



LEGACY 20/20

Celebrating Our Past and Securing Our Future: Souls, Sites, Stewardship and Succession

WEEK FOUR

DAY 29 - THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

May 24, 2015

Our Church

Matthew 16:18

In the New Testament the word “church” is used 115 times. Every book in the New Testament was written to a church, gives the history of the church or for use in a church. Obviously then anything of such importance deserves our attention on our Journey to Victory. Let’s begin this section then by considering “our church.”

The local church is the most important organization or grouping of people on the face of the earth. It is divine in its origin, divine in its purpose, and divine in its destiny.

Here, we are not talking about a building. We make a mistake when we point to a building and say, “that is my church.” That is the building that houses the “church” — the body of Christ — in that location. The church is people, not bricks, stone or lumber.

It is His church and we the members belong to Him.

On the other hand, it is **our** church. It is made up of people just like you and me who have bonded together to be His body here in this location. As such, we have been given great responsibilities and awesome privileges.

We are to be His witness here, where we live and throughout the world. Jesus said, “you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, in all Judea and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) We do this by going to others ourselves, to tell of Jesus and giving so that others might go, when and where we cannot.



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The New Testament describes the church as a body and as such we all have individual responsibilities. Some are hands, some feet, some eyes, some ears, but all members of one body. It takes everyone working together for the body to function properly.

One of the folk tales of the Canadian Northwoods tells about two porcupines in the freezing weather who would huddle close together, but the closer they got together the more they were pricked by the quills of the other. So then they would move apart and then they would begin to chill and to freeze again. So they would move back together, and again the quills would prick the other one. So they would move apart; and the process went on and on. The moral of the story is, they needed each other, but they needled each other. And I have an idea that that is the perfect picture of the average body of believers in Christ. We need each other so much, but sometimes, in the abrasive ways of life, we needle each other. We are one in our church and must function as one body to achieve victory in the great task God has given us.

In the **STEWARDSHIP ENRICHMENT** program before us it is only together that we can accomplish the task God has given our church. Even with the large gifts that some will make, we are all essential to victory – each of us. The Apostle Paul gave us the guidelines, “Everyone of you ...” 100% participation. Do you realize that all by yourself you can make that 100% not happen?

Say out loud and with conviction: “It is my church!” I know you are only one, but you are one and you matter to Christ, to the other members and to yourself.

During the Olympic Games one summer, the third runner in a relay race dropped the baton as he tried to pass it. He threw himself on the ground, wept openly and had to be helped from the arena. Think of what was involved in his failure:

- ❖ It put his team out of the running;
- ❖ It disappointed his country;
- ❖ The success of the two runners before him was canceled;
- ❖ The runner who was to follow never had his chance;
- ❖ He had to live with his failure.



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Others are dependent on you. Others may work and give, but only you can do what God wants you to do. Those who come before you have faithfully passed the baton to you and those who come after you must find you faithful. Don't drop the baton.

It is essential that you fill your place in your church. Your regular presence, your dedicated service, your constant prayer and your sacrificial financial support will make a difference in the impact of our church today and in eternity.

**Lord, in years past other Saints have been faithful to build our church.
They have passed the baton to me. Help me to not drop the baton.
Help me "run with patience the race set before me" and
"may those who come behind me, find me faithful."**

DAY 30 - THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

May 25, 2015

Our Members

A young pastor was walking in his backyard when his foot struck what appeared to be an old lamp buried in the ground. When he picked it up, an old genie dressed in rags suddenly popped out.

The old genie was annoyed that he had been awakened. "Okay," he said, "tell me your one wish and make it quick. I want to get back into the lamp."

"I've always dreamed of this happening," the pastor said, excitedly. "Stay right here. I'll be back in a minute." Soon he returned with a map of the Middle East, unfolded it, and showed it to the genie.

"My one wish is that peace and harmony will come to this whole area, from Turkey to Egypt, from Israel to Iraq and Iran," the pastor said.

"Are you crazy?" the genie exclaimed. "Give me a break. I'm an old genie, and the Middle East has been in strife and at war for thousands of years. I just can't do it!"



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The pastor thought for a while and then said, "Okay, I'll make another request. I wish that my church would be a place where everyone could live in peace, where everyone would give sacrificial offerings over and above the tithe."

