper use of your temporal things will purchase your entrance into heaven. No, it simply gains friends for you there. Christ alone is the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but through Him. It is by grace that we are saved, through faith, and not of works. We cannot earn admission into the blessedness of heaven. Christ alone paid the entrance price when He shed His holy, precious blood. Through Him alone we are saved. This saving faith in Him, however, shows itself in a life of love and service. It is the evidence without which faith is dead. The proper use of money and temporal things, that is, works of love, merely show forth the fact that our Savior is enshrined in our hearts as our Redeemer. Through this exercise of our faith we convert our temporal gifts and talents into spiritual values which last beyond the grave (13, p. 208).

The author goes on to apply the Gospel directly to the goal of giving.

If others, moved by the love of money, or fame, or power, or pleasure, can subordinate all their interests to their one purpose and goal; shall not we, then, who are moved by the constraining love of Christ, who gave Himself for us, consecrate and dedicate ourselves and our talents unto Him in useful service? Shall we not be about our business and make investments for eternity? (13, p. 209).

In a sermon on Luke 19:11-27 the Gospel is applied for the justification of the hearer, and as forgiveness



for his failure to give, but not directly as power for better stewardship.

He had come to earth to earn that Kingdom for us. "To this vale of tears he comes, Here to serve in sadness, That with Him in heaven's fair homes We may reign in gladness" (14, p. 311).

He won the Kingdom He alone, no one else. Through His perfect obedience to the Law and through His innocent suffering and death He earned heaven for us (14, p. 311).

Have we used all our moments, all our money, all our opportunities to do His business? Has there been no fear, no laziness, no unfaithfulness holding us back? We know there has been. We plead guilty. He gladly forgives (14, p. 313).

Reward is also used as a motivation (14, p. 314).

In a sermon on 1 Cor. 6:19b-20 the Gospel is preached as follows to the goal of faithful stewardship.

Can the Christian be otherwise than faithful in the stewardship of his money? Can he afford to be otherwise? God has told him that he is not his own, that he has been bought with a price. That price has been the gift of His Son, who in willing obedience suffered the death of the Cross that all men through faith in Him might have eternal salvation. Do not we as Christians, in the acceptance of that truth, confess: "I believe that Jesus Christ . . . has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me . . . not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own, and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him. . . ." Such love of Christ for you and for me, for all men, without any merit or worthiness on our part, must certainly reflect itself in the faithful stewardship of His faithful people (17, pp. 266-267).

Love for people is also given as a motivation, as well as the encouragement of reward (17, p. 266).

In a sermon on Gen. 14:17-24 the Gospel is applied as follows.



Consider the goodness of Him who maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. Look upon the thorn-crowned brow of your beloved Savior, who in utter unselfishness gave His all to redeem you from sin and its dreadful consequences. Let that image of your Savior find a constant place in your thinking, for it will prove a mighty incentive to realize and confess your unworthiness and to grasp anew in fervent faith the grace which He so abundantly offers you. Then out of the fullness of your heart you will pray: "Take my life, and let it be, Consecrated Lord, to Thee"; take my moments, my days, my hands, my feet, my voice, my lips, my silver, my gold, my intellect, my will, my heart, my love, myself, my all; take me, keep me, and teach me to do Thy will now and in all eternity (18, p. 269).

The phrase "Then out of the fullness of your heart" in the paragraph above seems to imply gratitude as a motive. Earlier in the sermon the author explicitly offers gratitude as motivation (18, p. 265).

The example of others as well as reward is offered as an incentive (18, p. 265).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-11 the author defines the grace of God early in the sermon. The Gospel is first applied to justification, and then to sanctification as we see below.

First, of all our personal condition and our ability to give. The Apostle said: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you." "Grace"--have you ever stopped to consider the significance and the implications of this word? "Grace" means that, if you or I were to be treated as we deserve, then God would have to deal with us in His wrath. His justice would demand that we make full payment, that we suffer the full penalty for all our sins and transgressions. But instead of dealing with us according to our sins as we deserve, God has shown us undeserved kindness and mercy. Yes, grace means undeserved kindness and mercy (19, p. 301).



Instead of making us bear the guilt and punishment of our own sins, God laid on His Son the iniquity of us all. The bitter agony which we should suffer was borne by our Savior Jesus Christ. To us unworthy sinners God freely gives His love and forgiveness. Through Holy Baptism He has made us His children (19, p. 301).

God did not give grudgingly to me. God did not give because He felt He had to. God owes us nothing. Everything we have is grace, undeserved kindness and mercy. So God has the right to expect us to give as He did: liberally and cheerfully. Our Savior would say to us:

I gave my life for thee, My precious blood I shed,  
That thou might'st ransomed be And quickened from  
the dead.

I gave My life for thee; What has thou giv'n  
for Me?

(19, p. 302).

Later the author merely uses the word "grace" as the source of power. Perhaps the full meaning of the word carries through.

But God says: Try Me--give liberally of your meager income. I am "able to make all grace to abound toward you," so that you will "always have all sufficiency in all things," and you will not only be able to give sparingly, but I will make it possible "that you may abound to every good work" (19, p. 304).

In this sermon reward is also cited as an encouragement to give (19, p. 303).

In a sermon on Rom. 11:36a the motivation is the Gospel mixed with the idea of gratitude.

And we should do it cheerfully and out of gratitude to God, for "God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. 9:7). We should thrill with joy over the privilege of giving to God. Cheerfully God gave us His own Son, so that we might have life through Him. He still gives us the Gospel and His holy Sacraments to bring us to faith in our Redeemer, to preserve us in faith, and to lead others to the Savior's fold (20, p. 445).



But with Paul we can say: "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me" (Phil. 4:13). As we give our hearts to Him in true faith, in sincere gratitude, and in fervent love, we receive the strength to live a life of faithful stewards to God (20, p. 446).

Rewards of grace are also offered as incentive (20, p. 445).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1 the Gospel is elaborated extensively and is given as the reason for the worship of our hands in giving.

Now, of all that Paul said to the Corinthians about this matter, what was it that persuaded them to open their hearts and purses? His commendation of their former performance? His shaming them for the present letdown? His pointing them to the zeal of others? His reminding them of the reward of liberal giving? (25, p. 328).

There is no doubt that each of these approaches had some effect on the Corinthians. But if you were to ask me what it was that really "got them," that overwhelmed them, that made them pour out their gifts, I would say that it was none of the things just mentioned (25, pp. 328-329).

It was this: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich" (25, p. 329).

Our Lord Jesus Christ "became poor." Became a baby . . . flesh and blood . . . in diapers on straw. Became a Galilean peasant . . . with never a home of His own . . . not as well off as the foxes. Became "despised and rejected of men" . . . a crucified outlaw forsaken by God . . . laid in a grave as little His own as once was the manger (25, p. 329).

Our Lord Jesus Christ became poor "for your sakes, that ye through His poverty might be rich." "For your sakes"--rather let each of us say: For my sake . . . for this damned sinner's sake . . . for me, that I, once so unspeakably poor, might be rich . . . might have God and all that is God's . . . might have forgiveness, life, peace, joy, hope, heaven (25, p. 329).



That is "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." Or is it? The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is bigger than words--it is the final amazement. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ defies words and calls for worship . . . worship of our hearts in deepest faith and love . . . worship of our tongues in rapturous praise and thanksgiving . . . worship of our hands in endless doing and joyful, hilarious giving (25, p. 330).

In a sermon on 1 Cor. 15:57-16:2 the Gospel is expressed as follows.

When we look at Jesus and what He has done for us, when we ponder the victory that is ours now, when we contemplate the joy that shall be ours in our home in heaven, when we recall that He redeemed us "not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death," we are ready to go on and confess, with joy in our heart, with a gleam in our eye, with head held high, "that I may be His own and . . . serve Him," serve Him with all that I am, serve Him with all that I have (27, p. 485).

In a sermon on Luke 16:1-9 the Gospel is applied first to the justification of the hearer, out of this will flow sanctification.

