

“Entrusted With *The Message*” 9/15-16/07 6 p.m.; 9 & 10:45 a.m.
1 Corinthians 4:1-2

First message in the series, “The Stewardship of The Message”

INTRODUCTION

Every year at this time we have what we call a “stewardship focus.” “Stewardship” simply means “management.”

God has entrusted to us various things to us in this life that He calls us to manage.

This is a major theme in the Bible. Jesus told a lot of stories about servants managing their master’s assets as an illustration of what the Kingdom of God is like.

Let’s look for a second at one example, from Matthew 25:14-30. This is a pattern for God’s expectations for management, whatever it is He entrusts to us:

1. The master entrusted **HIS** money to his servants.
2. Each servant was given a different amount of money, “**each according to his ability.**”
3. The expectation of the servants is to invest and grow their master’s money.
4. Each servant is held accountable for how he managed what he was given.

Through the rest of September and October, we’re going to look at another kind of trust the Lord has given to us ... as individuals and as a congregation: God has entrusted to us *The Message* about Jesus Christ. It is called “**the Gospel**” or “**the good news.**”

It is the message that Jesus can reunite us with God, in a relationship that God wanted to have with us from the beginning of creation.

So, over the next several weeks we are going to look at various dimensions of how God expects us to manage the life-changing message He has entrusted to us, so we can invest it in people’s lives.

Let’s open to 1 Corinthians 4:1 (**PAGE** 1775)

1 Corinthians 4:1-2 “**So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God.**

2 Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”

To faithfully manage The Message, you must...

I. Accept God's Calling On Your Life (1 Corinthians 4:1-2)

A. Servant of Christ (v. 1)

servant: “an assistant who carries out the will of another” (TDNT)

The typical word for “servant,” “*diakonos*” simply describes anyone who serves another person.

This word emphasizes that the servant is carrying out the will of another, in this case, Jesus Christ.

of Christ: He is Lord

Therefore, God's calling on my life is that I serve Jesus Christ.

I am not here to do my will, but His.

I am not here to be self-serving, but to serve Christ.

B. Manager (v. 2)

“those who have been given a trust” = “*manager*” (one word in the Greek language; seven in English)

lit. “*It is required that managers be found faithful.*”

Remember Matthew 25? Two servants were faithful, one was not.

We are **servants** of Jesus Christ, who **manage** what He entrusts to us.

Did you know that this is God's calling on your life?

Have you accepted His calling?

“Lord Jesus, I accept Your calling.”

To faithfully manage The Message, you must ...

I. Accept God's Calling On Your Life

To faithfully manage The Message, you must ...

II. Know The Message (v. 1b)

v. 1b: **"... entrusted with the secret things of God."**

This can be a bit confusing ... **"the secret things of God."**

This is a continuation of what is written in chapter 3.

"The secret things of God" is The Message about Jesus. God kept it a secret until Jesus came, died and was raised from death.

Then He allowed the apostles to "see" this "secret" on the pages of the OT Scriptures. So, they are revealing the secret of God, that Jesus is Messiah, that He offers a relationship with God to *every* person, Jew or not through faith in Jesus Christ.

More specifically, The Message about Jesus involves:

1 Corinthians 15:3-5: death, burial, resurrection of Jesus; witnesses to resurrection.

Romans 1:16: The message about Jesus is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes.

Ephesians 2:8-9: by God's grace a person is saved from the penalty of sin, not by their good works.

John 17:3 **"Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom You have sent."**

Eternal life, salvation are not "things" any more than marriage is a "thing."

Eternal life is a forever *relationship* ... knowing God, knowing Jesus Christ, through believing what He has said, and entrusting our lives to Him;

just as marriage is a relationship.

And this Message about Jesus has been entrusted to every child of God.

We have been entrusted with a message that has the power to forgive all sins and remove all guilt.

We have been entrusted with a message that sets people free from trying to earn God's approval or forgiveness through their own efforts.

We have been entrusted with a message that allows a person to enter into a relationship with God that is for now and forever.

That is the message that God has entrusted to us. So, we must know this *Message*.

To faithfully manage The Message, you must ...

III. Understand What God Expects (1 Corinthians 4:2)

“Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful.”

lit. “*Now it is required that managers must prove faithful.*”

So, what does it mean to be a **faithful manager of *The Message***?

A. Invest *The Message*

Ephesians 3:2 “**Surely you have heard about the administration (management) of God's grace (*The Message*) that was given to me for you.**”

“... **given to me for you** ...” (Ephesians 3:2)

Plant, water, cultivate ... God causes the growth.

Just as a farmer puts grains of seed corn in the ground, and each individual seed results in a corn stalk that has many ears of corn, and each ear has many kernels of corn,

So Jesus calls us to manage the Message by planting it in the hearts and minds of individuals.

The more we sow, the bigger the crop, the less we sow, the smaller the crop.

Invest The Message in people's lives.

B. Invest Your Life

1 Thessalonians 2:8 “**We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the Gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us.”**

They didn’t just share the message and run, they stayed and served the people they planted in ...

C. Adapt to People

1 Corinthians 9:19-22 “**Though I am free and belong to no man, I make myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible.**

20 To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law.

21 To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law.

22 To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.”

I serve people by meeting them where they are; adapting to them, so that I can see the best way to plant The Message about Jesus in their lives.

D. Know the tools of your trade (2 Timothy 2:15)

2 Timothy 2:15 “**Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the Word of truth.”**

- A **lifeguard’s** trade is to save lives.

He has been equipped with training and with the tools of his trade (rope, pole, life preserver, skills in reaching a drowning person)

- A **police officer’s** trade is to protect people.

He has been equipped with training and with the tools of his trade. (pepper spray, night stick, handcuffs, pistol, etc.)

- A **surgeon's** trade is to open up someone's body to try to bring healing.

He has been equipped with training and with the tools of his trade.
(scalpel)

A **pharmacist's** trade is to administer the proper medication in the proper amounts with accurate instructions on the label, and give the patient needed information.

He has been equipped with training and with the tools of his trade.
(bottles, labels, computers, reference books)

A key part of the **Christian's** trade is to invest/plant *The Message* about Jesus in people's lives.

He has been equipped with *The Message* and with the Holy Spirit. (*have you taken training?*)

Do you know the tools of this very important part of your trade?

Share testimony

Share Gospel

Lead someone to Jesus

Can you use these tools as a workman who does not need to be ashamed? Can you take these tools and lead someone to Christ?

CONCLUSION

Starting next week, we're going to hit six themes from Acts that explain how to be on-target managers of *The Message* ... managing in such a way that fruit will result ... people will come to know Jesus as you are a capable manager of this Message that God has entrusted to you.

"Father, thank You for entrusting The Message about Jesus to me. It is an honor! With Your help, I will invest it in others who need You. In Jesus' Name, Amen."