The genie pondered the request and then said, "Do you mind if I take another look at the map?"

Yes, it is difficult to have a church where there is complete unity and complete sacrificial giving. It depends on us and our giving of ourselves completely to the Lord and His church to make it so. It is difficult, but not impossible.

The problem today is that 40% of our members are standing on the promises and 60% are sitting off the premises.

Three local church pastors were having lunch together. As they discussed their problems, they discovered that they all had the same problem – cockroaches.

The first pastor said, "I sprayed with DDT but it didn't help. They all returned."

The second pastor said, "I called in an exterminator, but it didn't work either. They soon returned."

The Baptist pastor said, "I solved the problem easily. I baptized them, added them to the membership role and they haven't been back since."

This is what membership means to many whose names are on our roll. Today our church needs members who are loyal to Christ and His program of work. Ask yourself – "How can I help?" "What can I do?"

You can begin by being present. Ben Alford says to never underestimate the importance of your attendance. Actually when you are in your place in your church you are ministering in at least seven ways:

First, you have voted – **by your presence** – for the most important thing in the world. **Second**, you have – **by your presence** – influenced everyone with whom you come in contact. **Third** – **by your presence** – you have made a witness. You have said, "This is important to me." **Fourth** – **by your presence** – you have enabled God to use you, in innumerable ways, to accomplish the divine will. **Fifth**, you have – **by your presence** – placed yourself in the



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*company of other pilgrims who, like you, are on the journey of life, and by being present to one another, will have the opportunity for enrichment and encouragement. **Sixth – by your presence** – you place yourself in the center of God’s people, where the acts of God are remembered and treasured, and where the Spirit of God is both welcomed and affirmed. It is there, waiting upon God – like the Apostles in the upper room – that wonderful things occur and power is discovered. **Finally, by your presence here**, you are involved in the greatest force for good in the entire world. The sun never sets on the army of which you are a part. The work of God’s people is really what makes the difference in this world.*

Our church needs members who love one another and are united in their love for our church. Our church can and should be like this account from the Special Olympics. As you know the Special Olympics features mentally and physically disabled athletes from around the world. One of the most memorable events that happened during the Special Olympics was a foot race among a group of people with Down Syndrome. The runners were close together as they came around the track toward the finish line. One of them stumbled and fell. When that happened, the rest of the runners stopped. They went back as a group, helped the runner who’d fallen, to stand up, and then all ran across the finish line together. Once across, they hugged and congratulated each other for finishing the race.

This is what our church was meant to be. You can make it so!

Our church needs members who are willing to be used – to serve where needed. The pastor of a Baptist church said he had too many “Lilly Baptists” in the membership. When asked about it he said, that Jesus talked about them in the New Testament – “They toil not and neither do they spin.”

God gave you special talents and abilities. The secret of a happy, useful life is to be content with what He gave you and discontent with the use you make of them. Our church needs you!

Our church needs members who are willing to give, to sacrifice and more. What we are doing for God in our church is demanding. Our regular budget is worldwide in scope. Our Capital Program requires the best from all of us. The special needs that arise are costly.



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An American stood beside a native in India. It was a poor part of the country, yet a lovely temple was under construction. The practical-minded Westerner turned to a native and asked: "How much will it cost?" A startled look came over the face of the woman: **"The cost does not count ... it is for our God."**

As Jesus moved toward Calvary He never counted the cost. He surrounded Himself with men and women, most of them simple, humble people who shared His spirit and His attitude. They did not count the cost and neither will we!! It, too, is for our God!

What we need is a time of spiritual renewal – one that touches every member. We will if all the:

- Sleeping folk – wake up
 - Lukewarm folk – fire up
 - Disgruntled folk – sweeten up
 - Discouraged folk – cheer up
 - Depressed folk – look up
 - Estranged folk – make up
 - Gossipers – shut up
 - True Christians – stand up
 - Church members – pray up

When this happens we will have a great **STEWARDSHIP ENRICHMENT** Program.

You and your family can lead the way!

Lord, help me to be an active, living, giving part of Your church – my church. Lord, help me to link arms with others in our church and press toward the finish line and the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. I want to cross the finish line together with my fellow Saints.