Finally, the text says, "that they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Jesus does not want to say or imply here that we may purchase our way into heaven by the proper use of His gifts or make a down payment on eternal life. . . . Can you really buy your way into heaven? Is this what Jesus means? Certainly not! Jesus Himself came into the world for the express purpose of paying the price of our place in heaven. "The wages of sin is death," and Jesus went to the cross and paid that debt. This is all the payment which must be made, and He made it for all men. We are invited to believe in Jesus Christ's vicarious atonement. And as soon as that faith in Jesus lives in our heart, the gate of heaven is open to us. The joys of heaven are ours, not because of any payment of money, not because of any time which we have spent in church work, not because of any talent which we have turned over to the Lord but simply by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus



Christ. Shall we therefore do nothing? God forbid. It is just this grace of God in Christ that makes true believers cheerful givers (28, p. 252).

This sermon also contains the motivation of knowing we are stewards, and that we will one day lose our stewardship (28, pp. 250-251).

In a sermon on Matt. 28:19 the Gospel is preached to the goal of stewardship as follows:

The more we receive God's Word and let Christ move us, the more we shall be interested in the cause of missions (30, p. 307).

You may be saying to yourself right now, "How can I live closer to God? I do want to pray more. I have been a bit hesitant to exceed the tithe in my offering. I don't spend time in motivating my son to serve the Lord. How can things be different? (30, p. 307).

The difference always comes in and through our relationship to Jesus Christ. This Savior, who has power on earth to forgive sins, who healed the sick and raised the dead, who called disciples to Himself and gave them the commission, also offers power to you and me. This living Word is the power of God unto salvation. This same Jesus who called us into the mission of the Gospel before He ascended into heaven gives us the power to do the work in Himself (30, p. 307).

The focal point of God's power and mercy and grace is the cross. Salvation comes in no other way. Nor does rededication. It is through the Cross alone that we grow in the assurance that Christ is the Son of God, that He is our Savior, that He alone is our hope for heaven (30, p. 307).

The Christian grows in two ways; through the Word and the sacraments. Through these means of grace God gives us power to confess our sins, a sense of privilege to offer Him our praise and prayer, a desire to dedicate life anew to His glory and under His will (30, p. 307).

Missionaries are not made; they are born. They are born again through the love of Jesus Christ, and in this new birth this love of the Savior



overflows in their life with the desire to bring Christ to others. This new life or new birth in Christ comes first in Holy Baptism. Thus discipleship is God's blessing. Living in the joy of the means of grace, the joy of Baptism, where God through Jesus Christ gives us His life, His glory, His heaven, there can be only one genuine response, This is the response of the Christian who says, "O Lord, I am thankful for this gift, this discipleship. In Thy Word I will depend on Thee for new concern and strength" (30, pp. 307-308).

There is much said about Christ and the cross in this sermon, but the act of Christ's rescue is not spelled out a great deal.

In a sermon on 1 Sam. 2:19 the Gospel is spelled out in terms of justification and sanctification, with the idea also of the reward of God's fulfilled promises.

May the Holy Spirit fill us with zeal to support a program that calls us to move forward for the Lord! Let us remind ourselves that the task ahead of us is never greater than the Power behind us. God's power is available to those who accept His purposes. I call upon you this day to take your Bibles in hand, to read and review the directives of our great King and Commander. Read also and hug to your hearts the wonderful promises recorded there--no fewer than 5,000 of them!--the promises God makes to those who work faithfully and toil while it is yet day for the church and before the night comes for our world. Above all else, draw closer to the cross of Christ in the months ahead. The love that comes rolling down from Calvary covers us all like a garment. Here alone we will find the great dynamic and the motivating power that will enable us to embark on a larger program for the King and support it in adequate measure (31, p. 312).

In closing this sermon, I should like to leave you there--at Calvary's cross and in the shelter of His forgiving and strengthening love. . . . Poor sinners that we know and confess ourselves to be, we realize that we are not worthy to approach Him or to receive Him, clad in the old coat of our own righteousness. But we may draw nigh in full



assurance, for the good news of the Gospel is precisely this: Each year a new coat! To all who believe and repent Christ gives that garment which is eternally new--the shimmering robe of His precious merit, purchased at the so great cost of His life and death and bitter anguish (31, p. 312).

Here, in the Holy Communion, the crucified, risen, and reigning Christ comes to us, uniting Himself with us, making us sharers in all He has done for us and in the victory He has won for us (31, p. 312).

In a sermon on Ex. 20:15 the Gospel is preached to the goal of stewardship as follows.

All that has been said rests, of course, on the more fundamental obligation of the sacrifice of self. Of the Macedonians of the apostolic age it is written, "First they gave their own selves to the Lord." That is the primary thing, for it is directly involved with the self-offering of our Savior. That is to say that His action on the cross is mankind's great example of obedience to the positive requirements of the Seventh Commandment. Our Lord taught us by the parable of the Good Samaritan to help our neighbor in every need, and on Calvary He showed us what He meant. Our need was nothing less than the redemption of our souls, and to fill it God's Son was willing to surrender all that He had. In Holy Communion He imparts to us His very body and blood in token of His complete redeeming sacrifice. To this some response must be made--a response which ought to be as complete as was His; the dedication of our whole being. "I beseech you by the mercies of God," says the holy writer, "that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (32, p. 508).

The above paragraph also holds up our Lord's example as an encouragement to give of ourselves.

In a sermon on Ps. 97:8,7b,1 the Gospel is preached first as redemption of the hearer, and then as sanctification flowing from this.



In our need for forgiveness and life we have experienced the Lord's mercy. In His Son Jesus as our Substitute God has judged all our sins. We know not only sin and its terrible results for time and eternity in the lives of men but also the mercy of the Lord and His putting away our sins in the life and death of Jesus Christ. During the past weeks and during this season of Epiphany we have again experienced the epiphany, the manifestation, of God's mercy in taking away our sins and guilt and condemnation. Sunday after Sunday in our worship services, day after day in our personal reading of the Word of God in our private and family devotions the announcement and assurance of the Lord's merciful forgiveness have come our way (33, p. 68).

Our privilege of rejoicing in the Lord's mercy places on us the responsibility of sharing the Lord's mercy with others. Having obtained mercy, we are under compulsion to glorify Christ in missions of mercy (33, p. 70).

In a sermon on Mark 12:38-44 the motivation is God's love for us, however, mixed with other motives of faith in God (34, p. 306); glorifying God (34, p. 304); and showing our love to Him (34, p. 304).

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16). The Gospel is God's love in action. Love is the greatest moving force of all. And that love of God is born in the human heart through conversion. The Spirit of God moves in the story of Jesus Christ and in the hearts of those who hear. When their knowledge of Jesus becomes a trust in Him, they have passed from death to life and from hate to love. "We love Him because He first loved us" is the story over and over again. This love is the first evidence of faith. Now the Christian, the bearer of God's love in his heart, is moved to give himself to God. The dedicated life, according to the measure of one's faith, places time, talents, and material possessions at His disposal. Nothing but love for God could so move man, who is by nature selfish, self-indulgent, and self-glorifying (34, p. 304).



In a sermon on Luke 12:15-23 the Gospel is applied as follows to the goal of giving.

When our Lord tells us, "Do not be anxious about your life," He is not calling us to irresponsible living. He is instead calling us to trust as our Preserver the One who has made Himself known to us as our Redeemer. Will the Lord who stopped at nothing to redeem us now turn a deaf ear to us or be unmindful of our daily needs? "He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him?" (Rom. 8: 32 RSV) (35, p. 314).

Who is it that calls us to give to the poor, without counting the cost? It is the One of whom St. Paul says: "You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9 RSV). We know indeed the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who emptied Himself on our behalf, endured the cross for our sakes, revealing the amazing love God has for us. He who was pleased to make us His sons through the incarnation, death, rising, and ascension of His own Son shall continue to care for us until that day on which we shall share His Son's resurrection (35, p. 314).

We can live with open hearts and open hands, without anxiety about our own food and clothing, "For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing." God has graciously and freely taken care of the major item--our life; it follows that He also takes care of the minor items--food and clothing and the rest. Life is more than food, and He who has seen to the "more" will not abandon us in the respect to the "less." To be rich toward God is to trust Him with all our hearts and pocketbooks (35, p. 314).

The idea of trust as a motive is strong in this sermon, a trust encouraged by God's faithfulness in Christ.

In a sermon on Luke 10:1-9 the Gospel is preached in such a way that sanctification flows out of justification.

