

**“Stewardship: Discover This Word and Love It!”**  
**“Stewardship of the Earth”**  
**Psalm 8**

Dr. J. Howard Olds  
October 21, 2007

When God made you and God made me,  
He gave us a wonderful place to be.  
We have woods and hills and waterfalls;  
We have varieties of creatures, great and small.  
When God made you and God made me,  
He gave us an awesome responsibility.

There is a great political debate waging in our world concerning global warming. Some affirm it and others deny it. Meanwhile, the rest of us sweat our way through one of the hottest, driest summers in history, but I have not come to preach about an inconvenient truth.

**I HAVE COME TO DECLARE AN ABSOLUTE TRUTH, AN UNDEBATABLE FACT, AN EVERLASTING REALITY**

*“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it”*  
(Psalm 24:1).

Until this sovereign truth becomes an abiding conviction, we are lost in endless debate and ultimate destruction. Of course, not everybody agrees.

Who says the Earth is the Lord’s? It’s my land, it’s my house, it’s my car, it’s my investments; I will do with them as I please. We become so engrossed in our appointments, our accomplishments, our accolades, our assessments that we have little time to consider alternatives.

Jesus told a sobering parable about such self-possessed persons. We call it the parable of the rich fool. *“The ground of a certain rich man produced much.”* The bountiful harvest presented a perplexing problem. *“What shall I do? Where can I store my crops?”* The self-centeredness of this successful farmer is quickly evident. *“Then he said, ‘This is what I will do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and goods.’ I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink, and be merry.’”* I, me, myself, - 15 times in 2 verses.

God called the man a fool. Not a robber, not a thief, not an adulterer or an abuser, not a liar, certainly not lazy, but a fool - a nitwit, a dumbbell, a crackpot, a bonehead.

Somebody that ought to have known better. *“For this very night your life is demanded from you.”* Smart people remember who owns the place.

Another group who ignores the Lord’s ownership of the Earth are those who say, “Who Cares?” If the Earth is the Lord’s then let him worry about it. Let God take care of it. He’s probably going to destroy it anyway, so why bother?

This thought is prevalent among conservative Christians. If this world is not our home, then why should we care what happens to the Earth? If we plan to fly away, why be concerned with what’s left behind? If it’s just a matter of time until the world self-destructs, why should we interfere with this final judgment?

The Bible, however, never teaches such deism. God so loved the world that he gave his only Son. Consider the lilies of the field and the birds of the air. God cares for each one of them. According to Job, even the whales were made to praise God.

When will we come to grip with this Absolute Truth? *The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it.* We are not owners, we are renters. We are not kings, we are stewards. We are not the masters of our fate and the captains of our souls. The very air we breathe is a gift of God.

#### **AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY**

*“You have given them dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under their feet”* (Psalm 8:6).

For God has given us dominion over the works of God’s hands, and put all things under our feet. By dominion the Bible means steward, manager, care-taker, gardener.

We are CO-CREATORS with God. *“Be fruitful and multiply”* (Genesis 1:28). Every time I visit a newborn, I say a prayer of thanksgiving. “Dear God, thank you for allowing these parents to participate with you in the glorious wonder of creating a life.”

Several years ago, when I underwent a stem-cell transplant, I got the doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners, and social workers all in my room for a prayer meeting. I said, “Dear God, we thank you for the wisdom and compassion of these people who have developed and now administer this medicine to my sick body. We praise you for their commitment to health and their service to me. Now, let this medicine go to work in this feeble body. Amen.”

Every time I see a beautiful painting, a remarkable building, a piece of sculpture bringing praise to God, my soul leaps for joy.

As one of our creeds so eloquently states, “We are not alone, we live in God’s world. We believe in God, who has created and is creating.”

We are CARETAKERS “*The flocks and herds, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea*” (Psalm 8:7).

During WWII patriotic Americans recycled tin cans and old tires for the war effort. People of that great generation valued hard work, modest consumption, consistent giving, and frugal spending. They lived by a simple motto: “Buy what you need and make it last as long as you can.”

What has happened to that great American Spirit? Have we the desire to leave the Earth in better shape than we found it? Are we willing to put in more than we take out? Are we willing to do little things for the good of all?

- Change our light bulbs
- Recycle our plastic and paper
- Change our thermostats a degree or two
- Turn off the lights
- Drive fuel efficient cars
- Plant more trees

I believe Americans want to do better. In recent decades, great strides have been made toward reducing the pollution of our air and water. Creeks and rivers once filled with debris now flow with fresh streams of fish and wildlife.

Concerned leaders came together some years ago to stop the arms race, possibly avoiding a nuclear holocaust. Even the Berlin Wall came tumbling down. Let us not lessen that resolve.

To think that in the last 100 years, women got the right to vote and blacks got the right to eat at lunch counters, and a man walked on the moon, speaks volumes to our capabilities under God, to bring liberty and justice for all.

So let us not relent on this issue of global warming, or the destruction of the rain forest, or the depletion of human worth through the trafficking of drugs. We can do better, and we must do better for the glory of God and the good of people.

We are called to CELEBRATE and WORSHIP the God of all creation. “*O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth.*” (Psalm 8:9)

When through the woods and forest glades and wander,  
And hear the birds sing sweetly in the trees;  
When I look down, from lofty mountain grandeur  
And hear the brook, and feel the gentle breeze;

Then my soul begins to sing, How Great Thou Art.

This is my Father's world, and to my listening ears  
All nature sings, and round me rings the music of the spheres.  
This is my Father's world: he shines in all that's fair;  
In the rustling grass I hear him pass; He speaks to me everywhere.  
Then my soul begins to sing, How Great Thou Art.

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath;  
And when my voice is lost in death,  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers.  
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,  
While life, and thought, and being last,  
Or immortality endures.  
Then my soul begins to sing How Great Thou Art.