

## Worship Engagement and Devotion for week of August 1, 2021

READ Luke 16:14-17 and Matthew 20:1-16

*Reclaiming Good News Series Week 4: Good News - Really!*



What is good news? How do we know when something is good news? Can old news still be good news? In our new series, Reclaiming Good News, we will search the pages of Scripture together to gain insight and understanding about the meaning of a phrase we use a lot! Let's explore good news in a fresh way!

### Questions for Reflection:

- Reread Luke 16:14-17. What questions would you ask Jesus about this passage?
- If you had been one of the first workers hired, how would you have felt when you were paid?
- How would you have felt if you were one of the last workers hired?
- What does the parable say to you about God and God's kingdom?
- What does this parable show us about God's grace and mercy compared to human ideas of fairness?
- What do these passages teach us about Good News?

### Spiritual Practice: Stewardship

Often when we hear the word stewardship, our first thoughts turn to money. Even misunderstanding that stewardship is about God and/or the church just wanting our money. The story of Joseph in Genesis is one example showing us that God is really wanting something much more valuable than money. God wants us to give our lives to the work of God's kingdom. A steward is someone who manages another's property or financial affairs. Stewardship begins with recognizing that everything we have really belongs to God and that we are simply the stewards of God's gifts and opportunities. Stewardship is caring for, using and sharing the gifts God has given us. Adele Calhoun describes spiritual practice of stewardship as "the voluntary and generous offering of God's gifts of our resources, time, talents and treasure for the benefit and love of God and others." The key to the spiritual practice of stewardship is offering our lives to God with joy so that we can mature and be transformed over time. Tom Berlin writes in the book *Defying Gravity*, "As we grow in our identity as stewards, we will increasingly make sacrifices to be generous with our time, character, and money in ways that will result in joy instead of resentment." God calls us all of us to be stewards and invites each of us to practice stewardship in order to reach the world with God's loving care. God has given each of us gifts and abilities and wants all of us to use them to serve God by building and taking care of God's world.

The Spiritual Practice of stewardship includes:

- Adopting an intentionally generous lifestyle flowing from love of God and others
- Being liberated from greed, self-centeredness, money, etc so that the generous spirit of Jesus grows in you
- Living in a way that exemplifies that your life, your time, your money, your home, your family are not your own
- Living as a steward in all areas of your life; stewardship of your character, the environment, etc
- Thoughtfully investing resources and spiritual gifts to benefit the body of Christ
- Generously sharing the resources God has given you: physical, mental, natural, economic, and spiritual
- Becoming more aware of the ways we may act selfishly and portray a lack of love for others
- Modeling God's goodness and generosity
- Making offerings that go beyond the tithe
- Embracing generous hospitality toward those in need
- Cultivating generosity by being generous with your time, money, praise/encouragement, belongings and knowledge - <https://www.umc.org/en/content/cultivating-generosity>
- Investing in the kingdom of God, building up treasures in heaven
- Loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and loving your neighbor as yourself
- Experiencing a life in Christ that makes us generous in every way with our kindness, compassion and love made evident in the ways we use our time, resources and money. Adapted from *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* by Adele Ahlberg Calhoun