

The Nature God Has Given Us

Series: Render to God

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Text: Luke 20: 20 Keeping a close watch on him, they sent spies, who pretended to be sincere. They hoped to catch Jesus in something he said, so that they might hand him over to the power and authority of the governor. 21 So the spies questioned him: "Teacher, we know that you speak and teach what is right, and that you do not show partiality but teach the way of God in accordance with the truth. 22 Is it right for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 23 He saw through their duplicity and said to them, 24 "Show me a denarius. Whose image and inscription are on it?" "Caesar's," they replied. 25 He said to them, "Then give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's." 26 They were unable to trap him in what he had said there in public. And astonished by his answer, they became silent.

Last week we looked at giving back to God the people He has given us in our lives, making sure we are good stewards, returning them to Him in better shape than when they were given to us.

This week we are looking for things pertaining to the nature of God He gives to us.

Gen.1: 26 Then God said, "Let us make mankind **in our image, in our likeness**, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." 27 So God created mankind **in his own image, in the image of God he created them**; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Both the character of God and the ability of man to respond to the nature of God is given to each person. What will we do with that? This goes deeper than what God teaches us (we will explore that next week). This is about who we were made to be, our identity and our purpose. Here is what I found in Romans-Philippians:

God's Will

Rom.1:10, 10 in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.

1 Cor.1:1, 1 Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes,

2 Cor.8:5, 5 And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us.

God's volition is part of His nature. He has a good, pleasing, and perfect will, and He desires that this will be expressed in our lives. When we ignore it in whole or in part we are poor stewards of His will. One way for others to know God's will is to see it lived out in our lives.

God's Power

1 Cor.1:23-24, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1 Cor.2:4-5, 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power.

2 Cor.6:4, 7 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God;

2 Cor.10:4, 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

God's power is given to us to use. When we deny the power of the cross, the power of God for daily living, and the power to fight our battles we are not giving back to God what He has given us. We are poor stewards of His power.

God's Name

Rom.2:4, 24 As it is written: "God's name is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

Phil.2: 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The name of Jesus has been given to each of us so that we can know the one who is our authority. When we fail to honor His name, to confess His name, and to bow before Him we are not good stewards.

God's Righteousness

Rom.3: 21 But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. 22 This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— 26 he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

When we live by our own righteousness or take advantage of the righteousness of God by continuing to sin we are not good stewards of His righteousness. Our job is to live righteously so people can see God's righteousness in us.

God's Grace

Rom.5: 15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many!

Rom.6: 1 What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? 2 By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer?

When we exploit the grace of God in order to do what we want, we are not good stewards of His grace. Grace that becomes license is not grace.

God's Glory

Rom.1: 21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

The glory of God is to be expressed in our lives. When we sin we fall from that glory but when we turn to the Lord the glory is restored. Turning back to idols or lesser things diminishes His glory in our lives and makes us poor stewards.

God's Love

Rom.5: 5 And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

When we are unloving to others we are poor stewards of the love He has given us.

God's Kindness

Rom.2: 4 Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance?

When we receive the kindness of God but it does not lead us to repentance, we are poor stewards of this kindness.

God's Mercy

Rom.12: 1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

When we ignore God's mercy and fail to offer ourselves as sacrifices to Him we are not good stewards.

God's Wisdom

! Cor.1: 21 For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 22 Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom, 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 24 but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

When we live foolish lives we do not display the wisdom of God, and we are poor stewards.

God's Peace

Phil.4:6-7, 6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

When Christians worry and are constantly stressed out they do not display the peace of God, and are not good stewards of His nature.

O To Be Like Thee

O to be like Thee! blessed Redeemer;
This is my constant longing and prayer;
Gladly I'll forfeit all of earth's treasures,
Jesus, Thy perfect likeness to wear.

O to be like Thee! O to be like Thee!
Blessed Redeemer, pure as Thou art;
Come in Thy sweetness, come in Thy fullness;
Stamp Thine own image deep on my heart.

2

O to be like Thee! full of compassion,
Loving, forgiving, tender and kind,
Helping the helpless, cheering the fainting,
Seeking the wand'ring sinners to find.

3

O to be like Thee! lowly in spirit,
Holy and harmless, patient and brave;
Meekly enduring cruel reproaches,
Willing to suffer, others to save.

4

O to be like Thee! Lord, I am coming,
Now to receive th' anointing divine;
All that I am and have I am bringing;
Lord, from this moment all shall be Thine.

5

O to be like Thee! While I am pleading

Pour out Thy Spirit, fill with Thy love.
Make me a temple meet for Thy dwelling,
Fit for a life which Thou wouldst approve.