

Galatians 6:9

Reflections on Stewardship

By Chaplain Mary Kearns

The first time I received in depth instruction on this scripture, I was attending a Christian Women's Conference in Portland, Oregon. I and several ladies from the Dallas First Christian church travelled up there to be inspired by women in ministry doing amazing things for the Lord. Churches were growing. New ministry was being initiated by women all over the Northwest. On the last night of the conference, the woman who preached had us turn to this scripture and read it aloud together. We then were given 5 minutes to sit in silent meditation and repeat reading this scripture. We were to ask God what part of it was meant for us to hear that night.

I remember specifically underlining this verse in my Bible.

Something about it just...resonated with me. The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we **don't give up.**" You see, I was struggling with wanting to give up on my calling and vocation. I was weary. I was questioning God's timing. I was questioning my call. I was at a crossroads...

At that time in my life, Jesse and I were serving as Youth Ministers. In addition to this, I worked secretarial jobs at a Real Estate company and eventually for a Temp Agency in Salem. Jesse and I provided Bible study, hospitality, chaperoning; crisis counseling for troubled youth and their families; Sunday School teaching, youth group meetings, etc, etc, etc. Dallas FCC even allowed me to preach a few times when the sr. minister and his family were on vacation. I am

fortunate to say that at every church I have served, my gifts and calling were welcomed and nurtured. The Lord has always been faithful to me. All He asked was for me to **not...give...up.**

However, in my family of origin, I had a family member who was hammering at me every family gathering to go back to school and get a “real degree and to stop serving the church.” This comment was always followed by, “Don’t you ever call me or come home begging for help.”

Every letter.
Every pm. call

Why, you may be asking, am I sharing such a personal story in a sermon? Because, the hero of this story is the Lord. Jehovah Jireh, The Provider. I stopped seeking the approval of that family member and learned to lean only on the Lord. I had to learn to not let the bitterness and fear of one individual keep me from trusting in God’s faithfulness and provision. I had to become a “faith walker.”

Over the years, God has continued to whisper in my ear, “Don’t give up. Don’t be weary in doing good.” It hasn’t always been easy.

In the last 18 years, ^{of ministry} we all have experienced The Oroville Dam spillway disaster; The Camp Fire; The flooding of our church during a super cell storm that damaged 2/3 of our property; The Pandemic; The Carr Fire; The Park Fire; and the saints God has called home or those who had to relocate to other states after The Camp Fire.

Throughout it all, you remained faithful. Instead of barricading the doors, you all through them open and said, “Come here! We can help!” It’s almost as if God was whispering in your ear too. “Let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.”

Last year, Jesse shared with me that the church was going to have to consider doing a Capital Campaign in order to address some long-term needs for our facility. Because I am the financial planner of the family, I remember thinking at the time, “Oh, o.k. I will start a separate savings account and start a slush fund for that so that we can participate. Thanks for the heads up. I will have time and be able to prepare.” *of course, I had to be gainfully employed ...*

On August 6, 2025, my world came crashing down. My dream job...my dream team...my colleagues who were like family...the job I was going to work till I retired was cut from the budget. I and 73 other employees were told we were being laid off.

I loved that job. I waited 13 long years for that job. I had gotten my 5 year pin in January. I ugly cried all the way home...^{with Husband + Dog} but in my tears, I remembered a scripture. “The Lord Gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.” And then, I prayed a very desperate prayer. “O Lord, my heart is shattered. I am scared. I don’t know how we are going to do this. I know I can do a commuting job, I’ve done it before, but it really wrecked my body Lord. I don’t know if I can do it again. Please, please, help me find something local with health insurance. Amen.”

The next morning in my devotional time, God kept saying to me, “Trust. I will provide.” In the next few days, I learned that Butte *Hospice* would be partnering with Enloe in the transition to take on our team as they would be growing and needing to staff the influx of patient transfers. I reached out to my colleague, Hugh and asked, “Will Butte need more ^{Chap.} Chaplains?” “Yes! Do you know of anyone looking?” I replied, “I am.”

My last day at Enloe was 9/15. I started with Butte Hospice on 9/30. They hired me at the same pay as what I was making. We had no lapse in health insurance.

On the day I picked up my severance package check from HR, I held it in my hand and I said to Jesse, “Whatever this is, this is what I am giving to God. Only God could have worked this kind of miracle – being able to stay in my community doing the kind of ministry I love.”

(The only thing I want to invest in is you. This church. This ministry. We have walked together. We have served. You all keep surprising me with new and passionate ways to do Jesus work in this community. And frankly, I want to keep it going for another 70 years.)

And as I’ve been praying about all of this... I keep coming back to that same quiet voice that has followed me for so many years:

“Do not grow weary in doing good.”

✧ Because the truth is—what we do here matters. ✧

The ways you show up... the ways you serve... the ways you care for people in moments of crisis and need... those things matter more than we often realize.

Sometimes we don’t get to see the harvest right away.

Sometimes we don’t even know what God is growing through us.

But every act of faith... every step of trust... every moment we choose not to give up—

God uses it.

And maybe that's what it means to *imagine more*.

Not just to dream about what could be...

but to trust that God is already at work—

growing something beyond what we can see.

And what that looks like for each of us...

how we respond...

what we feel led to do...

✎ that is something between you and God. ✎

So maybe the invitation this morning is simply this:

To pay attention.

To listen for that quiet voice.

To notice where God has been faithful in your own life...

and where God might be inviting you to keep going.

Because the same God who has provided...
the same God who has been faithful...
is still at work here.

And I believe—truly—
that the harvest is still ahead of us.