You and I wish to be identified as Christians. We are thereby professing that Jesus Christ, God's only Son, came into the world to save also the likes of us. We are confessing that our salvation



has been wrought through sweat and blood and in the issues of life and death on a cross outside a city wall. We are saying that the guilt and punishment of our sins has been paid for and that heaven is again open to us and that we can approach our loving, heavenly Father without fear or trembling. As we have accepted Jesus as our Savior, we have been reconciled to God, and the peace that passes all understanding has come upon us. We have been redeemed body and soul for time and eternity, and henceforth we belong to Him body and soul (36, p. 241).

As Jesus selected the Seventy in His day, so He has not only selected us, but as Scripture testifies, He has elected us to be His own (Eph. 1:4). From the foundations of the world He has elected us to His grace and has worked faith in our hearts. We belong to Him, and He has authority over us. He has the authority also to send us "before His face into every city and place whither He Himself would come" (36, p. 241).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-15, the Gospel is preached as salvation, which apparently then will automatically move the hearer to give.

Now what each of us is to learn is that God wants us to be cheerful givers too. Go and stand before the Lord's cross. It is only as you look up into the face of Jesus and remember that He came in love to do for you what needed to be done to save you from your sins and to gain for you a hope of eternal salvation that you will know what it means to give cheerfully. Stand at the foot of the Lord's cross, look into the eyes of Christ, and have a little heart-to-heart conversation with Him. Will you have a difficult time deciding what you ought to give and how you ought to give? (37, p. 257).

Other themes of motivation appear in this sermon. The Gospel as God's giving is held forth as an example for our giving (37, p. 256). Love to God (37, p. 256); and reward (37, p. 259) are also held forth as motives.

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1-9 the Gospel is set forth as follows.



Yet the emotional approach is not the whole answer either. What people need is to know the emotion of the love of God. Stewardship cannot be gone into until we have been moved and motivated by the love of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Only then can we know something of the joy and freedom of service as stewards of God (38, p. 249).

In this sermon the need of people to hear the Gospel is also put forth as an encouragement (38, p. 251).

In a sermon on Luke 12:15-21 the Gospel is preached as forgiveness and power for stewardship.

There was one Man, however, whose death did gain a lot of copy, more lines of copy than any other man who has ever lived. His name was Jesus Christ. This is what St. Paul said of Him: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor that ye through His poverty might be rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). So the Christ possessing all gave it up in order to make us rich. For no gain to Himself by grace He gave up every treasure and took upon Himself the poor form of a man--who when He died owned absolutely nothing, was stripped of His garments, emptied of His life, and finally buried in a friend's tomb (39, pp. 250-251).

For all men, damned to their own self-centered fate, "Christ humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8). Not only was His a life of poverty and self-giving His choice, but His death was a chosen one. He willingly gave His life for the doomed and empty lives of prideful, greedy, sinful men. He made His life poor--giving away His riches that the poor rich might be forgiven . . . and once forgiven might be truly rich. Remember the story of the emperor's clothes? How the tailors fooled the king into believing he was sumptuously dressed in fine attire although he was not dressed at all? But rich men come to faith in Christ are not fooled by false promises of empty hopes and dreams and riches and pleasures, for through Christ's death they are finely covered with the beauty and elegance of His rich forgiveness and love (39, p. 251).

Now Christ's men, covered with His forgiveness, not only look beautiful, but they have the power that goes with it. They can overcome greed and self-



centeredness. They can in Christ truly give and share--as Christ did. They are rich and have much to share (39, p. 251).

In a sermon on Ex. 20:15 the Gospel is applied to the goal of stewardship as follows.

It was when Zacchaeus received Christ into his home that salvation had come to him. Then he recognized that Jesus Christ was the Lord of mine and thine. Now at least half was no longer his because he gave it to the poor. Now whatever he accumulated by robbing God he restored fourfold. Jesus Christ was the Lord, his God, who delivered him from the bondage of Mammon to serve the living God (40, p. 69).

And He is this especially because He came into this world of sinners and took all our sins upon Himself into death on the cross, thus earning forgiveness for us and purchasing us to be His own that by faith we might live under Him and serve Him at all times and in all ways, particularly in regard to the things that are mine and thine yet always His as the Lord (40, p. 70).

#### The motivation of gratitude

We turn now to the second-most important theme of motivation in terms of the frequency of its appearance. This is the theme of gratitude.

In a sermon outline on Luke 16:1-9, part 4 of the outline is entitled: "The impelling motive--gratitude for the mercies of God" (1, p. 154). The following paragraph urges the motivation of gratitude, as well as the themes of God's command, and God's example.

God's commands ought to induce the Christian to give. Heb. 13,16; Prov. 3,9; 1 Tim. 6,18; Ps. 76,11; 2 Cor. 9,7; Luke 16,9; Mt. 22,21; etc. God's example ought to move us to give. Point



out His giving as recorded in the Three Articles of the Apostles Creed. Gratitude for the mercies of God: Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8,9; 9,15.

The Gospel is not given in this outline as motive for giving, except that it is offered as that which we should be grateful for.

In a sermon on Mark 12:38-44, gratitude, expressed as appreciation, is the motive which accounts for the giving.

Christ warns against greed, but He demands generosity. The widow, also referred to in the text, distinguished herself by it. Despite her great poverty and widowhood she brings an offering to the Temple treasury. Without regard for self, she is whole-heartedly dedicated to God. Prov. 3,9. She appreciates God's blessings received from worship in a practical manner (2, p. 118).

The example of the widow is also cited as encouragement for giving (2, p. 118).

In a sermon on Matt. 10:8, gratitude, expressed as appreciation, is to reflect itself in giving.

Have I made my point clear? Our appreciation of our Christian privileges reflects itself in our giving. As we appreciate what we have received, so shall we give. As we are insensible to our privileges, so shall we also be insensible to our obligations and duties (5, p. 446).

The Gospel is alluded to in this sermon, but only the word "Gospel" is used, without spelling out what it is. As we feel the value of the Gospel, we are to share (5, p. 444).

In a sermon on 1 Chron. 29:9, the motivation is gratitude for God's blessings.

For what really is this Every-member-pledge Plan? Simply this; you, God's sons and daughters by grace, forming a royal priesthood, are being asked, in effect, to send God a love-letter, stating:



"Dear Father in heaven, gratitude for Thy blessings, etc., stirs my heart to promise to Thee for the upbuilding of Thy kingdom a definite portion of the earthly goods Thou hast entrusted to me." Truly this is all there is, in substance, to the Every-member-pledge Plan (11, p. 413).

The Gospel is hinted at in this sermon, but no explicitly proclaimed (11, p. 416).

In a sermon on Gen. 14:17-24 we find the Gospel given as motivation (18, p. 269); but gratitude is also given as motive for our consecration.

Abram lived more than four hundred years before the great mediator of the Old Covenant, Moses, received the Ten Commandments as well as other ordinances of God on Mount Sinai. Yet, somehow, somewhere, this method of honoring God with the tenth part of one's income came into use among God's children. And just for that reason, because it was not divinely prescribed, but because it was a voluntary expression of gratitude, it is a most beautiful example of Christian consecration and stewardship (18, p. 269).

Reward is also offered as an incentive (18, p. 267).

In a sermon on Mark 12:38-44, gratitude is given as the predominant motive. There is a hint of Gospel in the phrase: "who gave His all for us" (21, p. 247).

Finally, we learn that we should give out of gratitude. That is not directly mentioned in the story, but certainly it is implied. Such a gift as the widow brought, "even all her living," as the Savior expresses it, must have been prompted by a grateful heart (21, p. 247).

there is joy in giving if one is prompted by a spirit of gratitude to Him who gave His all for us (21, p. 247).

In a sermon on Gen. 28:20-22, the Gospel is preached, but it is gratitude for this Gospel that is the motive.



What moved Jacob to make this pledge to God? It was Jacob's gratitude and appreciation for God's blessings of the past and His promises for the future. What were some of these blessings and promises? . . . He gave him the promise of the Savior, telling him that in him and in his seed, meaning one of his descendants, Jesus Christ, would all the nations of the earth be blessed (22, pp. 456-457).