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DAY 31 - THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

May 26, 2015

Our Privilege

Ephesians 5:25

Tony Compolo has a sermon on Redeeming Time. In it he tells a story about a survey of several hundred people who had reached age ninety-five. They were asked if they could live their life over, what would they do differently.

Researchers summarized all the answers and distilled them to the most prominent three.

- (3) I would make persons more important and treat people differently.
- (2) I would take more risks with my life.
- (1) I would try to do something that would live on after I am dead.

Now that is something to think about! ...and something to act on! If you want to accomplish all three things the 95 year olds wished for...dare I say...**go to work in your church.**

Basically what these were saying was that if they had another chance they wanted their lives to really matter, to make a difference in time and eternity. They wanted their influence to live on after they are gone.

Now you probably are not 95, but you have the same desires and ambitions. Here's the answer – get involved in your church and your life and influence will matter. In fact, our Capital Program will guarantee that. Jesus said of Mary of Bethany's gift, "This which she has done will be spoken of as a memorial to her wherever the gospel is preached throughout all eternity."

What we are doing will definitely affect the lives of young and old alike. It will have an impact today and for years to come. Even those not yet born will be influenced by what you do. What you do will inexorably "live on after I am dead" as those 95 year olds' wished. What a privilege!!

How then can you get started to insure this? Here are several suggestions:



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1. Get involved in what is happening today in your church. There is a class to be taught, committees to serve on, visits to be made, members who need to be encouraged – make your own list. You can matter.
2. Volunteer to assist in the work of the Capital Program. There are testimonies needed, calls to be made, meals to be prepared, prayers to be offered, etc. Ask someone now involved!
3. You can pray! This has been said so many times it has lost its meaning to many. Remember though God has promised: “Call upon me and I will answer you and show you great and mighty things which you know not.” (Jeremiah 33:3) There are miracles to be performed in our church and in your life waiting for your prayers to bring them to pass.

Here is a prayer offered in a Capital Program in another church: “Lord, you have blessed this church in a wonderful way, but I want so much more. I want to see more souls saved. I want our church to become more Christ like. I want our facilities to expand to meet our needs. I want us to give as you have given to us. I want us to learn the meaning of sacrifice and to practice it in our stewardship program. Lord I want you to answer this prayer beginning in me.”

4. You can make a commitment. Yes, I know that commitment is costly (demanding). In the early days of our country John Adams was a vocal advocate of the Declaration of Independence. He once declared: “Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I give my hand and my heart to this [declaration].... It may cost treasure and it may cost blood, but... my whole heart is in it. All that I have and all that I am and all that I hope in this life I am now ready here to stake upon it... independence now and independence forever!”

In doing so he was risking his life, his friends, and his fortune. We all, if we love and care, must take such a stand and make such a commitment.

In our **STEWARDSHIP ENRICHMENT** program we face the moment of decision. This is my church. This is my ministry. This is my program. This is my commitment!



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5. You can give sacrificially. Give yourself completely to Christ and your finances will follow. Paul praised those of Macedonia who begged him to let them give and then gave sacrificially. The key to this was that “they first gave themselves unto the Lord” (II Corinthians 8:5). This you can do! It is easier to give your money (part of you) when you

have first given yourself (all of you). The songs says, “All to Jesus, I surrender. All to Him I freely give.”

A little Church was having a homecoming service to which ex-members who had moved away were invited. One ex-member who attended was a man who had become a multi-millionaire. He, along with others, were giving a little testimony on their Faith experience. The rich man spoke of when, as a little boy in that Church, he had earned his first dollar – a silver dollar. “I had decided,” he said, “to keep it forever. But a visiting missionary came to the Church and preached about the urgent need for funds in his mission work. Consequently, when the offering basket was passed a great struggle took place within me. As a result, I put my treasured silver dollar in the basket. And I am convinced that the reason God has blessed me richly is that when I was a boy I gave God everything I possessed.” The congregation was spellbound by the multi-millionaire’s tremendous testimony until an elderly little lady in the front pew rose and said, “Brother, I dare you to do it again!”

“Christ loved the church and gave himself for it.”

