

Wrong Stewardship: “Those Who Guard”

“And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side” (Luke 10:31).

Some years ago, an acquaintance of mine told me of his comrades in the military whose duty it was to guard a shack where a lot of ammunition was stored. When the shack was examined the next morning, to the surprise of the guards and the commander, all the ammunition was gone. Like rabbits, the enemy had dug underground in the night, come up in the middle of the shack, and stolen all the ammunition.

In the arena of stewardship, instead of giving what belongs to God, many try to guard their possessions. Stalwartly, they stand and protect all the stuff they have, not realizing that the enemy is taking it away all the time. Oh, how surprised they will be in the morning of the resurrection when what they thought had been safe has been taken away by the enemy. The only possessions that really endure are those given to the safekeeping of God.

The priest and the Levite in this account could have ministered to the wounded man. But like those who guard their substance, they would not minister in any capacity. They observed the need but chose to neglect it and walk on down the road. They illustrate another philosophy that says, “WHAT I POSSESS, I KEEP FROM OTHERS!” A few other insights are visible as we muse upon the phrases.

Those who refuse to give cannot claim that needs are not prevalent! As the priest came down the road the needs were rather evident. The moans of a dying man indicated a desperate situation. The priest could not say, “I did not know that he was in need of help.” But like so many who could help and refuse to do so, neither the priest nor the Levite (see 10:32) offered any assistance to one who was lying near death’s door.

Those who refuse to give cannot claim that needs are not perceived! Not only were the needs of the poor man presented to the priest and the Levite, but it is stated that the priest “saw him” (10:31). He actually looked at him. Also, “the Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him” (10:32). How sad when we not only close our eyes to the needs of others, but also shut up our “bowels of compassion” to them (1 John 3:17).

Those who refuse to give cannot claim that needs are not pressing! The needs of the dying man were needs that demanded immediate care. They should not have been neglected or prolonged. However, passing by “on the other side” (10:31, 32), the priest and the Levite left the pressing needs for someone else. Whatever we have to give, may our hearts be sensitive to the needs at hand, and by His grace, minister to them.