There is no commandment in the Bible which says that we must make a sealed pledge to God. Nor do we Christians need such a specific commandment. All we need to do is to review with grateful appreciation the wonderful blessings that God has given to us. As Jacob in his dream saw the ladder between heaven and earth, so we by faith have seen the true ladder, Jesus Christ our Savior, opening up for us the way to heaven, that we poor sinners can come to God, our heavenly Father. Jacob had the promise of a coming Savior. You and I have the fulfillment of these promises, for Christ has come, and in Him all the promises of God are yea and Amen. Jacob had sinned against God and against his father by deceiving his father, but the ladder in the dream indicated to Jacob that God would still accept him. You and I in spite of our many sins have found acceptance with God through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Jacob had the assurance that God would be with him and would provide the things he would need on the way, such as food and clothing, protection against danger, and God's abiding presence. Surely every one of us, looking back upon our lives, must exclaim with gratitude: "God has been with me" (22, pp. 456-457).

In a sermon on Gen. 28:20-22, gratitude is preached as the motivation.

And in that ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending on it, God spoke to Jacob, as it were, in a visual way, of the coming of Christ, His Savior from sin and death. By faith in that promised Savior, Jacob looked straight into the merciful and forgiving heart of God, embraced Him as his heavenly Father, and then went his way assured of the guardian care of His holy angels, and with eyes that were fixed upon the abode of God in heaven as his abiding homeland. As Jacob reflected upon these promises of



God, his heart went out to God in fervent gratitude and love, and from his lips there came the pledge: "Of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee" (24, p. 459).

The theme of trusting in God, because he keeps His promises, appears in this sermon, but the promises of God are not spelled out (24, pp. 460-461).

The theme of God's material and spiritual blessings as a motive, also finds expression in this sermon (24, pp. 460-461).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-15, gratitude appears as a major theme for motivation.

Like the wise sower, the Christian gives generously because he has stood before the cross of Jesus. At Christmas time he has viewed the manger with the shepherds. He has observed Jesus under the olive trees in Gethsemane. He has followed his Savior on the pathway of sorrows. He has seen Him in the agony of the cross on Calvary. He has stood and looked with faith that marveled at the figure of the resurrected and living Lord. The Christian has observed all of these things which Jesus has done for him. He has often found himself before the altar of his Lord's church receiving the most precious body and blood of the very Lamb of God for sinners slain. He has heard this same Lord say to him: "My son, my daughter, this is My body given for you, and this is my blood shed for you." So the heart of the Christian overflows with a sense of love and gratitude toward Jesus. The Christian's very life becomes an opportunity to express that love and appreciation. "Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift." There lies the basic reason why Christians should give with such a glad heart, not grudgingly, not stingily, but cheerfully and generously (37, p. 256).

Other themes are found in this sermon too, God's example (37, p. 256), and love to God (37, p. 256). The Gospel is preached in such a way that the motive of gratitude is implied (37, p. 257).



The motivation of love for God and man

The third most frequent theme to appear as motivation is that of love for God and man.

In a sermon outline on Heb. 13:16, the theme of love for God mixed with the theme of gratitude appears as follows.

But if you are eager to help build the kingdom of God, if you think it a privilege to give and to sacrifice for the work of bringing salvation to sinners, you give evidence that the Word of God is a priceless treasure to you, that the grace of God is of paramount importance to you, that you love your Savior, who suffered and died for you, that there is nothing you would rather do than glorify His name. You show true appreciation of God's goodness to you (3, p. 520).

By giving we Christians show our appreciation for God's goodness toward us (3, p. 520).

Following God's example of giving is also held forth as a motive in this sermon (3, p. 520).

In a sermon outline on Acts 4:31-37, love for fellow man is given as a motive.

Development of Christian stewardship in the early Church was prompted by the motives of Christian love, v. 34; 2 Cor. 8:1-8. This was a love for the fellow-Christian concerning his earthly needs. A readiness to level property distinctions in order to prove the sincerity of Christian love. But this involves also love for his fellow-man's soul. Hence the relationship between Christian giving and the business of spreading the Gospel (4, p. 373).

However, Gospel motivation is dominant in this outline (4, pp. 372-373). The example of other Christians is also offered as encouragement for giving (4, p. 373).

In a sermon on Mark 12:41-44, love for God is the motive. Although the sermon expresses what God did for us



in Christ, it is used to kindle love for God, which in turn moves us to give.

He knew that a heart full of love to God would demand also this expression of worship and devotion. . . . when love prompted the gift, when deep devotion to a loving, kind, merciful, forgiving God made someone reach deep and deeper into the pocket, then He accepted with praise even the last quarter of a cent of a poor widow (15, p. 267).

Today Jesus still is interested in our giving. He still sits over against the treasury and watches what we cast in. He still knows whether these gifts are prompted by love or not! We frequently hear that "giving to the Church" is over-emphasized, that it looms too large in the preaching, writing, and admonition from pulpit and desk. That would be true if Christian giving were not such a good thermometer to indicate the warmth of love for Jesus (15, p. 268).

Love will be true and warm and living if we remember who it is that sits over against the treasury. . . . It was also the same Jesus who stood in the prow of the boat and comforted His disciples in the storm that threatened to swamp them, the same Jesus who stood on the mountainside and gave them that were famishing to eat, the same Jesus who told so many a sin-wearied, transgression-burdened soul: "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The hands that waved to the disciples to come nearer so He could tell them about the widow's gift are also the bloody nail-pierced, flesh-torn hands impaled upon Calvary's Cross. The Jesus of the treasury is also the Jesus of Gethsemane and Gabbath and Golgotha. Yes, and above all, He is also the Jesus of the open grave! . . . He it is who sits and watches whether we give for love or for any other reason. He it is who knows whether our gifts are to be praised or condemned. God grant that every contribution you ever make to the Church be not only recorded "with thanks" on the records of a congregation, but be credited in the eyes of the watching Jesus with love (15, p. 268).

In a sermon on 1 Cor. 6:19b-20, we find Gospel motivation (17, p. 266). However, the theme of love for Christ and for people is strong.



Just so must the principle of love impel us to faithfulness in giving. For the Lord is not so much concerned about "how much is given" as about "from how much has the Christian given," prompted by his love for Christ, for His Church, and for blood-bought souls (17, p. 266).

In a sermon on Prov. 3:9, love for God and man, kindled by God's love for us, is set forth as the motive.

A love for God and man is the only right motive to actuate a proper use of whatever things we possess. . . . A love for God and man is the only motive for a proper administration of our money and goods (23, p. 362).

In a sermon on Prov. 3:9-10, love for God and man is described as motive.

God will richly bless those who use their possessions in the manner outlined. Do not doubt these words. They are true and have been experienced by children of God in all ages. Believe them and then out of love to the Savior and to His church resolve that you will henceforth use your possessions to honor the Lord and to give Him the first fruits of all your increase (26, p. 379).

In a sermon on Mark 12:38-44, the author speaks of God's love as kindling ours, but then counts our love produced by God as being the motive.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us" (1 John 3:16). The Gospel is God's love in action. Love is the greatest moving force of all. And that love of God is born in the human heart through conversion. The Spirit of God moves in the story of Jesus Christ and in the hearts of those who hear. When their knowledge of Jesus becomes a trust in Him, they have passed from death to life and from hate to love. "We love Him because He first loved us" is the story over and over again. This love is the first evidence of faith. Now the Christian, the bearer of God's love in his heart, is moved to give himself to God. The dedicated life, according to the measure of one's faith, places



time, talents, and material possessions at His disposal. Nothing but love for God could so move man, who is by nature selfish, self-indulgent, and self-glorifying (34, p. 304).

This sermon also sets forth the motivation of glorifying God (34, p. 304), and trusting God (34, p. 306).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-15, the motivation is our love for God, kindled by His love for us.

The truth that "God loves a cheerful giver" can motivate you to give to the Lord because of love. Who really is a cheerful giver? He is one who gives because he loves God in return for God's love toward Him. "We love Him because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19) (37, pp. 256-257).

This sermon also holds up God's example of giving (37, p. 256), and gratitude (37, p. 256) as motivations.

The motivation of reward

Now we come to the fourth most frequent theme in the area of motivation-reward. Reward for our faithfulness in stewardship is usually a secondary theme in the sermons, and is given as added encouragement for giving.

In a sermon on Luke 19:11-27, reward is discussed as follows.

Yet the King richly rewards them in His grace. Since all their faults and failings were covered with Jesus' blood, all their works shine before Him. He gives them cities over which to rule and showers them with blessings and glory (14, p. 314).

In a sermon on 1 Cor. 6:19b-20, the idea of reward is expressed as follows, subordinate to the real motivation which is love.