(Ephesians 5:25)

**Lord, help me to follow Your lead and love the church so much
that I am willing to give myself – everything I have – in helping it succeed**



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DAY 32 - THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

May 27, 2015

Our Money

I Corinthians 16:1-2

Mention money in church and certain things happen. Some close their ears and wonder why they came this Sunday. Others will think, "There he goes again. All he preaches on is money." The committed Christian who is by definition "a good steward" will enjoy it. He will recognize it as a major part of Jesus' teaching, and the Bible's message.

Money is an interesting subject where ever it is discussed. Note some reactions:

- ❖ Woody Allen says, "Money is better than poverty even if only for financial reasons."
- ❖ Money has miraculous powers. "It greases the palm, feathers a nest, holds heads above the water, makes both ends meet."
- ❖ Carl Sandburg stated in one of his poems that "money buys everything except love, personality, freedom, immortality, silence, and peace."

All of this is interesting and no wonder we love it. Here-in is the problem. Not money, but "the love of money is the root of all evil" (I Timothy 6:10).

It's hard not to love money for it is necessary in so many areas and provides for so much good. Food, clothing, and shelter all require money. Medicines, doctors, and dentists all require money. Education, transportation, and recreation all require money. On and on we could go.

When we begin to love it, put it first in our lives, it becomes our master, even over God. When we elevate it to first place it becomes our object of worship.



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What is the solution to the problem? Actually the solution is simple. In a word it is stewardship! Once we come to understand and accept our stewardship responsibilities the problem is solved. In simple steps:

1. Stewardship in one phrase is - God owns it all! He is the creator and owner of everything. "The earth is the Lord's...the world, and they that dwell therein (Psalm 24:1).
2. We are His stewards. We are responsible to Him for how we
 - ❖ Receive what we have
 - ❖ Use what we have
 - ❖ Give what we have
 - ❖ Leave what we have

This includes our time, talent, and treasure. It embraces time and eternity.

3. We are to give "offerings." Sacrificial gifts over and above our tithes.

Only love can bring one to the point of sacrificial giving.

A little boy saw his mother come to the house and leave her muddy shoes at the door before she entered. In a spirit of helpfulness he cleaned the shoes and polished them. The he placed them by her dresser. The mother was so pleased with his thoughtfulness that she placed a dollar bill on his pillow with her note "Thank you!" The next morning the dollar bill with the note still attached was on the breakfast table. He added his note: "I did it for love!"

This is our response when we consider His love for us. It is the "love of Christ which compels us!" (II Corinthians 5:14) One translation states "the love of Christ leaves me no choice." We learned how to love from Christ and we love Him so much that our love leaves us no choice but to give - dramatically.

4. We are and shall be accountable to Him.
 - ❖ "Give an account of your stewardship" (Luke 16:2)
 - ❖ "It is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)



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A man began to doze in church just before the offering. In his sleep he could see the ushers coming down the aisle. He reached reluctantly for a bill. The usher reached his seat. He was about to place the dollar on the plate, but the plate seemed to fade out. In its place was a nail-pierced hand waiting to receive his gift. Glancing up, he saw not the usher's familiar face but a face of deep tenderness and a thorn-crowned brow. For the first time in his life, it dawned on him that he was not giving to the usher, to the preacher, nor to the church but to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Lord, I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that you own everything – including me.

And you have placed some possessions and money in my hands and have given me “power to get more.” Lord, I want to be a good manager – a good steward – of all that.

**Into Your hand and Your hand alone do I place my gift.
Use it (and me) for Your glory.**

DAY 33 - THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

May 28, 2015

Our Finances

A ministry called Christian Financial Concepts receives about 150,000 calls per month from people asking for financial advice. The profile of the average caller:

- Age 30-35
- Owes \$15,000 - \$20,000 in school loans
- Owes \$17,000 - \$20,000 in credit card debt
- Owes \$20,000 on two cars
- Owes \$120,000 on the average mortgage



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In America today:

- 50% of marriages fail
- 60-80% of these cite financial problems as the root cause of strife
- \$1.17 is spent for every \$1 earned

Many are not managing their money well. Note this information on the giving patterns in our churches:

- Individuals pay four times as much in interest as they give the church (10.2% vs. 2.3%)
- 80 cents of every dollar is given by those 55 and over
- 20% of members give 80% of the money contributed
- 30% give the other 20% of contributions
- 50% give nothing at all
- 1 in 5 churches borrow money to keep the doors open

Why do we consider all of these figures? There are several reasons:

- They reveal the tremendous financial burdens that many live with.
- They reveal the major problem so many face when they think of tithing and/or giving to their church.
- They reveal the few who support the work of the church enjoyed by all.
- They reveal the marital problems caused by financial problems.

