

28<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time  
October 10, 2010  
Fr. Tom Elliott

## For the Greater Glory of God

2 Kings 5:14-17  
Psalm 98  
2 Timothy 2:8-13  
Luke 17:11-19

A “steward,” is someone who has been put in charge of a valuable gift and is to properly use and care for the gift. Stewardship, then, is our being stewards of the gifts God has given to us, properly taking care of and using our time, talent, and treasure. As we begin our 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Stewardship Month, it is important for us to reflect on the *motivation* behind our stewardship.

Motivation is an extremely important thing. For people who want to live meaningful lives, we must be aware of, not only *what* we do and *how* we do it, but also, *why* we do it. Our motivation is what often gives us the courage to step out of our comfort zone, and it gives us the strength and perseverance to finish a task or project.

I recently ran across a video of a young man who has been labeled the “Worst Motivational Speaker Ever.” His motivational philosophy is simple—“Believe in yourself, form a plan of action and follow through with it.” His philosophy is deficient in many ways, as he demonstrates by attempting to break a seemingly small board over his head by holding it above his head and thrusting it down with both hands. Let’s listen to what a poor motivation sounds like!

<http://www.bored-to-death.com/32378/Watch-me-Break-this-Wood-Over-my-Head>

This young man’s philosophy of motivation can never be adequate for Christians. Our motivation cannot be self-focused; it must be God-focused. Our Christian motivation can be summarized in one simple motto attributed to Saint Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit religious order—“For the greater glory of God.” Our one motivation for *everything* in life must be to glorify God. Every aspect of our stewardship—the service we offer to the community and Church, the time we spend in prayer, and the financial and material resources we give—must be done with the primary purpose of glorifying God. When our intentions and motivations are self-focused and ego-based, then we will quickly give up when we run into difficulties or when we don’t feel appreciated.

In order for the motivation for our stewardship to be “for the greater glory of God,” we must recognize a few important steps. **First, we must love God enough to seek His will.** When we first begin our Christian journey, we are more interested in *getting to know God*. We may not love Him yet. As we get to know Him, though, we realize that He loves us and we find ourselves falling in love with Him. This is the precursor to our desiring to know and to do His will. Jesus explains this in the Gospel of John when He says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (John 14:15). Until we fall madly in love with God, then our words and actions, even our service and charity towards others, will be based on what *we* want to do, rather than on what *God* desires us to do; it will reflect our own desire for recognition and glory rather than glorifying God.

After we fall in love with God and begin discerning His will, **we find ourselves growing in gratitude for the gifts He’s given to us.** Prior to our falling in love with God, we consciously or unconsciously attributed our gifts to ourselves rather than God. But our loving relationship with God quickly reveals that *everything* comes from Him, and our hearts become overwhelmed with gratitude!

The final thing that is important in order to our service and stewardship to glorify God in the greatest way possible is **poverty.** The poorer we are, the less we feel we have to give, the less we feel capable of doing what we feel God is calling us to do, the greater the glory God receives! Another way of putting this is—God does not call the qualified, He qualifies the called. And, by doing so, He receives greater glory. Or, to put it in the words of the liturgy, “[God], You choose the weak and make them strong in bearing witness to You” (Preface for Martyrs). Or, as God told Saint Paul, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” Because of this encouragement, Paul was able to write, “I will rather boast most gladly of my weaknesses, in order that the power of Christ may dwell with me” (2 Corinthians 12:9). There are countless examples in Sacred Scripture of God choosing to use the weakest, most unlikely people, to do the most extraordinary things.

A whole army was camped, preparing to do battle with the Philistines, but God chose to use the most unlikely person—a small, young, untrained shepherd boy, David—to win the Israelites the victory.<sup>1</sup> Why did God chose David? Because David loved God, desired to do His will, and brought greater glory to God because of His obvious weakness.

In the Book of Genesis, God chose Abraham and Sarah as the future parents of a great nation.<sup>2</sup> They were both too old to have children. Why did God choose them? Abraham and Sarah loved God, desired to do His will, and were the most unlikely future parents around! Because of this, God was greatly glorified!

As we begin a month of prayer and discernment about how God might desire to use our time, talent, and treasure for His greater glory, let’s reflect on our love for God, our desire to do His will, and our gratitude for what He has given to us. May He use, not only what we have, but what we don’t have—our poverty and weakness. And, may our only motivation be to bring God greater glory!

### **SUGGESTED PRAYER EXERCISES:**

- ✚ What is one area of your life that you feel is bringing God a lot of glory right now? Spend some time in prayer telling God about what that means to you. Then, think of one area of your life that does not seem to be glorifying God. Share with Him what you desire to change in that area of your life so that it brings Him greater glory.
  
- ✚ Spend some time asking God for discernment regarding how you will dedicate your prayer, your finances, and your talents to Him for His greater glory this year.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 17

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 18