Yet even this promise of material blessings is not the main reason for a faithful stewardship of our material possessions! There is a higher motive behind the true Christian's gifts--he gives because of the principle of love. All that the Christian does he does out of love, for the love of Christ constrains him (17, p. 266).

In a sermon on Gen. 14:17-24, the concept of reward is introduced as follows.

Our contributions for missions and charity are not gifts at all, but investments, deposits in God's bank, on which we shall draw heavy interest (18, p. 267).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-11, both physical and spiritual rewards are discussed.

The liberal soul who gives freely and cheerfully shall be rewarded. Often-times God will cause that person to enjoy every greater prosperity (19, p. 303).

Liberality has a reward all its own. It not only stifles cold selfishness, but brings a satisfaction, joy, and happiness into life that gives life a deeper meaning and a higher purpose. It brings sunshine not only to the needy who receives the gift, but also into the life of the giver (19, p. 303).

In a sermon on Rom. 11:36a, the author discusses reward extensively. He takes pains to point out that rewards are not merited.

As if this were not enough to move us to cheerful and liberal giving, God gives us the promise: "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall he give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38). What does He give? For one thing, He gives joy and satisfaction to those who know that they are giving what is right and pleasing to God. What is more, He gives to those who are faithful in their stewardship an increase of faith, a greater love of their Savior, and a more fervent zeal for the upbuilding of His kingdom. Besides all



this, He takes away all cause for worry and anxiety, because He has promised all things needful for this life to those who seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. Faithfulness in our stewardship is godliness, and godliness, the Bible tells us, is profitable unto all things. It pays to be a faithful steward. Not that God owes us anything for our faithfulness. Even if we were perfect in our stewardship relation to God, with all that this involves, we would still be obliged to confess: we are unprofitable servants. We have merited nothing. We have only done our duty. But if we see that duty clearly and discharge it faithfully out of love for our Savior, God will give us rewards of grace here in time and hereafter in eternity (20, p. 445).

In a sermon on Gen. 28:20-22, the author introduces the examples of Mr. Kraft and Mr. LeTourneau, who prospered after they decided to give much (24, p. 461). However, he points out that the prospect of reward should not be our motive. The author is speaking of Jacob.

It was not motivated by a desire to enrich himself in a material way. If it had been, God would not have blessed him (24, p. 461).

In a sermon on Prov. 3:9-10, reward is discussed in terms of God's blessing on those who give.

There is in the text also a very wonderful promise offered to all who will heed the injunction. The promise reads thus: "So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine." That is another way of saying: God will richly bless those who use their possessions in the manner outlined. Do not doubt these words. They are true and have been experienced by children of God in all ages. Believe them and then out of love to the Savior and to His church resolve that you will henceforth use your possessions to honor the Lord and to give Him the first fruits of all your increase (26, pp. 379-380).



There is no other motivation in this sermon, other than love for God (26, p. 380).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-15, reward is offered as encouragement as follows.

For that matter, the New Testament is not afraid to mention the reward motive. We are not promised the wealth of things, but we are promised the wealth of the heart and of the spirit (37, p. 259).

What then can the generous Christian expect? He will be rich in love; he will be rich in friends; and he will be rich towards God (37, p. 259).

The motivation of the example of God and people

The fifth most frequent theme for motivation is the example of God and other people in giving.

In a sermon on Luke 16:1-9, God's example is put forth as motivation, along with His command to give, and gratitude.

God's commands ought to induce the Christian to give. Heb. 13,16; Proverbs 3,9; 1 Tim. 6,18; Ps. 76,11; 2 Cor. 9,7; Luke 16,9; Mt. 22,21; etc. God's example ought to move us to give. Point out His giving as recorded in the Three Articles of the Apostles Creed. Gratitude for the mercies of God: Rom. 12:1-8; 2 Cor. 8,9; 9,15 (1, p. 154).

In a sermon outline on Mark 12:38-44, the example of the widow is given as motivation.

Let us imitate her example. Jesus exhorts us to do so, v. 43. His eye is upon us to see how we respond, v. 41. May His hearty commendation of the widow's generosity encourage us (2, p. 118).

The theme of gratitude also appears in this sermon (2, p. 118).



In a sermon outline on Acts 4:31-37, the example of other Christians is cited for the hearer's encouragement.

The good example Christians in a congregation set one another is a great incentive to stewardship and faithfulness in administering oneself to God, Heb. 10,24; 2 Cor. 8:1-8 (4, p. 373).

This outline also includes good Gospel motivation (4, pp. 372-373).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1-9, the author cites the example of the Macedonians as encouragement to give.

Paul had simply told the Macedonians of the affliction and dire need of their fellow saints, and thereupon they had given so liberally. And I am sure that every true Christian among us will say, I want to be like these Christians of Macedonia. That is the God-willed effect which this noble example of the Macedonians should have on us. There are such among us as need an inspiring example. And we should be influenced by such good examples (6, p. 416).

The Gospel is proclaimed in this sermon, especially in the area of justification (6, p. 418).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:13, the example of Christ is held up for the hearer's encouragement.

You can pass the test by offering a portion of what God has given you, thereby glorifying Him and following Christ's example, who though He was rich, yet became poor so that all men might be rich through Him (29, p. 465).

Other themes are love for Christ (29, p. 464), a test of faith (29, p. 465), and love for others (29, p. 465).

In a sermon on 1 John 3:16-18, Christ's example is offered as a reason for our caring.



Six times after His resurrection our Lord made reference to the cause of missions. He truly cared for the salvation of others, and because He cared, they who receive Him also care (30, p. 307).

This sermon also contains good Gospel motivation (30, p. 307).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-15, Jesus' example of self-giving is developed extensively as motivation.

In the church we view giving as something very special. Who could have given more than our dear Lord. The sacrifice of Jesus did not begin on the cross. It did not even begin with His birth. It began in heaven. It began when in the counsel of God He consented to lay aside His glory and come to earth. Jesus said: "The Son of Man . . . did not come to be served but to serve, and to surrender His life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28 NEB). He came to give Himself, He devoted all His time and energy to this. "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10 RSV). To accomplish this, there was nothing that was unwilling to do. He was ready to endure distress, to shed the last drop of His holy, precious blood in order that His purpose might be achieved, men's souls be saved, and the gift of eternal life given to every individual under God's heaven (37, p. 256).

With such an example before us, can anything hold us back? Every Christian can learn from the life of Jesus Himself that it is more blessed to give than to receive (37, p. 256).

There is Gospel motivation in this sermon (37, p. 256), coupled with gratitude (37, p. 256), and love for God (37, p. 256).

God's concern for man is so great that it caused Him to send His Son into the world to suffer and die for the welfare of man. What greater business could there be? Surely giving to such a business



## The motivation of faith in God

The sixth most frequent motivation is faith in God.

In a sermon on Gen. 28:20-22, faith in God's promises is held up as motivation. However, the promises are not spelled out, and the Gospel is not proclaimed as power for trust in God.

Jacob's pledge was primarily a pledge of trust in God. He said, to begin with: "The Lord shall be my God." God gave Jacob wonderful promises. Jacob believed these promises. He believed that God would do all that He had promised to do for him. And because he trusted in God, he promised to give back to Him one-tenth of all that God would give to him (24, p. 458).

This sermon also appeals to gratitude (24, p. 459), and reward (24, p. 461) for motivation.

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:13, the motive of faith in God is just touched upon, however, with no Gospel to build the faith.

The opportunity to offer your substance is a test of your faith (29, p. 465).

This sermon also appeals to love for Christ (29, p. 464), love for others (29, p. 465), and Christ's example (29, p. 465) as motivation.

In a sermon on Mark 12:38-44, trust in God is urged as a motive, in the context of God's faithfulness in keeping His promises.

God's concern for man is so great that it caused Him to send His Son into the world to suffer and die for the welfare of man. What greater business could there be? Surely giving to such a business



is trustworthy. And, above all, trusting in God and showing this by giving to Him our material wealth is safe because of the wonderful commitments which He has made and kept (34, p. 306).

The author goes on to show God's faithfulness in keeping His commitments through Old Testament history, then concludes with the following statement.

Jesus passed through death and lives and reigns to all eternity, assuring us of the validity of the promise and proving God's trustworthiness (34, p. 306).

