

When Jesus said that kind of stuff, it made people so mad they wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff. I'm not saying that I always like it. I'm just saying that Jesus said it, and I think he meant it....

because of debts are freed. If your land was taken because of debt, your land is returned to you.¹

Hmmmm. Imagine being the one who had collected the land because someone owed you money. Imagine having to give the land back to the person who owed you money, but they don't have to pay you for it. It doesn't seem fair does it? And that is the problem for all of us.

We cannot stop thinking of stuff as either ours or somebody else's. But it's neither ours nor someone else's ultimately. The next time you see a couple of two year olds fighting over a toy, Mine! No Mine! Why don't you say your both wrong. You'll get the same response as you would get from grown brothers fighting over inheritance.

Huh?

All that we have is not really ours and it's God's given to us only for the purpose of tending as stewards.

¹ The teaching of the Jubilee Year was and remains, in the words of scholar Walter Brueggemann, "a daring act of ethical imagination" ... a daring act of ethical imagination that sees an alternative future for the community, for the poorest of the poor ... a daring act of ethical imagination intended to guarantee a new beginning, a fresh start for those who are drowning in debt. In the church, we call that grace.

very rich man because I gave up everything. He sat back, crossed his arms and smiled. One in the group leaned forward to him and said, “Dare you to do it again.”

You cannot retire from stewardship. God continues to give us more over which to be stewards.

God has a bigger vision for our life. In our scripture passage, one of the things that Jesus reads is that he is here to proclaim “the year of the Lord’s favor.” That phrase refers to the Hebrew practice given to Moses at Mt. Sinai called the Year of Jubilee.

The year of Jubilee was to occur every 50 years for the purpose of limiting the debilitating effects of poverty to a single generation.

In the 50th year, a ram's horn is blown, the alarm is sounded, the Year of Jubilee is announced.

At that moment what God says is supposed to happen is that those enslaved

If you bought a new car, went on vacation to a beach this year, did you think you were spending God's money? If you worked long hours all week, spent your time watching tv, talking on the phone, planning a wedding, or mowing the grass....You didn't really spend your time, you spent God's time. You spent the time that God has put you in charge of as God's steward.

God does not judge us too harshly. We don't necessarily need to cancel our plans for recreation. Enjoy your time. But with all the time we have, we are stewards of God. Rather, don't take your time for granted.

All your time, all your money is God's. You cannot even retire from being a steward.

I don't remember where I heard the following illustration. It might have already been said in this sanctuary.

There was an older man in a Sunday School class when the class was talking about tithing and giving 10%. They talked about the widow's mite. He told them, when I was a young business man, just out of college, I was doing well. I was convicted by the story of the widows mite, so I took all the money that I had earned all year that was stored up in the bank and took it to the church. I gave up everything; I had no money in the bank. God blessed my business from then on and made me a

But there is one thing wrong with that. Think about it.....What does a steward do?

A steward is somebody who takes care of someone else's resources for them.

Forget about this "*my business*".... "my gifts" "my talents" "my money"

Those people heard Jesus read the scroll of Isaiah and thought, this is Joseph's son, one of our own and began to think about all the things Jesus could do for them. Jesus was a commodity for them; a resource they could use. No wonder Jesus balked at their expectations. They weren't interested in God's love for the blind outside of their narrow community. They liked Jesus until he cost them something and didn't deliver on their expectations.

They weren't interested in being stewards, they wanted to be waited on by Jesus. He was supposed to be their own after all? Only a people with such a sense of entitlement could get so angry.

I hope better for us. The life that we have is a gift from God. The things we own, we own only for a season and then they are passed on to somebody else when we die. They are never really our things, just ours to tend as stewards while we are here.

They are all gifts from God for us to tend.

Maybe Nazareth's biggest problem and the very reason that Jesus says he is not going to heal in Nazareth is because the people think they own Jesus and are entitled to gifts that come from his ministry.

They were not entitled, they did not receive, they were shocked and they got angry. They heard that Jesus was doing wonderful things in nearby areas. Why couldn't they be happy that Jesus was healing some blind? Why couldn't they get excited for other people? Why did they assume that Jesus was really on their side?

Jesus routinely shocks those who assume that they are entitled.

A sense of entitlement is one of the most destructive things in a person's life. This is why even if the church had no bills, even if all the church's ministries were fully funded, there would be a need to talk about stewardship.

You've heard the quote a few times, "Stewardship is everything we do after we say I believe. How would you define stewardship?"

Often we've thought about stewardship as having to do with *my* time, *my* talents, and *my* money. ...taking care of *my* resources.

Jesus on the surface. They like thirty seconds of Jesus, the simplistic hometown Jesus.

The problem is that Jesus is nobody's hometown Jesus.

Jesus says he will bring sight to the blind, but not in his hometown. Jesus will set the captives free, but not in his hometown; and bring good news to the poor but not in his hometown.

Is this right?

Is Jesus right to treat other people but not in his hometown?

I don't know. I think most of the world's debates and problems could be summed up with the question, Who is entitled to what things?

Healthcare...Who is entitled to it and how much?

Oil...Who owns it? How much profit is acceptable?

Education...how do we distribute that in a way that is fair?

We make heroes out of those we agree with and those we don't, maybe they'll trip and fall cliff.

could suddenly be able to see. That sounds so nice doesn't it? The people hear Jesus say all this. They just love this speaker; such gracious words. Isn't this Joseph's son? They are so proud, amazed that one of their own is going to make such good things happen.

Until...well...Jesus goes and messes it all up. He keeps talking and now they want to throw him off a cliff.

There was some reporter there, ready with the headline "Hometown hero's return a rousing success...for the first 30 seconds."

He says, "Doubtless you will say to me Do here in your hometown, Jerusalem, what you did in Capernaam." Do for your own people what you did for those strangers in Capernaum....Uh huh.... Yes you would expect that his hometown would think that they would get special treatment, or at least as good a treatment as he gave the strangers. What hometown hero does not want to take care of his own?

You would think that Jesus would say, "Oh ok, that sounds fair. Jesus loves everybody especially those he grew up around."

But Jesus doesn't say anything like that. In fact, the fact that we/the people of Nazareth would expect Jesus to say that is part of the problem. Most people like

Luke 4 ¹⁴Then Jesus, filled with the power of the Spirit, returned to Galilee, and a report about him spread through all the surrounding country. ¹⁵He began to teach in their synagogues and was praised by everyone. ¹⁶When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: ¹⁸“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, ¹⁹to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” ²⁰And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. ²¹Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²²**All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?”** ²³He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” ²⁴And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. ²⁵**But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.”** ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

I’ve always wondered how the people could get so angry so quickly that they wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff. He’s just read from a scroll of Isaiah. The spirit of the Lord is upon me to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free. Who doesn’t want the poor to hear a little good news, or let those trapped captives go free, and oh if only the blind people