

“Casting the Vision”

A Look at Stewardship 2005

Opening Devotions & Prayer

Matthew 6:19-21

“Concerning Treasures”

Defining Identity a Christian Perspective

- Faith & Trust in God (Matthew 16:24ff)
- Salt & Light (Matthew 5:13-14)
- Witnesses (Acts 1:6ff)
- Evangelists (Matthew 28:18ff)

A Pastor’s Perspective on Christian Identity

- **We are the church of Jesus Christ!**
- Beth-El = House or place of God
- **We are “Stewards” on behalf of Jesus Christ**
- Not our Church
- Jesus’ Church
 - *Steward – the overseer of another’s house or estate*
- **We are called to be the Hands, and feet, and voice of Jesus Christ to the world**

Self-Image – Defined

- The World - *A Cultural Model*
 - We are defined by what we have
 - And by what we have done
 - And how we look
 - **Image is everything*
- The Church – *The Christian Model*
 - We are defined by what we have been given
 - And by what of those gifts we can share and give away
 - How others look to us both as we look at them and as they look to us
 - **Who we represent is everything*
- **Some Biblical Models**
 - Old Testament
 - Tithe
 - Form of Taxation (*The 1st Flat Tax = 10% to the King or Emperor*)
 - Adopted by the Hebrews Since God is their King!
 - New Testament
 - Jesus & the Rich Man *Matthew 19:16-22*
 - Jesus & Zacchaeus *Luke 19:1-10*

What we give is always a matter of the heart as our giving (to all things including the church) reflects our thankfulness for God’s blessings in our lives!

One Possibility for Financial Stewardship!

Projected Congregational Income = \$832,600.00

Percentage increase based on giving alone (Example: if you give \$100.00 a month 1% increase means giving \$101.00) If the whole congregation increased that same...

- 1% Increase = \$840,926.00
- 2% Increase = \$849,252.00
- 3% Increase = \$857,578.00
- 4% Increase = \$865,904.00
- 5% Increase = \$874,230.00

- **Another Possibility**
\$832,600.00 = 2.1% of Gross Income (Based on the national Lutheran Average)
 Make \$1,000.00 a week and give 2.1% of total income = \$21.00 per week
 A 1% increase = \$31.00 per week
 1% total income increase by the whole congregation = **\$1,229,076.1**

A Challenge

In three years Bethel will Celebrate its 50th Anniversary!

What are our GOALS and the POSSIBILITIES for our ministry between now and 2008, 2010, 2015?

A Closing Devotional

This is a bit striking how it worked out this way. You might want to pay attention to this!
 Think of this ...

Q: What is the shortest chapter in the Bible?

A: Psalms 117 It has two verses only.

Psalm 117 (NRSV)

1 Praise the LORD, all you nations;

Extol him, all you peoples.

2 For great is his steadfast love for us,!

And faithfulness of the LORD for us endures forever.

Q: What is the longest chapter in the Bible?

A: Psalms 119

It has one hundred seventy six (176) verses.

Q: Which chapter is in the center of the Bible?

A: Psalms 118

Fact: There are 594 chapters before Psalms 118

Fact: There are 594 chapters after Psalms 118

Add these numbers up and you get 1188.

Q: What is the center verse in the Bible?

A: Psalms 118:8

Does this verse say something significant about God's will for our lives?

The next time someone says they would like to find God's will for their lives and that they want to be in the center of God's will, just send them to the center of God's Word!

Psalms 118:8

*"It is better to take refuge in the LORD
 than to put confidence in mortals."*

(NRSV)

Now isn't that odd how this worked out

A brief Prayer:

“Gracious God bless those gathered here this day in whatever it is that you know they may need this day!

And may their lives be full of your peace, Abundant in joy, and filled with the power of your love”

AMEN.

When things get tough, always remember... Faith doesn't get you around trouble, it gets you through it!
 When you relinquish the need to be in control of your future, only then do you discover contentment as a gift from God. God bless you, now and always in God's Peace!