This sermon is also strong on the motive of love for God because of His love for us (34, p. 304); and the motive for glorifying God (34, p. 304).

#### Miscellaneous themes of motivation

The remaining themes appear only once or twice, and examples are cited below.

In a sermon on Rom. 2:17-24, the need of people in the world to hear the Gospel, coupled with a reference to repentance in Christ's blood, is given as motivation.

When we consider the size--three-fourths of the world's population are absolute heathen--and the pressing nature of the task assigned to us and compare it with our achievements and the little we are doing, verily, we ought to fly to the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins and as a fruit meet for repentance guide and teach more interestedly and shine more brightly in the darkness of heathendom (10, pp. 401-402).

No other motivation is offered in this sermon.

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1-9, the spiritual need of the heathen is set forth as motivation.



We are just as aware as they were of God's call for exuberance on the part of His people in openhanded, lavish giving. We are just as aware of the world's empty spiritual larders. We know the need for the broken and bruised to be healed and for God's sacred business to go on full force in a tottering, quaking world (38, p. 251).

Gospel motivation is given in this sermon in terms of Christ's love for us (38, p. 249).

In a sermon outline on Matt. 25:14-20, the motive for giving is glorifying God.

Before we make an expenditure of money, we should make sure that in some way God will be glorified by it. (Apply to recreation, education, luxuries, etc.) (12, p. 425).

No other motivation is offered in this sermon outline.

In a sermon on Mark 12:38-44, one of the motives for giving is glorifying God.

The right motivation for giving is, then, the glory of God. It flows from the recognition that God is the Owner of all things. He is also the Supplier of all strength and health and wisdom. The creature honors the Creator when he seeks to give all credit for the ability to give to Him from whom he has received all (34, p. 304).

Other motivations given are our love for God, moved by His love for us (34, p. 304), and trust in God (34, p. 306).

In a sermon outline on Luke 16:1-9, God's command is given as motive.

God's commands ought to induce the Christian to give. Heb. 13,16; Prov. 3,9; 1 Tim. 6, 18; Ps. 76:11; 2 Cor. 9,7; Luke 16,9; Mt. 22,21; etc. (1, p. 154).

This appears as motivation, along with God's example (1, p. 154) and gratitude (1, p. 154).



In a sermon on Jonah 1:1-3a, the motivation is that the hearer should have zeal and give, because people will be saved.

And what is our reward? That people will repent and believe the Gospel. Many successes even though so many Christians are so unwilling. How much greater would our success be if we all were filled with undiminished zeal! How much is done today for the cure of physical disease and the alleviation of bodily suffering! Should not the Christian Church bestir herself and do more, much more, for the cure of souls and their salvation from the eternal suffering in hell? (8, p. 393).

No other motivation is offered in this sermon.

In a sermon on John 12:1-8, the author states that Mary did what she did because she sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word. Sitting at Jesus' feet will also motivate the hearer.

We cannot help wondering how Mary obtained what none of the disciples had as yet acquired; the knowledge and firm faith that Jesus must suffer and die, and yet, even in His deepest humiliation, He must be adored as her God and Savior. The answer is such as the grumbling disciple in today's narrative and the well-meaning but uncomprehending treasury-pinchers in our congregation today, will not be found among Christians who adore Christ and steep themselves in His Word and its precepts. Let us humbly sit at Jesus' feet during and after the hour of our public services, reading, drinking in His gracious words, calling upon the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth and to teach us all the things that Jesus has said unto us! (16, p. 145).

The motive of love for Christ is also offered in this sermon (16, p. 143).

In a sermon on Luke 16:1-9, part of the motivation is that we are stewards, and that we will one day lose that over which we are stewards.



Therefore Jesus wants to tell us to be prudent. We should look into this matter before it is too late. You will begin to think differently about earthly things if you recognize that your position is that of steward and that God is the Owner of all things. You will use those things differently. . . . The understanding that you will one day lose all will make a great difference in the way you look at the material things of the world. . . . Certainly this should make a difference in the way we use what we have today (28, pp. 250-251).

The Gospel is offered in this sermon in terms of justification followed by sanctification (28, p. 252).

#### Giving to the Goal of Helping People

If people are to be motivated to give money for churchly purposes, to manage their business and investments so that people are helped, and to influence the economic issues of society; they must see that thereby they are doing the work God has commissioned them to do. The sermons in this study were examined to see if giving money and the use of money are described as helping, a means whereby God's ministry is carried out through people. The following examples point out that giving is indeed a helping of people.

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 8:1-9, giving as helping is described as follows, in terms of helping through the local congregation, training ministers and teachers, and alleviating suffering.

Use your money for God-pleasing purposes, which include the alleviation of suffering and the upbuilding of His kingdom (6, p. 414).

Ought they not much more cheerfully contribute of their money for church purposes, since they get in return that food which sustains their spiritual



life and makes it possible for them to continue their pilgrimage to heaven? Ought they not cheerfully to give of their money, so that ministers and teachers can be trained, since they and their children need such men? (6, pp. 414-415).

Gospel motivation is given in this sermon (6, p. 418)<sup>1</sup> as is the example of others (6, p. 416).<sup>2</sup>

In a sermon on Jonah 1:1-3a, giving is described as helping through foreign mission work.

How many Ninevehs today! Arise and go to Denver, San Francisco, St. Louis, Chicago, New York; London, Paris, Berlin; Buenos Aires and Rio de Janeiro; Hankow, Shanghai, and Calcutta. Why? Because their wickedness is come up before the Lord. The world is lying in sins and vices, not only in the big cities, but in all towns and hamlets, in all countrysides and farm communities. Because of their unbelief God has given them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, Rom. 1. Like the sin of Jonah, the sins of men have turned this world into a tempestuous sea: a sea of war, and bloodshed, of strife and hatred, of despair and final eternal destruction (8, p. 393).

Will you not go to the Ninevehs of this world? St. Paul says: "Woe is unto me if I preach not the Gospel!" (8, p. 393).

The Gospel is not given as motivation in this sermon, only the encouragement that the hearer have zeal and give because others will believe (8, p. 393).<sup>3</sup>

In a sermon on Matt. 25:14-20, love, charity, Christian testimony, and the saving of souls are given as ways in which we help with our money.

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<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup>Supra, p. 58.

<sup>3</sup>Supra, p. 63.



Temporal gifts are to return a yield in terms of human souls, in goods that last beyond the grave, Luke 16:1-13. The emphasis in the parable is on the actual yielding of rich profit; the gifts are distributed for the one purpose of producing profit; we are judged by the Lord, not by how much we possess, but by how much the possessions produce in love, charity, testimony, saving of souls (9, p. 262).

The Gospel is given as motivation in this sermon (9, p. 264).<sup>4</sup>

In a sermon on 1 <sup>Chron.</sup> Cor. 29:9, a wide range of helping is described in terms of home and foreign missions, the work of Synod, and the local congregation.

God has arranged it that His kingdom is to be built by prayers, personal missionary efforts, and gifts. Preaching the Gospel is done by those who, according to Scripture, are laborers worthy of their hire. 1 Tim. 5:18. A salaried ministry is essential and taken for granted in the Bible (cf. 1 Cor. 9:14). Missionaries who travel to their stations in foreign countries need money to get there and to return occasionally for a needed furlough; training-schools for our teachers and ministers are buildings of brick and concrete, which represent money expended in construction and maintenance. It required money to purchase the real estate upon which these buildings stand. Money expenditure is demanded to maintain professors who train our clergy. Board of Support. We who worship here locally also meet in a building that was made possible only through expenditures of moneys. Host of necessary incidental expenses for home purposes (mention local needs, even such ordinary bills as gas, light, coal, insurance) and for Synod (libraries, laboratories, rents, overhead, etc.). Thus God has arranged it that the effective preaching of the Gospel of salvation is closely related to the willingness of His people to promise and give their silver and their gold (11, pp. 412-413).

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<sup>4</sup>Supra, p. 32.



This presupposes that we have taken time to study the problems of our church-work (modern development of urban missions), the fields that have been opening as mission possibilities (new Southeastern District of Synod). . . . We should understand why our pledges and gifts are necessary (11, p. 415).

The motivation in this sermon is basically that of gratitude (11, p. 413).<sup>5</sup>

In a sermon on Matt. 25:14-20, giving is help offered in the areas of public worship, missions and charity.

