

A sermon “Stewardship 4: Exercising Faithful Stewardship: Authority as Service”  
From Genesis 1:28 and 2:5-8  
By Rev. Peter Blank  
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### **Introduction – From Power to Care**

The phrase “have dominion” makes many of us uneasy. [pause]  
It sounds like domination — like power misused or authority gone wrong.

But in Genesis, God’s command to have dominion isn’t about exploitation. It’s about faithful stewardship — caring for creation as God would, with justice, mercy, and love.

And this week, on Stewardship Commitment Sunday, we hear the word stewardship and often think, “Oh, this is about money.” [pause, gentle smile]  
And yes, part of it is. But it’s much, much more than that.

Stewardship is about how we use everything God has entrusted to us: our time, our abilities, our relationships, our influence, and our care for creation.

Money is one piece of a much larger calling — the calling to practice faithful stewardship: not about control, but about care; not about ownership, but about partnership with God in tending what God loves.

### **I. Stewardship Misunderstood – Power Gone Wrong**

We’ve all seen what happens when authority or resources are misused.  
History is full of examples — kings who conquer, corporations that exploit, leaders who abuse.  
Even in our own lives, we’ve seen how power can hurt when it’s used selfishly — a boss who belittles, a system that oppresses, a relationship that manipulates.

That’s not God’s vision.

Scripture paints a very different picture.  
Psalm 72 describes a ruler who “defends the cause of the poor” and “delivers the needy.”  
And Jesus says, “Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant.”

Faithful stewardship in God’s design is never about control. It’s about compassion — power used to lift others up.

### **II. Faithful Stewardship – Power Used for Good**

To be a faithful steward is to accept responsibility for the sake of others.

Parents do this when they guide their children with patience and love.  
Teachers do it when they draw out the best in their students.  
Leaders do it when they serve with integrity rather than ego.

And the church does it when it uses its gifts — financial and otherwise — for healing, hospitality, and hope.

Every act of stewardship — every pledge, every volunteer hour, every prayer — says: These resources will not control us. We will use them for the work of God's kingdom.

That's faithful stewardship in action — responsibility transformed into love.

### **III. Local Responsibility – Stewardship at Work Among Us**

We see this kind of stewardship all around us in our community.

When volunteers raise walls with Habitat for Humanity — that's faithful stewardship.

When someone stocks shelves at the food pantry, teaches Sunday School, or cooks a meal for a neighbor — that's faithful stewardship.

When a teacher stays late to help a student, or a member quietly sets up chairs for worship, or a leader steps forward to guide a project with humility — that's faithful stewardship too.

It's not flashy. It's not forceful. It's faithful.

Faithful stewardship says: This is mine to care for. I will take responsibility.

And that's what your commitment today means.

You're saying, "God, I will tend the piece of your creation you've entrusted to me — my home, my work, my neighborhood, my church."

### **IV. Christ the Servant King – The Model of Faithful Stewardship**

And who shows us this better than Jesus?

"All authority in heaven and on earth," Scripture says, "was given to him."

But what does he do with it? [pause]

He kneels and washes feet.

He touches the untouchable.

He forgives the unforgivable.

He carries a cross.

Jesus reigns not from a throne of gold but from a tree of suffering. His crown is made of thorns. His power is love poured out.

That is faithful stewardship — authority expressed through service, strength revealed in humility.

### **Conclusion – Our Commitment of Care**

So today, as we make our commitments, remember: stewardship is about money — but it's also about far more than money.

It's about everything God has placed in our care.

Our pledges are symbols of trust — trust that God has given us real responsibility and invites us to use it for good.

So come forward today with joy.  
Let us practice faithful stewardship not by grasping but by giving.  
Not by ruling but by serving.

Let us offer our gifts, our time, and our lives to the Servant King who reigns forever.

Amen.

#### AFFIRMATION OF FAITH / REMEMBER

The story of God calls us to remember—

**that creation was made good,  
and Sabbath is necessary.**

The story of God calls us to remember—

**that we belong to one another,  
for we are bone of bone and flesh of flesh.**

The story of God calls us to remember—

**that reconciliation between siblings is holy,  
and slavery of any kind is evil.**

The story of God calls us to remember—

**that the wilderness is real,  
and that God will be with us—  
raining down manna and speaking in a still, small voice.**

The story of God calls us to remember—

**that love looks like healing the sick,  
eating with the outcast,  
making room for the children,  
and seeing the unseen.**

The story of God calls us to remember—

**because if we forget,  
we risk making God, love,  
and reconciliation small.**

So as we remember, we declare—

**we believe in a God who made all things good,  
who stands with the suffering,  
walks with us in the wilderness,  
sees the overlooked,**

So as we remember, we declare—

**God loves with an untamed heart,  
and makes room for all at the table.  
Amen.**