

**McCabe United Methodist Church**  
**A Spirit of Stewardship**  
**II Corinthians 9:6-15 \* Matthew 10:40-42: October 27, 2013**  
**Pastor Rick Fossum**

Did you ever hear the story of Oseola McCarty, a Mississippi house cleaner who dropped out of school in the sixth grade? Her story was in the *Guidepost* magazine several years ago. Toward the end of her life, she gave \$150,000 to the University of Southern Mississippi for scholarships! She shocked everyone with the gift. Who knew she had saved up that much money?

Miss McCarty never had much of an education, but that didn't stop her from wanting others to have one. For her, this was good stewardship. When people found out about her gift, they would ask her, **"Miss McCarty, why didn't you spend the money on yourself?"**

Her answer, with a smile, was always the same: **"Thanks to the good Lord, I am spending it on myself. I'm helping people."**

This is stewardship. It's being thankful for what we have by giving back to God and God's created world. Stewardship is helping others as we help ourselves. It's taking care of the here and now, but it's also taking care of our future.

This is the third and last stewardship message in our stewardship campaign. Thank you for your patience during these past three weeks. Stewardship, especially stewardship of our money, is not the most pleasant subject to talk about. Yet, how we use our resources is an important part of our faith.

The stewardship of money was a common topic for Jesus. If you look in your Bibles and do a little reading and studying, you will find that one-sixth of Jesus' words have to do with money. The stewardship of money. The only subject he talked about more was the kingdom of God.

Listen to our passage from Matthew. This is from the *Message* translation: *"If you don't go all the way with me, through thick and thin, you don't deserve me. If your first concern is to look after yourself, you'll never find yourself. But if you forget about yourself and look to me, you'll find both yourself and me."* -Matt 10:38-39 (MSG)

Paul wasn't shy when it came to talking about money either. *"Remember: A stingy planter gets a stingy crop; a lavish planter gets a lavish crop. I want each of you to take plenty of time to think it over, and make up your own mind what you will give. That will protect you against sob stories and arm-twisting. God loves it when the*

Stewardship! It's biblical.

I had a dream the other night. It was pretty wild. Do you want to hear it?

I dreamed I was preaching. It was a consecration message like today. In my dream, the words just came to me all at once. There I was, in my dream, preaching like I had never preached before. I was on fire. Those of you who normally sleep during my messages, and you know who you are, were wide awake. And those of you who normally take bathroom breaks during this time, you didn't! Even the kids were listening! It was awesome!

I preached about stewardship. I said **“God has blessed us. We are a blessed people!”** I challenged us to think about all that we have and all the good we could do for God if we pooled our time and talents and money together.

And do you know what? In my dream, before I was finished preaching, people, you people, started throwing money at me and checks and credit cards. You threw *‘Estimate of Giving’* cards at me. The floor was covered. I was ankle deep in cash. You were weeping and crying for joy. You were praising God and singing alleluia!

And then you started shouting things at me. Some of you said, **“Rick, we're going to start inviting our friends and neighbors to join us at McCabe.”** Others of you said, **“We're going to join the choir.”** Others said, **“We're going to teach Sunday School, serve on the Finance Committee, help out in the kitchen and be nice to the grumpy people.”** Still others said, **“We're going to start study groups and support groups, fun groups and work groups.”** A young couple said, **“We're going off to seminary to be pastors.”**

And then my dream fast-forwarded a couple of years. The year was 2016 and I looked around at our church and I saw all four of our worship services filled with people. *Filled!* In fact, there was a line of people waiting to get in. I saw our children hanging from the balconies . . . we had grown balconies in my dream! Our choir had grown to over a 100 members. I saw happy faces and hope-filled faces and nice faces. I saw old men talking to young men and older women helping younger women with their babies.

And then our bishop came to McCabe and he was happy. He said he had never seen a church like ours. He ordered all the other churches in the conference to come to Bismarck and learn from us. **“Send teams of people,”** he ordered all across the conference. **“Take notes, ask questions and learn from the people of McCabe.”**

And then, and you won't believe this part, and then I heard the voice of God. God was here. God said, "**Way to go, McCabe! Who loves you baby?**" God was pretty excited. "**I'm proud of you and the church you're becoming. Keep up the good work,**" God said. "**Keep ministering in my name! I am so totally with you.**"

And then . . . and then, I woke up and rolled over and went back to sleep. Pretty wild, huh?

It doesn't hurt to dream. I don't know what McCabe will look like next year. No one does. Actually, it's hard to predict what we'll look like next week or next month.

But I do know this, whatever good happens in our church; whatever progress we make in regards to church programs, ministries and missions; whatever spirit, passion and joy, we feel in our worship services; whatever growth we have in terms of church attendance or membership or giving will depend almost entirely on YOU!

YOU and YOU alone. It's not preaching that grows churches. It's not music that grows churches. It's not Sunday Schools that grow churches. It's YOU. It's YOU supporting this church with YOUR time and talents and money.

Churches, like most everything else in the world, don't grow bigger or better through osmosis. It takes people working and planning and dreaming together. It takes people pooling their different and varied gifts and talents to keep us marching toward the church we're meant to be.

The future of McCabe is in our hands. What kind of church we become will depend on what kind of stewards we are today.

In a little while, I'm going to ask you to come forward for communion. But first, let's have a moment or two of silence. Use this silent time to pray about McCabe and not just about our finances. Pray about the church we're becoming and ask yourself, "**how can YOU help?**"

Finally, you'll be invited to come forward for communion. Bring your '*Estimate of Giving*' cards with you and place them in the box.

By the way, if you're not in the habit of pledging, simply sign your name on the card and write down zero or NP for '*no pledge*.' Or, if you're not happy with McCabe, with our staff or programs or me, don't pledge anything. If you can't be a cheerful giver, than don't be one at all.

On behalf of McCabe, thank you for your patience during this Stewardship

Campaign and thank you for your continued and generous support of this great and wonderful church.

Please, let's pray silently.

*(Silence - Consecrate Communion - Invite people to come forward)*