Whether you fit into this pattern or not it may be profitable to analyze the situation and see if all of us couldn't handle our finances more effectively and become better stewards. Perhaps a good way to do this is to do a Bible study of one of the miracles of Jesus - The Feeding of the Five Thousand found in Mark 6.

Admit there is a problem — Mark 6:34-37

You know the story. Great crowds were following Jesus to see and hear Him. Seeing their needs Jesus "had compassion on them." It was dinner time and they had no food – there was a problem and the disciples recognized it.



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Unlike so many today when dealing with finances people stick their heads in the sand and refuse to see a problem. Note the following:

Patient: "I have the finest home in the area. I have a swimming pool and membership at the country club. I drive a new BMW and my wife has a new Corvette."

Doctor: "And what's your problem?"

Patient: "I only make \$100 a week."

He had a problem and recognized it. Many don't.

Lending institutions have a criteria to determine if one is in danger of debt destruction:

- You pay only bare minimum each month on credit and never pay more than that minimum.
- You make partial payments rather than full.
- You start falling behind on payments shortly after opening an account.
- Your account balance always seems to grow. You cannot seem to pay it off.
- You have periodic bouts of late payments.

All of this says, "I have a problem and I need to deal with it." It is important because if you do not master your money, your money will master you. It means:

- You have a burden of debt that is back breaking
- You can't get out of the maze of discouragement, disillusionment and despair.
- You have no hope for savings, retirement, education of children – the future is bleak.
- You cannot support the Lord's work as you want to and as God wants you to.

Lord, help me master my money. I want you to be the center of my life – not money, not debt. I will take positive steps now to control my debt.



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DAY 34 - THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

May 29, 2015

Our Opportunity

Philippians 4:19

II. Consider what your resources are — Mark 6:38

This is what Jesus and the disciples did. They found a young man with 5 loaves and 2 fishes. These were the assets that were available to deal with the problem.

In like manner this is where we start to solve the debt problem. The first step in making ends meet is to know how far apart they are.

1. Make a list of your income – all sources of capital. This reveals what you have to work with.
2. Make an honest list of all your “outgo”. On this list include everything you are responsible for – item by item.
3. Put the two together – if the expenses exceed the income you are in trouble (I know – it took a PHD to conclude that.) Some of you may have a “near debt” experience.
4. Now it is time to recognize that financial problems do not usually come from too little financial resources but from misplaced priorities, by a lifestyle out of control and by reckless use of credit cards.

When your outgo exceeds your income
Your upkeep will be your downfall.

III. Give what you have to Jesus — Mark 6:41

The young man gave his resources (the loaves and fishes) to Jesus and trusted Him. Jesus was their greatest resource. It may seem simplistic, but this is the first step in solving your problem. Ask for guidance and follow His leadership. Do your part and He will bless. The lad gave his food, but was fed along with thousands of others.



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The Bible tells us we are to give the “first fruits” of our income to God. When we trust Him with the first part He will bless and see that the rest goes farther.

Memorize Proverbs 3:9-10 — “Honor the Lord with your possessions and with the firstfruits of all your increase; so your barns will be filled with plenty and your vats will overflow with new wine.”

And remember, “Those who honor me I will honor.” (1 Samuel 2:30)

If you trust Christ with your soul surely you can trust Him with your finances.

The first step in getting out of debt is to stop spending and for most people the first step in doing that is to eliminate credit cards. One person said, “I like credit cards, they go so much farther than money.” Actually, “plastic surgery” is needed. Cut them into 2 pieces and put one piece in the garbage at home and the other in the garbage at work. This will prevent any possibility of “divine healing” (or theft).

