



## **Pentecost 18**

**October 12, 2025 (STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY)  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church, Portland, OR**

**THE LESSONS: 2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c;  
Psalm 111; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke  
17:11-19**

**THE SERMON: “When We’re Happy...  
We’re Healthy...”**

**Grace and Peace to you in the NAME of GOD: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I have to admit that writing this week’s sermon has really been a challenge. Because today is Stewardship Sunday, I’m supposed to preach about stewardship. How can I do that when the First Lesson and the Gospel are about healing? What does healing have to do with stewardship? But, because most people think stewardship is about money, I thought about following the advice of a joke of a preacher giving his congregation the opportunity to decide how long his sermon would be. But, in order to do that, I’d have to change the service. Then, I remembered that old joke about how many Lutherans it would take to change a lightbulb; NONE because Lutherans don’t like change. But, I’m rambling and speaking incoherently like some of our government officials have been doing. But, to get back to the point, In order to allow you to decide how long my sermon would be, according to the joke, I’d have to move the offering to before the sermon and I’d have to prepare three different sermons. According to the joke, if the offering was over a \$1000, I’d give you a ten-minute sermon; if it was over \$500, you’d get a fifteen-minute sermon; but, if it was less than \$250, I’d preach for over an hour. But, in order to have the Temple Talk we heard earlier, the Stewardship Committee had asked me to keep my sermon short; so, I’m giving you the \$1000 sermon no matter what the offering is. But, what should I preach: about the healings in our lessons or about our stewardship of our time, our talents, and our financial responsibilities? What would you preach about?

## **2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c**

I'm going to "cop out" and preach about neither. Our first lesson tells us that a great Aramean general named Naaman had leprosy and, so, a Jewish slave girl told Naaman's wife that there was a prophet in Israel who could heal him. So, Naaman went to Israel with a huge entourage and all dressed up in his fancy robes and came to the prophet Elisha's door. But, Elisha didn't even go out to meet the Naaman; instead, he sent his servant to tell Naaman to go to the Jordan and wash himself seven times. What an outrage! Elisha didn't even have the courtesy to greet the great general in person and, in his outrage, Naaman argued that the rivers in Aramea were as good as any river in Israel. But, Naaman's servants told him that if Elisha had told him to do something difficult, wouldn't he do that? So, Naaman went to the Jordan and washed himself seven times and what happened? He was healed! But, what if Naaman hadn't listened to the slave girl and his servants? This made me wonder that maybe one of the pillars of stewardship is listening. What did you hear from our Temple Talks? Were you a good steward so that you heard what was being shared? And, are you a good steward, a caretaker and carryout what you hear in church? Like Naaman's servants suggested, if God would do something like letting you win the Oregon Lottery, wouldn't you do what God asked you to do? But, all God is asking is what the prophet Micah called us to do: to act justly and to **love mercy** and to walk humbly with your God.

## **Luke 17:11-19**

But, Luke's gospel isn't really about listening or any other kind of stewardship, is it? It's just a healing story about ten men who had leprosy like Naaman and called out to Jesus, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!" Like Elisha, Jesus doesn't issue any wild, extraordinary demands but, simply says, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And, Luke tells us, "And as they went, they were made clean." Like Naaman, they listened and they were healed. But, as we read on, we learn that there's another dimension to stewardship beyond listening and following through, because Luke tells us, "Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice. He prostrated himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him. And he

was a Samaritan.” So, besides listening as stewardship, our gospel tells us that being thankful is another dimension of giving back to God. For what can you thank God, not just on Stewardship Sunday but every day? And, if we listen to God’s call to love God and love our neighbor, how can we not thank God for God’s love for us, this church, our friends, and our families. And, if we listen and really think about what God has done for us when we hear the words, “This is my Body; this is my Blood,” we might thank God for for loving us so much. So, our lessons tell us that stewardship is about listening and thanking God.

## **2 Timothy 2:8-15**

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul gives us a third dimension of stewardship, “Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead... Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect... If we have died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him; if we deny him, he will also deny us; if we are faithless, he remains faithful...” Remember that Jesus is faithful. No matter what hardship or challenge you are facing, God in Christ is faithful. Jesus may not take away your problems but he does promise that he will send a Comforter and a Helper so you can persevere and endure every challenge that life throws your way. The Bible tells us that we are never alone. Remember that God is with us. Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead so you can be raised up from any obstacle or problem you’re facing. Stewardship is listening to God, thanking God, and remembering what God in Christ did for us on the cross.

## **Psalm 111, The Call and the Challenge**

Our psalm pretty much sums up what stewardship is. When we listen, our stewardship is hearing what God is telling us, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding.” The Psalm also reminds us to thank God, “Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.” And, the Psalm teaches us to remember all that God is doing in our lives, “Great are the works of the Lord... Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever... the Lord is gracious and merciful. He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant. He has shown his people the power of his works... He sent redemption to his

people; he has commanded his covenant forever....” We know how God had sent redemption to us. God loved us so much that God allowed His one and only Son to be God’s lamb to take away the sins of all humanity, once and for all. And, so, on this Stewardship Sunday and every Sunday, no, every day, stewardship is more than how much we can give to keep St. Timothy going. Our stewardship is listening to hear to what God the Holy Spirit is calling us. Our stewardship is thanking God for what we have: food, clothing, a roof over our head, our family, our friends, our church. Our stewardship is remembering that God loves us so much that God would even allow His one and only Son be crucified to fulfill the Mosaic Covenant by being the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Stewardship is not a special Sunday or a month set aside to talk about. Stewardship is a way of life for a Christian. Stewardship is listening to God’s call to us to love God and love our neighbor. Our Hymn of the Day reminds us that stewardship is thanking God for family, friends, food, shelter, our church. So, as the hymn challenges us to let us all thank God with heart and hands and voices. And, may our bounteous God grant us peace to cheer us and guide us when perplexed and free us from all our ills in this world and the next...So, let us all thank our God with our lives and voices...