**In the Beginning, God…**

**1 Chronicles 29:10-20**

**October 2nd, 2022**

**Stewardship-Worship**

**SCRIPTURE**

10David praised the Lord in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,

"Praise be to you, Lord, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. 11Yours, Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, Lord, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. 12Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. 13Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.

14"But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. 15We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. 16Lord our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. 17I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. 18Lord, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. 19And give my son Solomon the wholehearted devotion to keep your commands, statutes and decrees and to do everything to build the palatial structure for which I have provided."

20Then David said to the whole assembly, "Praise the Lord your God." So they all praised the Lord, the God of their fathers; they bowed down, prostrating themselves before the Lord and the king.

**INTRODUCTION**

An article came out some time ago entitled, "What the World Needs Now," sharing the reports released from a Gallup Poll reporting the seven basic needs based on the average American:

* The need for shelter and food
* The need to believe life is meaningful and has a purpose
* The need for a sense of community and deeper relationships
* The need to be appreciated and respected
* The need to be listened to and to be heard
* The need to feel one is growing in their faith
* The need for practical help in developing a mature faith

If you think about those seven needs, there are at least six needs that the Church is better equipped to meet than any other organization or institution on this earth, and there is not one of the seven that the Church can't meet if necessary.

There is a lot of hype in advertising about everything we need that will make us happy, but things only last for a short time. There comes a time when many people realize all the striving in the world will not bring meaning to life. In these moments of reflection, people recognize that God is the only one who can truly bring meaning to a person's life.

The Church has seen a rapid change from a respected organization to being looked at with disdain or irrelevance. Somebody cannot deny that the Church has not adapted as fast as other organizations and has become close to irrelevant based on what people need and the strategies to reach them. However, Jesus has not become irrelevant; therefore, the Church still has a critical mission to reach the world for Jesus. This is not the time to lament the difficulty of reaching a new generation for Jesus; it is a time to build up and upon the Church.

**BACKGROUND**

One of the most famous characters in the Bible is king David. David's story is told in parts of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles. David was a warrior that God said: "was a man after my own heart." David, as a boy, demonstrated great faith as he hunted lions and bears and killed Goliath in an epic confrontation between Israel and Goliath. As a young man, David entered the service of Saul and vanquished all enemies that stood before the people of God. David was victorious and blessed in all he did, yet he was not without failure. Despite David's devotion to God, he still sinned against him, committing adultery and murder. Despite David's failings, God still accepted and loved him. Because of God's faithfulness to David and his family, David wanted to build a perfect house for God or a temple. One of David's life goals was to build the Temple, yet God said it was not for him to do. The task of building the Temple would fall on his son Solomon. Even though David was saddened that he could not accomplish this for God, he did all he could to prepare plans, materials, and leadership so Solomon could be successful. The passage read this morning is a time of celebration because David will soon die and leave the work to Solomon. David praises God's overwhelming abundance and provision for him and his son Solomon. David acknowledges that all things come from God, and he is thankful that God chose him to have the part of providing resources and leadership for his son Solomon.

**MESSAGE**

This morning I brought a vital tool for every household, a hammer. This tool can be used for many things, including putting nails in wood, pulling nails out of wood, and doing small demolition projects. The hammer is a versatile tool and can be used for many other different things, but it is only as good as the person using it. You may want to hammer one nail in the wall, but if you can't hit the head of the nail, it's not the hammers fault; it is the user's.

I also brought this dollar in this morning. This dollar is called a pound in England, a Euro in Europe, a Shekel in Israel, and a Yen in China, to name just a few places. It does not matter the name; it is currency, and it is a tool. Like the hammer, money is only as good as the person using it, but we must never forget money is a tool to be controlled. People can be hurt if you don't have control over a tool, primarily a power tool. When we lose control of the tool money, people do get hurt.

Money is a tool, but it is the most powerful tool in the world and can be the most destructive tool ever created by humanity.

-Money can tempt preachers to sell their souls for money

-Buy their private jets

-Million-dollar homes

-High-priced exotic cars

-They can get their heart's desire but lose Jesus

-Money has tempted fathers and mothers to sacrifice their families for

more of this paper

-All the time rationalizing, it's so my family can have more

yet never seeing them or being there for them

-Money has led geniuses to squander all they have and go into a

a lifetime of debt to keep up with the Joneses

-Money has led people to be crippled in fear of losing it, so they

never spend and are reluctant to share, hoarding wealth till the

day the die

Money is powerful, but it really has no value. Money's worth comes only from what people give it or what people believe it's worth. What is the value of a dollar? When I graduated high school, one dollar gave me a gallon of gas; today, one dollar may give me a quarter of a gallon. A person wanting to buy a car sees a 2023 sedan and is willing to pay $20,000; this person may see a classic 70's Trans Am and pay the same price. The value is in the eye of the beholder.

Our money is a piece of paper printed by the government with no real value except what we give it. Yet, this piece of paper or similar currency has led countless people to worship it more than the creator of the universe; that's power! However, it is not the same as God's power. God is always powerful regardless of our actions. Money only receives the power we give it.

David says two critical things in this passage for us to remember: God is the creator and controller of all things. Put another way, everything comes from God, and everything belongs to God; however, out of God's abundant love and generosity made humanity stewards over all that belongs to God. As stewards, we are entrusted to the care of creation, our families, and the care of the Church.

Why was David so excited about the building of the Temple near his death? The reason for David's joy is that after he committed so much of his and the nation's wealth to this task, people flocked to give money to the building of the Temple. Giving to the Temple became contagious, not out of duty or extortion, but out of joy and a willingness to give. The same is valid today; with a compelling vision and a passion for the Church's ministry in this world, we can provide all that is needed to fulfill God's calling on our lives and the Church.

**CONCLUSION**

The people in David's time did not give because they were forced or because of a budget or an expense report. The people gave out of a passion for something they believed in. People in Church do not give and are not inspired by budgets or expense reports but give out of a desire to support the most important goals of the Church. At Stidham, we have three areas of passion, worship, ministry/service for our church family, and mission and outreach for the Lafayette community.

Keep these words from John Wesley in your heart; Earn all you can, Save all you can, and Give all you can!