In addition to making our general expenditures of money so as to glorify God, God wants us to set aside a liberal portion of our material possessions as a direct offering toward the maintenance of public worship, the propagation of the Gospel, and the relief of human ills (12, p. 425).

The motivation in this sermon is to glorify God (12, p. 425).<sup>6</sup>

In a sermon on Luke 16:1-9, the work of missions is the predominant theme.

The Christian, too, is engaged in a business, his Father's business. Surely he ought to employ the same energy and wisdom and determination to take care of that business as he shows in the temporal concerns of life (13, p. 206).

There is much to be done, much to be given in order that His promises may be kept, His kingdom extended and maintained, His name extolled and magnified upon earth (13, p. 207).

Yes, Jesus says, My children should use their gifts and talents to make friends; they should use them in the interests of the kingdom of God, in establishing and extending the Church of Jesus Christ in all the world (13, p. 208).

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<sup>5</sup> Supra, p. 48.

<sup>6</sup> Supra, p. 62.



The Gospel is applied as motivation in this sermon (13, pp. 208-209).<sup>7</sup>

In a sermon on Gen. 15:17-24, giving as helping is shown in our over-all responsibility to our neighbor.

Christian stewardship includes the proper and willing discharge of all responsibilities toward our neighbor, which are so beautifully summarized in the well-known words: "Owe no man anything but to love one another." . . . It means that we give to each his due and grant help in time of need without regard to race, creed, or color. Yea, even our enemy should not be barred from consideration (18, pp. 268-269).

The Gospel is offered as motivation in this sermon (18, p. 269)<sup>8</sup> as well as gratitude (18, p. 265),<sup>9</sup> reward (18, p. 267),<sup>10</sup> and the example of others (18, p. 265).

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-11, helping is described as the work of home and foreign missions and charity.

Another factor which must be weighed when we have been appealed to and asked to give is the need. If it is a cause of human suffering and the need is urgent, that must be taken into consideration. If it is the work of missions, perhaps some foreign field where such wonderful opportunities exist, or the opportunities right in our own District, where many souls can be won for Christ if the work is prosecuted properly, that too must be taken into consideration (19, p. 302).

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<sup>7</sup>Supra, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup>Supra, p. 35.

<sup>9</sup>Supra, p. 48.

<sup>10</sup>Supra, p. 55.



The Gospel is applied in this sermon in terms of God's grace (19, p. 304),<sup>11</sup> with the incentive of reward (19, p. 303).<sup>12</sup>

The above quotation can be interpreted as holding up a need as the motive for giving, but it also directs the hearer to how he can help with his gifts.

In a sermon on Prov. 3:9, help is extended by our giving to the areas of man's physical intellectual, and spiritual needs.

Whenever Jesus speaks of riches, He states that all riches are mis-applied which are not applied for the welfare of human beings (23, p. 362).

Property and possessions should be held and used for the good of persons, for the good of the administrator as well as for all others who are involved. . . . However, whether a man possesses much or little, the one principle applies: Administer to the honor of God and for the welfare of man (23, p. 363).

The needs of men may be classified as being of physical, intellectual, and spiritual natures (23, p. 363).

The Gospel is given in this sermon (23, pp. 361-362). The chief motivation, however, is love for God and man (23, p. 362).<sup>13</sup>

In a sermon on Prov. 3:9-10, a wide range of helping is defined, in terms of family, charity, government, local and foreign missions, and congregation.

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<sup>11</sup>supra, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup>supra, p. 55.

<sup>13</sup>supra, p. 53.



God wants us to work. He has said: "If any would not work, neither should he eat." Again: "If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel," 1 Tim. 4:8 (26, pp. 376-377).

We discover further, if we read our Bible, that we honor God with our substance when we take care of the poor and needy (26, p. 377).

God further requires that we honor Him with our substance by fulfilling our responsibilities toward the government (26, p. 377).

supporting the treasuries of the church for local and foreign missionary work--all these efforts on our part, when performed in obedience to the Savior's command and out of love to Him, serve to honor the Lord who bought us at so great a price (26, p. 378).

Are you thus honoring the Lord with your substance in your membership and activity and support in this congregation? (26, p. 378).

The Gospel is not given as motivation in this sermon.

Reward is the incentive (26, p. 379).<sup>14</sup>

In a sermon on 1 Cor. 15:57-16:2, helping is described as activity in the areas of home and foreign missions, the Synod's training program and pastoral care.

The offerings you thus bring to Jesus make possible the winning of souls here at home, something we see demonstrated before our eyes every time a class is received into the church through Baptism and confirmation. Your offering makes possible the witnessing to the unsaved. Your offering makes possible our service to the sick and the shut-ins of our congregation. Your offering makes possible training another generation of pastors and teachers. Your offering makes it possible to baptize a class of natives in New Guinea. Your offering makes possible the sending of missionaries into the hills of the Philippines,

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<sup>14</sup>Supra, p. 56.



to minister to the headhunters there. Your offering makes possible carrying the banners of the cross deeper and deeper into Africa-- and so it goes. "Ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (27, p. 484).

The Gospel is the motivation in this sermon (27, p. 485).<sup>15</sup>

In a sermon on Luke 16:1-9, giving as helping is discussed in terms of home and foreign missions.

How often a dollar can be turned into friendship! More important, someone is in need spiritually. Some people far away do not know Christ as the Savior of the world. Through the offerings which we bring, ministers and missionaries can go out to these people with the message of salvation. And again, money has been turned into friendship (28, p. 252).

The Gospel is given in this sermon in terms of justification followed by sanctification (28, p. 252).<sup>16</sup>

In a sermon on Ps. 97:8,7b,1, the helping of charitable work is stressed.

The second area of this activity is what you and I do through our work and contributions to social welfare agencies. We know that we cannot personally reach all those who need mercy and help. But means of our support, in work and in money, we enable welfare agencies to go where we personally cannot go. A cause for joy for every Christian should be that in our church we have so many agencies that seek to help the needy. Our orphanages, our old folks' homes, our welfare societies, our hospitals, our sanatoria, our programs of chaplains in many of our state institutions, our mission societies

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<sup>15</sup> Supra, p. 38.

<sup>16</sup> Supra, pp. 38-39.



in the blighted areas, are but a few of the agencies by which we go on missions of mercy by means of our contributions (33, p. 72).

In this sermon the Gospel is presented, mostly in terms of justification followed by sanctification (33, pp. 68, 70).<sup>17</sup>

In a sermon on Mark 12:38-44, charity, missions, and the work of Synod in training personnel and in the printing ministry, are the areas of helping.

Furthermore, giving is good because it is God's way to give man opportunity to support the church and charitable agencies and work. He could supply the needs of the world, both physically and spiritually, in some other way. But He chose to give His people the privilege and pleasure of giving their gifts to maintain, promote, and extend the church. He whose design and creation are so evident in the beauties of nature with the marvelous peaks, fertile plains, and starry heavens, could as easily build our houses of worship, transport our missionaries, supply our Bibles, heal our sick with medicine and care, and do all that which the congregation of believers is asked to do by the Lord. But ask He does! This is God's way. Therefore God's people will give according to the blessings they receive (34, p. 303).

And what gifts of love and trust can do! Missions can be established throughout the land and the world, with qualified men and women teaching and preaching the pure Word of God. Buildings can be erected for training workers to go into all the world and for congregations and schools to worship and praise God and study His Word. Books and tracts and magazines which tell of the blood atonement and the salvation by grace are printed and disseminated throughout the world. The sick and the halt, the destitute in mind and body can be reached and helped physically and spiritually with the gifts of love and trust (34, p. 308).

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<sup>17</sup>Supra, p. 42.



In this sermon the motivation is our love for God prompted by His love for us (34, p. 304),<sup>18</sup> and the purpose of glorifying God (34, p. 304).<sup>19</sup>

In a sermon on 2 Cor. 9:6-15, helping is carried out in District and foreign missions, and in Synod's training program.

Our mission pledge is of first concern, for in this way we are God's instruments "in supplying the wants of the saints." Our church can reach into every avenue of life with the message of the blessed assurance. Our foreign mission program extends all around the globe. Faithful missionaries are preaching and teaching the precious Word of truth. Thousands are being led to know Jesus as we are privileged to know Him. Your generous and faithful giving assures you of having an important part in missionary work. Can we support this program haphazardly? (37, p. 258).

