



Pastor Sorensen's May First-of-the-Month Letter

He is risen!

This month I want to talk about money, values, and pastoral care. In other words, I am going to talk about STEWARDSHIP.

To be sure, not everyone first associates 'pastoral care' with stewardship. But our relationship with our money, stuff, and things has a profound impact on our relationship with our family, friends, self, and God. Tending those relationships to be healthy, faithful, and thriving is a profound pastoral concern. So, you see, stewardship is a pastoral care concern.

During this month of May, I will be doing a lot of talking and preaching about Stewardship. And let me be perfectly clear, my concern in all of these conversations and sermons about stewardship is not about funding a church budget. I want everyone to be able to align their stated values with their operative values. I want everyone to develop healthy relationships with money and not be a servant to their money.

Each and every one of us is bombarded with hundreds of messages everyday telling us that we are not fulfilled, we are not happy, we are not good enough, valuable enough, important, if we don't purchase the right...fill in the gap. Car. Toothpaste. Beer. Hair care product. Soda. Pain reliever. Use the right investment manager. Fly the right airline. Vacation here. We are told our life is the accumulation of possessions.

This is very much a faith issue, and a pastoral care issue. With so much constant pressure to be defined by what we have or don't have, it is a small step to the mistaken position that *some* people are more important, more valuable than other people. Titles, wealth, or fame does not make one more valuable, or less valuable. Our faith teaches us that all peoples, everyone, *everyONE*, is of infinite worth as a precious and loved child of God...the *one* for whom Jesus died.

This is why I think we need to explore deeply our relationship with money in an honest way. Money can be seductive, and we can end up serving it, rather than money serving us.

I would have hoped that by the time I reached this spry age of 67, I would have had my relationship with money and values always in line. But no. I struggle like everyone else. So, I lean into faith where I discover my identity is as a child of God, and not some identity label that comes with the clothes I wear or the phone I use.

What I have discovered over the years is that generous people are the happiest people I know. And there is a simple reason for this. Generous people control their money and are not controlled by their money. And to be clear, generosity has nothing to do with any sort of socio-economic strata. If I had more time and space, I could tell you about the overwhelming generosity I have experienced from what the world would call subsistence farmers in rural Rwanda. I have also witnessed generosity from those at the other end of the economic spectrum. This is to say, income level has *nothing* to do with generosity.

Generosity is a matter of faith, values, a healthy relationship with money, and a deep faith in Jesus.

At the end of May, on Sunday, May 25, I am going to invite everyone who is part of the Our Savior's Lutheran Church community to live this generous life. I am boldly asking everyone to prayerfully make a financial commitment to the life, mission, and ministry of Our Savior's. For the sake of your walk as a disciple of Jesus, for the sake of you being in command of your money rather than your money in command of you...act in a way that brings you great joy.

Years ago, during a capital campaign at a previous congregation I served, a member half-jokingly asked me if they were 'supposed to give until it hurt.' I think they were surprised by my serious reply. 'No.' I said. 'I want you to give until it brings you joy.'

May we be bearers of Easter joy.
Pastor Scot





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