

The 4th “T” in Stewardship: Located by Our Treasures

“Where your heart is, your treasure will be also...”

Traditionally, the third “T” of stewardship is “Treasure”, and the accent lies on what Jesus said about building up treasures in heaven because, in contrast to earthly treasures like gold, silver, money, property, etc., their value can never be diminished by natural processes, economic downturns, or historic disasters. He made it very clear how we build up heavenly treasures: acts of mercy motivated by unconditional love that demonstrate faith in God, especially the ones that no one gives you any credit for and have no benefit to yourself. Jesus locates our hearts by where we are building up our treasure: if we’re building up treasures in heaven, then our heart is with Jesus. As a self-evaluation exercise, locating our treasure reveals how much more we need to grow into Christ. How willing am I to share my treasures with others? To dedicate my treasures to God’s mission? Which of my treasures am I not able to trust God to look after? What has God given me that I don’t even consider “treasure”? The third “T” of stewardship constantly pushes us away from isolated individualized ownership into compassionate committed management for the common good which isn’t completed until we belong fully to Christ in the new creation.

My reflections on the third “T” of stewardship suggested another possibility for the “4th T:” Par-T! The pandemic has cast another shadow over the idea of having a party: every party can become a super spreader event with many people getting sick and people who weren’t any where near the party even dying. This “4th T” in Stewardship shows the whole world what the greatest treasure really is: our relationships with one another, our concern for one another, the joy we share when we can be together in freedom and peace. That’s the goal of good stewardship of all our lesser treasures: the endless party of eternal joy in the resurrection. Isn’t that what the whole world wants—but without Christ? With Christ, we receive little tastes of it in Holy Communion and the forgiven fellowship of the Church and the kinds of par-Ties that these spiritual realities shape and inspire. The 4th T in Stewardship does locate our hearts, doesn’t it? What party we are at says something about the state of our hearts and how we are doing as stewards of the time, talent, and treasure we have received from God.

Thank you God, for all the treasures you have given me that fill my heart with joy. Help me give them all to you, that where my treasures are my heart may be also.