Another vital work we have to do is to share the Gospel of Jesus with the people who are close to us, who live in our own community. Through our District we carry on an extensive mission program (37, p. 258).

All mission work, in fact all work in the church, depends on an adequate supply of well-trained full-time church workers. With the increased needs of our day, brought about in part by the tremendous growth in population, it is important that we continue to talk about, to expand, and to support the program of recruiting and training the needed manpower. Only through a fine system of training will the church continue to proclaim most effectively the power of God unto salvation (37, p. 258).

The motivation in this sermon is gratitude (37, p. 256),<sup>20</sup> God's example (37, p. 256),<sup>21</sup> and love to God (37, p. 256).<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Supra, pp. 53-54.

<sup>19</sup> Supra, p. 62.

<sup>20</sup> Supra, p. 50.

<sup>21</sup> Supra, p. 59.

<sup>22</sup> Supra, p. 54.



Giving is also expressed as automatically flowing from pondering the cross (37, p. 257).<sup>23</sup>

In a sermon on Ex. 20:15, the work of charity is the area in which we help with our giving.

Jesus Christ stands before us right here and now in the hungry, and we own Him Lord of mine and thine when we give Him to eat by feeding the hungry. He is present in the thirsty, and we own Him Lord of mine and thine when we give Him to drink. He is present as the Stranger, and we own Him Lord of mine and thine when we take the stranger in, for so do we welcome Christ. He is present in the naked. Have we clothed Him lately because He is the Lord of mine and thine? (40, p. 69).

The Gospel is proclaimed as forgiveness and power in this sermon (40, pp. 69,70).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Supra, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup> Supra, p. 46.



## CHAPTER III

### CONCLUSION

In the sermons surveyed, an analysis of surface symptoms in terms of failure of stewardship, and the fleshly hindrances to our stewardship are most prominent. The basic malady of not loving and caring for people is not found extensively. The underlying malady beneath the surface symptoms, of man cut off from the life of God, is found in only a few sermons. The theme of judgment upon failure in stewardship is quite prominent. A small number of sermons had no analysis of any kind in the area of malady, (for example 23, 31, 37).

The Gospel of Jesus Christ, His atoning work for the salvation of mankind, is the only correct motivation for God-pleasing stewardship of our money. It appears throughout these sermons in various ways. The method of preaching the Gospel to man's justification followed by his sanctification is a dominant approach. This approach seems to disappear from sermons published in the late 1960's, and gives place to the Gospel being preached not only as forgiveness, but as power to overcome fleshly hindrances, and to move forward in God-pleasing stewardship.

The Gospel is also preached in terms of God's love for man. This is correct motivation. However, a curious twist appears in many sermons--namely, that God's love kindles



man's love, and man's love for God and people then becomes the motivation. This approach seems to disappear in the sermons published in the later years.

The theme of trusting God as motivation for giving is valid, if it is offered in the context of the Gospel, which alone gives the power to trust. In most instances cited, the hearer is urged to express trust in God by giving, outside of the context of the Gospel.

Reward as incentive to give appears throughout the sermons examined, with no apparent trend toward greater or lesser use. It is useful as an encouragement, but it is not legitimate motivation in and of itself. A good share of the sermons using this theme emphasize that it is not in itself motive for giving.

The theme of gratitude is very common in the earlier sermons published. It appears consistently up to about 1955, and then appears only occasionally. Gratitude is not valid motivation, in that it causes the hearer to look to himself rather than to God for the power to be a faithful steward.

The example of others is used freely in encouragement to give. These examples are almost always biblical examples, the example of God Himself, the example of the Macedonians, and the poor widow. There are few instances where the preacher commends his hearers for past performance. One sermon (25, p. 327), commends the hearers for having contributed well to the building fund, but then chides them



for letting down in other areas. Another sermon (31, p. 308), cites notable progress for the Lord, in spite of obstacles. There are no instances where the preacher cites X examples of generosity among his people.

The other themes illustrated--love for God and man, the need of people to hear the Gospel, the motive of glorifying God, the encouragement of God's command, the exhortation to be good stewards, the urging of greater zeal for God's work--are not valid motivations in themselves, but may be useful as encouragement in the context of the Gospel.

Giving as helping people is brought out quite clearly in the sermons quoted, less clearly in some of the sermons not quoted. About one-half of the sermons examined do not bring out the idea of giving as helping at all.

From the quotations we can see that the most prominent goals for helping, in order of the frequency with which they are mentioned are as follows: foreign missions, home missions, charity, local congregation, man's general need, family, and government.

The goals of helping people through the use of money, center almost exclusively on giving to help through the church, the programs of the local congregation, missions, and Synod. Although the goal of helping through charity is prominent, it seems directed primarily toward the charitable work of the church.

The use of money is discussed almost entirely in terms of that which is given to the church. Thus an entire



dimension of the stewardship life seems to be almost completely missing from these sermons, namely, those areas of life where Christians use money for other than church purposes.

One sermon refers to the responsibility of providing for the physical needs of the family (26, pp. 376-377). One sermon speaks in a general way about using money for the good of others, and mentions man's physical and intellectual needs as well as his spiritual needs (23, p. 363). One sermon speaks about the responsibility of the Christian steward to discharge his responsibilities toward his neighbor, without regard to race, creed, or color; but does not spell out how this is to be done (18, pp. 268-269). One sermon speaks about man's duty toward the government in terms of paying taxes (26, p. 377).

Nothing was found in these sermons which speaks directly to a Christian steward's responsibility to manage his business and investments for the good of employee and customer as well as himself, or to adopt hiring policies which help the poor and disadvantaged. Very little was found in these sermons on the subject of influencing government to correct inequities, or working for changes in the structures of society which will help the poor and disadvantaged, all of which usually involve the use of tax money. One sermon discusses commitment to the underprivileged in the inner city, and the need to challenge the community and nation



to daring and effective attacks on civil and social injustice (35, p. 313).

It is interesting to note that the few sermons which do have reference to goals of stewardship other than for church purposes, appear in the later years. Perhaps this is an indication that the church is becoming more aware that the stewardship of its people is to involve them beyond the institutional church, in the concerns of government and society.

The sermons examined cover a span of forty years, a period of history in which the economic climate was affected by depression, war, and post-war prosperity. There is little reference to the economic climate in these sermons. There is only one reference to the depression (8, p. 393); and here it is not spoken of as a factor that would influence giving, but as a punishment for past failures in our mission obligations. Only one sermon in the depression period (7, p. 220), speaks of the economic climate, and it speaks of our country's natural resources, wonderful opportunities for success in business, our remarkably high standard of living, and the fact that many Lutheran people have become wealthy.

There are no sermons that speak of World War II, and its effect on the economic climate.

The post-war period has a number of sermons speaking about economic conditions. One (19, p. 304), analyzes the



thinking of people who are caught in poor economic conditions, and seeks to motivate the hearer to give even under these circumstances. Several sermons speak of the hearer's ability to spend much for pleasure, liquor, tobacco, treats, and non-essentials, and chides the hearer for being remiss in his giving (20, p. 445; 22, p. 456; 36, p. 345).

Several sermons written in the 1960's remark about general prosperity. Present high salaries and general employment are mentioned (32, p. 507). Reference is made to "our affluent society" (35, p. 309). Another sermon (39, p. 249) goes to some length to point out how much Americans have and enjoy, compared to people of other countries.

The tone of the sermons is generally evangelical and kind. The feeling is conveyed that the preacher sees himself as one with his hearers. The language is most often in terms of "we" or "you and I." While the preacher is exhorting his hearers, he gives the impression of including himself, and his oneness with the people in a common task.

A decided change in the style becomes evident over the course of years. Regarding homiletical structure, the sermons appear in usually a three-part format up until about 1950. In the later years, this format disappears. The earlier sermons seem to be more devoted to the exposition of the text than to application to the hearer. In the later years more sermons seem to be written to catch



the interest of the hearer, with more concern for application. Both content and style of expression make the later sermons easier to read. However, all sermons are quite textual, and seek to be meaningful to the hearer in his need.

By way of a general conclusion, it can be said that the later sermons seem to take form more and more in terms of the assumptions regarding malady, goal, and means, as outlined on page 5 of Chapter I.

Studying the past can help us to find direction for the future. May this study, under God's blessing, serve to that end.

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