

SERMON - THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 14 DECEMBER 2008  
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

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***1 Cor. 4:1-2 (KJV)***

*Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. <sup>2</sup>Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*

You and I, as Christians, are by the fact that we are Christians, are ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. And because we are both ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God, we are to be faithful Christians.

What are we talking about when we are admonished to faithful, faithful followers of Christ and what are we talking about when it is said that we are ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Let us start with the part where we are called to be ministers and stewards.

What is a minister? What is a steward?

Do you automatically think of a priest, a parson or a pastor when you hear the word minister? Sure we are ministers, ordained as ministers of the Gospel but you, all of you out there are ministers as well.

Minister as it is used in today's Epistle comes from a Greek word which means "to row" to be an "under-rower" to be a worker servant. In other words, we are to be worker servants of Christ. We are to be the hands and feet, to be the voice and the presence for Christ to the world. It means that everyone of us here are expected to give our utmost effort in the service of Christ in the work of spreading the Gospel.

To be a steward of the mysteries of God as Paul uses the term in today's Epistle is to hold on to the teachings of the Gospel and to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ with our actions, with the way we live our lives as followers of Christ.

Each one of us here today, as well as those that are not today for whatever reason that they might have, are supposed to give our all in the service of Christ. We are not being faithful ministers of Christ nor are we being faithful stewards of the mysteries of God when we put ourselves ahead of Jesus as an example when we come to church when we feel like it, when it is convenient for us, when we don't have anything else to do.

I know there are times when we are on vacation or sick or even maybe having to work that it is not possible for us to be here on Sunday morning. But otherwise we are supposed to be here. If we cannot make it for a good reason we should try to make it up on Wednesday evening or Thursday noon. If we are on vacation, we should find a church to attend.

Out of the nearly sixty some odd persons we have on our church register we only have an average attendance of thirty-four on Sundays and our weekday services rarely have more than a handful. On most Wednesday evenings and on Thursday you can count those that attend on the fingers of one hand.

That is not being faithful, that is not being a faithful ministers of Christ nor faithful stewards of the Gospel.

This is just one small thing that we can do, support the parish with our attendance.

In the parable of the talents we hear **Matthew 25:21 (KJV)** *His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.*

Here at St. John's we all are given the task to be good and faithful ministers and stewards, not just the clergy. There are many ministries, many tasks that need to be done but only a handful of us here actually pitch in and help. Just look at the back of the bulletin and see how often the same names are listed in the parish ministries.

It is your parish, it is God's parish, it is our job here at St. John's to spread the Gospel to the community, to the unchurched, to those who have fallen away. It is a task that requires all of us using our God-given and unique talents to accomplish, each of us, not just a few of us.

If we are not faithful in our assigned tasks as ministers of Christ and as stewards of the mysteries of God, we all better remember the end of the parable of the talents **Matthew 25:26 (KJV)** *His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed:* **Matthew 25:28-30 (KJV)** *Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. <sup>29</sup>For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. <sup>30</sup>And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Jesus is coming back. Judgment Day is coming. The choice is yours.

Amen.