Remember Philippians 4:19 does not say, “My God shall supply all my needs according to master charge.”

Actually there are only 2 ways to reduce debt.

1. Reduce expenses – eliminate every non-essential to enable you to pay off the high interest credit debts. Do you have to have that club membership or eat out at that fancy restaurant every week? Postpone major purchases.
2. Increase income – perhaps a second job or after hours job, part-time job, network marketing business. Have a garage sale. What can you sell? You don’t have to have that boat, travel trailer, second home, etc.

It isn’t easy but it can be done!

IV. Anticipate the Miracle — Mark 6:42-44

God will multiply what you give Him.

1. Believe it can be done! In Matthew 9:29 Jesus said, “According to your faith it will be done.” Just as He met the need of feeding the multitude He will meet your needs if you are obedient to His commands and follow His way.

**“Seek first the Kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you.”
(Matthew 6:33) Again, consider “Give and it shall**



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DAY 35 - THE CHRISTIAN STEWARD'S CHURCH

May 30, 2015

Our Goal

Ephesians 3:21

Frequently we are asked, "What is the goal?" Those who ask this question usually are thinking of numerical goals. Our answer, however, is in terms of spiritual goals.

Our **goal** is for all members and friends of the church to pray for, find, and in faith follow God's will for their lives individually as their part of God's will for the church.

Dr. Peter Wagner reminds us that becoming a Christian is optional. But once you become a Christian and ask Jesus Christ to take control of your life, involvement in His church and His program is no longer optional.

Our **need** is to meet the financial objectives before us. The preacher, staff and leadership have, over a period of time, prayerfully considered what will be required to do the work and fulfill the vision God has given our church.

This need must be met and even exceeded if the future plans and growth of our church are to be realized. This will require all of us doing all that God asks of us.

Our **presence** is needed on Commitment Sunday for this exciting worship experience. We want everyone to share in this historic time in the history of our church. Few days will matter as much to the future of our church as will this day. It will be an hour that matters in eternity.

Our **participation**. In a few days each of us will be receiving in the mail a personalized commitment card to be completed and returned on Commitment Sunday.



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This card matters to God, to our church and to you:

- It will represent you and your family
- It will reveal your love for your God
- It will represent your love for your church
- It will recognize your obedience to God's will
- It will say to your fellow members "I am with you in what God is doing in our church."

Our **prayer** is for this to be a high spiritual hour. Remember, it is "not by might nor power, but by My spirit" says the Lord and "except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain."

Continue praying for yourself and your family. God has a plan and purpose for you in this capital program. Remember as we have said repeatedly that we all must pray for, find and in faith, follow God's will.

In prayer you will discover that He wants you to make a sacrificial commitment. You may need to reconfigure your lifestyle, change your plans for the future, or give money you had planned to leave in your will.

His will may take you beyond what you think is possible, but this is where faith takes over. He wants you to show your faith by your commitment. He will never lead you to do what He has not already planned to provide.

Our **joy** is to be able to join hands and hearts with you and your family and others of our fellowship in a glorious worship experience. Together we will sing and pray and feel the presence of the Holy Spirit in the service.

Will we reach our goals? Will we succeed in this glorious undertaking for our God? Will victory be ours for His glory?

The story is told of a wise man that lived high in the mountains. He was able to answer any question posed to him. Time and again he had been tested, but he always gave the right answer.



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Celebrating Our Past and Securing Our Future: Souls, Sites, Stewardship and Succession

A young man decided to test him once again. He planned to hold a bird in his hands and ask, "What do I have in my hand?" If the wise man said, "a bird" he would then ask, "Is it dead or alive?" If the ancient one said "dead" he would release it and let it fly away. If the wise one said "alive" he would squeeze it and drop it dead before the man.

He made the long trek up the mountain until he encountered the man of wisdom. Holding the bird in his hand behind his back, he asked, "What do I have in my hand?" The wise man answered "a bird." "You are right sir, but is it alive or dead?" The man of wisdom answered, "You hold the answer in your hands!"

❖ **Will we reach our goal?**

❖ **You hold the answer in your hands!**

Lord, You have placed resources in my hands and gifts and abilities in my life, and have given me the power to get wealth. I open my hands and all that I am to You from whom all good things come.