

GENESIS: THE BEGINNING IS NOT THE END

We Are God's Managers!

TEXT: Genesis 1 – 2

INTRODUCTION: God begins both the Old and the New Testament with a declaration of a foundational principle of life that impacts each one of us in dramatic ways.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

John 1:1–3 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

The Scripture says simply and with clarity, “**God made it all.**” And then quickly arrives at the corollary to that truth saying, “**God owns it all.**”

The Bible quickly shows us that a primary way we demonstrate our understanding of this truth and our submission to this truth is by giving the tithe to God. The tithe says, “God I acknowledge Your ownership of all things by giving You the tithe in obedience to Your Word.”

By the way, how are you doing with that?

- Those of you who would say, “I faithfully give the tithe,” were you able to say “Amen” in your heart and affirm to God,
 - “That really is why I tithe, Lord. It’s not just a matter of tradition or upbringing.
 - It is not even just a matter that I love this church and believe in its mission and ministries.
 - I do believe that every good gift I have ever received, including those that came through my jobs, has come from You, the Father of Lights.
 - I give You my tithe to say I acknowledge that. I believe that. And I thank You.”
- Those of you who believe in the tithing, but you have slipped a bit in being faithful,
 - Did you recommit yourself to acknowledge God’s ownership by giving Him the tithe?
 - Did you decide to once again trust Him to keep His Word and open the windows of heaven to bless you so that you are better off living on 90% than you would be the 100%?

- Did you remember the times God had rebuked the devourer from your life as He promises to do for those who will trust Him and give the tithe? Did you decide you wanted to have that protection again?
- Those of you who have never or seldom tithed, those for whom the concept of tithing is new or strange, did you do what I suggested?
 - Did you talk to a person or a couple who are faithful tithers to just let them tell you their story of God's faithfulness?
 - Did you decide to take up God's challenge and put Him to the test? He said, "Try me now in this, and see if I will not open the windows of Heaven and pour out for you a blessing, so that there will not be room enough to receive it."
 - Do you believe God's Word enough to try something for one month and let God prove Himself to you?

Folks, I hope you understand, that **the principles** we are studying that begin in Genesis and are developed through the rest of the Word of God **are not given for our**

- **Entertainment**
- **Education**
- **Consideration**

They are given for our

- **Obedience**
- **Application**

May I pause to try to kick the elephant in the room out of here? Elephants are not easily moved, and this particular one is especially stubborn, and I cannot get him to move by myself. But I can with your help.

The elephant I am talking about is the thought some of you had last week and some of you have today that Bro. Mike's just raising money for the church!

Now folks, I don't mind telling you I want the mission and ministry of our church to be well funded. I love this church, and Karen and I both believe that this church is doing what God has called the church to do, and we are excited from our toenails to the hair on our head... well she is excited to the hair on her head, I'm excited to the peak of my bald spot, about just being a part of what the Lord is doing through this body of believers. So, I do want the ministries and the missions of our church to not be hindered by lack of funding.

But let me tell you something. I learned a long time ago not to put my faith in people, even God's people, as the source of supply, neither for myself nor for the church.

- God is our supply!
- God is our provider!
- Yes, He most often sends His supply for the church through His people, but only He can move their hearts, not me.
- When I need something, I ask God.
- When the church needs something, I ask God!

So, please understand. I am not teaching you these principles that begin in Genesis just to increase the net receipts of the church. I am teaching you this for two reasons:

- Because it is true.
- Because we all need it.

So, elephant, get out of here! And let us get back to see the second principle that begins in Genesis. We find it at the end of chapter 1.

Genesis 1:26–28 26 Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.

I. WE ARE CREATED TO BE GOD'S MANAGERS.

Genesis 1:28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; **fill the earth** and **subdue it**; **have dominion** over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Genesis 2:15 Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to **tend and keep** it.

God has not transferred ownership of all He made.

But God has made us managers of all He has made.

- **resources**
- **time**
- **talent**
- **energy**

The New Testament goes on to reveal that we are not just managers of the physical things, but spiritual as well.

1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Steward is another word for manager.

God has made us managers of

- **the gospel**
- **ministries**
- **spiritual gifts**

II. WHAT MAKES A GOOD MANAGER?

A good manager does one thing: what the boss wants him to do!

I began work in Middle School, but I was self-employed mowing lawns.

Through high school I assisted an accountant, was a roofers helper, and sold hardware.

In college I sold cookware, sold advertising for a newspaper, tutored math, and got my first paid position in ministry.

After graduation, I needed to increase our income beyond what the church was paying, so I took a job throwing newspapers.

It is the only job from which I was ever fired. I threw 400 newspapers every morning in OK City. Every one of them had to be on the porch at 6 a.m. One morning, I slept late, and the papers were not all out until 6:45. My boss called me about 8:00. His phone was ringing off the wall with complaints. He said I was fired. I didn't do what the boss said to do.

He called me later that afternoon. He asked if I wanted my job back. I told him I did. He asked if I would get the papers on the porch by 6. I told him I would do what he asked. I threw papers again the next morning.

Knowing how to be a good manager is not rocket science. We just do what the owner says.

Our struggle sometimes with being a good manager, is not that we don't know what is required of us, but that we are not motivated to do it.

III. HOW DO WE BECOME GOOD MANAGERS FOR GOD?

As usual, the Scripture tells us.

Matthew 22:36–39 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

37 Jesus said to him, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’

Jesus said, “Here is what drives it all. If you do this, other things fall into place.”

- Love God with all you have within you.
- Love people like you love yourself.

One final thing the New Testament reveals about this manager business.

IV. THERE WILL BE PERIODIC REVIEWS!

- Jesus spoke of interim reviews. We will talk about these as a part of the principle next week.
- Paul warned us of a final review concerning what kind of manager we have been of all that God entrusted to our care.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

This is not a judgement of salvation. This is a judgment of how well we have managed the things that God told us to use and have dominion over. Did we do what the boss, the King of the Universe told us to do?

CONCLUSION: **First two principles:**

- **God made it all. Therefore God owns it all.**
- **God created men and women to be the managers of all He created.**

Are we acknowledging His ownership?
Are we being faithful managers?