

Call to Obedience #370
 PO Box 299 Kokomo, IN 46903 USA
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God's First Words to Man

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The first words God ever spoke to man were: *Be fruitful and multiply....* (Genesis 1:28)

After God created everything in the universe He commanded man to become His steward. He established the God/man relationship as an owner/steward relationship. This relationship is like a silver thread running through the whole Bible ending with the Revelation where God asks man to give a final account of his stewardship. If a man has been a faithful steward he will be resurrected to life eternal, if not he'll be raised to the resurrection of damnation. *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation* (John 5: 28, 29).

The whole purpose of the creation is to produce faithful stewards who on Judgment Day, will be promoted to become the wife of Christ, to receive a crown of life to reign with Him forever (Rev. 2:10; 2 Tim. 2:12). So the whole journey of man's life is about stewardship, about being fruitful and multiplying. So, the first fact of life from childhood on is that man must be taught, is that he is not an owner of anything but only a steward :

Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the LORD'S thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is (Deut. 10:14).

Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture (Psalm 100:3).

For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out (1Tim 6:7).

It is easy to see that at the moment man claims ownership over anything he becomes a thief and a rebel. In essence, he takes God's label off of what he is steward over, and replaces it with his own label. For a little while Adam and Eve tended God's garden. They lived in a stewardship relationship: because of that they were blessed; they were dressed in light; they were not ashamed; they had fellowship with God. But soon the devil deceived them. He told them that they had rights over this tree of knowledge, so they took God's name off of that tree and put their names on it. When they treated the fruit and the tree as if they were the owners, immediately the party was over. Whenever we exchange labels like that, we lose the fellowship of God, and we are on the way out of

paradise.

The only way man can come back into paradise, which is the kingdom of God, is by abdicating his ownership claims to return to servanthood. Since Adam's fall, all men are born with an ownership mentality. The Bible calls this the carnal nature or the old man. This truth is plainly illustrated by Jesus in several passages of the Gospels.

Here is the parable of the talents. This is not about being born again. God has no stewardship requirements for sinners who come to Jesus. But He has them for the sinner once he has been saved. So, this parable is not about starting but about finishing. You don't get a crown for starting but for finishing, for enduring to the end (Matt. 10:22). It is about what you must do *after* you have been born of God:

For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey (Matt. 25: 14, 15).

Jesus is the man traveling into the far country. It is about Him having gone to heaven and giving stewardship responsibilities to His servants, for which they would have to give an account when He returned. This reflects the Genesis 1:28 formula: *be fruitful and multiply*. Notice all these men were faithful servants at the time Jesus gave them the talents, for Jesus does not give stewardship responsibilities to sinners or strangers. Two of the servants immediately began to be fruitful and multiply. That became their life's ambition. In other words, the rest of their lives now revolved around this assignment. But the one steward immediately buried the talent he was entrusted with. Again, this is not about getting into the garden but about staying in it. This steward did not take his stewardship responsibility to heart. He made no effort to be fruitful and multiply. He took ownership of the talent to do with it as he pleased. So while the other two stewards were rewarded for their faithfulness, this steward became an unprofitable servant. Here is Jesus judgment on him and all who are not fruitful and multiplying for Jesus: *cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth* (Matt. 25: 29, 30). This is your destiny my friend, if you are not about the Father's business.

Now let us look at another (true) story about a rich man (Mark 10:17-22). Again this is not about coming to Christ, but about what we do once we have come to Him. It is about becoming stewards of Christ, about becoming His wife at last. This story is about a man who also did not want to give up control of his life. Here is the story:

A certain ruler came running to Jesus to ask what he must *do* to inherit eternal life. Notice the urgency of this young man: *he ran*. Normally rulers don't run. They let their servants do the running. But this ruler was so convicted that he ran. As soon as he heard that Jesus was nearby, he did not want to

miss his answer. Further note the strange mix of his words: "do" and "inherit". In our Anglo-American culture, in most cases we have to do nothing to get our inheritance – it is a matter of a blood connection. Whether we are good or bad children does not matter. But in Jesus' world, a man's inheritance could be denied if the heir lacked in character or moral quality. If the heir became unworthy, if he was likely to abuse the inheritance or bring shame upon his father, he could be denied his inheritance. It was so in the case of Esau and Jacob. Esau was denied his inheritance even though he was the firstborn. This practice of denying an inheritance under certain circumstances is still true in some conservative Jewish groups to this very day.

And this is the way it is in God's world. In the Revelation Jesus says: *He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels* (Rev.3:5). When a person is born again his name is entered into the Book of Life. But if he does not become a *faithful* steward his name will eventually be erased from the Book of Life. It is contingent on overcoming, on giving over all ownership claims to become stewards. God has an eraser. In Jesus kingdom not all brides become wives (Matt. 25:1-12). Here an inheritance must not be taken for granted.

Many of us separate grace from works. We believe that the one has nothing to do with the other. Indeed, that is true when we come to Christ: it is all by grace. But after we have become Christ's, works must follow grace. Jesus expects us to produce, to be fruitful and multiply (John 15:1-7). We must know that no one is exempt from being fruitful and multiplying.

Continuing the story, Jesus asked the young man a few questions. Then He focused on the owner/steward relationship. For the young man to get eternal life he had to give up all his claims of ownership. Jesus asked him to sell all he had and follow Him. The young man did not want to give up his ownership. He did not want to be a steward. He did not want anyone to rule over him. Thus, he rejected Jesus and forfeited his claims to eternal life.

Be fruitful and multiply! Do you understand? Do you “get it”?

Friend, we are not our own. Stop acting as if your money is yours, as if your time is yours, as if anything is yours. You cannot get up in the morning and say I will do this or that. As a steward, you will start the day by saying: Lord what would You have me do this day? You are called to an owner/steward relationship. You need to find out what is on His schedule. If you are found to be a good steward on that great Judgment Day, God will have you seated at the marriage feast of the lamb of God. You will become the Savior's wife!

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