

We are in that time of year when our lessons talk more and more about our stewardship, our management of God's gifts. And so through these last several weeks you have heard Pastor and me preach plainly about Christ's call to commitment. And as we kicked off this new program year, our first two Adult Forums have been about money and faith. Why this emphasis...because that is what Scripture lifts up for us, that is what Christ lifted up for us. I shared with our folks last week, there are slightly less than 500 verses in Scripture that talk about *faith*. There are 500 references to *prayer*. But there are more than 2000 verses that deal with *money and possessions*. Why? Because as our lesson from Timothy today reminds us, our possessions can trap us, and they can destroy so much. I have seen it and I'll bet you have too.

Walter Brueggemann has a wonderful quote that "...*the central problem of our lives is that we are torn apart by conflict between our attraction to the Good News of God's abundance and the power of our belief in scarcity.*" Simply put...we come and we are touched by the hope and the promise of Easter, God's gift of new life, and then we retreat to our own selfishness. As I told our folks in Forum, we are often so busy enlarging our **net** worth, that we turn away from discovering and deepening our **self** worth.

One of God's great gifts to us is an invitation to commitment that comes in our baptisms. Contrary to all our fears, there is joy in committing to Christ, and knowing that we are making a difference in God's world.

Which takes me back to last week and worship down the hall. It's been a good experience for us, this movable worship and as the good Doctor led us in our first hymn, you sang with gusto. It's a great hymn. The first hymn last Sunday was 685, *Take My Life, That I May Be*. Would you open your hymnals to that hymn...685. You might want to read through the hymn in its entirety later. But for now, would you look with me at verse 4...*Take my silver and my gold, not a might would I withhold*. Are you kidding? There's that disconnect. We can talk the faith with gusto, it's making the real commitment that's the problem.

Maybe we need to go back to Good Friday and the commitment Jesus made with us, on a cross. Maybe we need to go back to Easter and the gift God gave to us, in that empty tomb. Do you claim that hope? I think its time to make that commitment to Christ. No kidding.