

**Devotional Thought**  
**Week of June 2, 2008**

THEME: "A Parable of Judgment"

**"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."**

*1 Corinthians 4:2*

When we think of stewardship, three areas usually come to mind – time, talent, and money. In this parable Jesus taught good stewardship of people and our relationship with them. If as most scholars agree, the owner of the vineyard is God and the husbandmen are the religious leaders, then the harvest represents the family of God (specifically the Jews at the time Jesus taught). Unfortunately, the Jewish leaders cared little about the fruit they produced in the lives of others. Their main concern centered on the honor of being the chosen leaders and on maintaining their authority. In their self-centeredness, they totally ignored the most sacred responsibility God gives – influencing another soul.

Today that symbolism still applies for mature Christian leaders. Pastors specifically are called to **account** for the souls they shepherd. *Paul writes in his Epistle to the Hebrews: "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give **account**" (Heb. 13:17).* Applied more broadly, we all have a responsibility to sow seeds of Christlikeness that bears fruit in the lives of others (John 15:5). Each contact we have with non-Christians is an opportunity to share by word or by attitude what Jesus had done for us.

Ministers are stewards of God with the responsibility to care and nurture the souls of others. The steward is set over others to love, protect, and care for the sheep, yet he himself is a servant and slave to the master. The steward is to make clear the mysteries of God that are alien to human minds. The steward, the servant, the slave will be help responsible by the master his faithfulness and for his care, love, and nurture of the sheep.

Notice that the scripture text does not require a steward to be eloquent or to have many gifts (though these would prove helpful), only that he be found faithful. There are so many who will be rewarded someday, not because they did some great thing or had some great gift, but because they were faithful in ministering to those under their authority. They will have been found faithful in what they did and how they did it. It is important for those in authority to never forget to whom you belong and to what you have been charged to do. I have learned over the years as a pastor in God's church that there will always be the faithful few. God will reveal them in His own time and in His own way. I have learned to depend on them because I knew where they stood.

**PRAYER:** Heaven Father, forgive us and lead us away from our selfish nearsightedness. With your help, may we accept the responsibility you've given for ministering to the needs of other people. May we be aware of their spiritual needs and how we may reach them for you. Amen.

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