

Do Everything
Colossians 3:12–17
Sunday, November 16, 2025 (Consecration)

Let us pray: Show us what you are calling us to do, Lord, and then give us the courage and faith to follow you, in Christ. Amen.

No, you're not crazy. This is the exact same scripture reading as last week. The same reading that Alex Becker preached on here and that I preached on at Covenant. I'm not just reusing the sermon I preached there last week to save myself work, and I'm not going back and trying to "correct" what Alex said here. The reason that we're hearing it again is, first, because this reading has served as our theme as we have talked about stewardship this year – gratitude in action, living out our faith in a way that expresses our gratitude to God. And second, even if we read the same thing over and over, God can always speak a new word to us. There have been times when I'm reading scripture, and I come across something and think, "Has that always been there?! I've never noticed it before!" So I could preach on this reading every Sunday for the rest of the year, and I guarantee you, we could hear something different and new each time. We're *not* going to do that, but we *could*.

When I preached on this last week at Covenant, I used it to talk about how stewardship is not a campaign or a season or a day in the life of the church. And it's not just about *money*. Stewardship is about *everything we do* with *everything we have*, as a grateful response to God. The word *steward* means, "caretaker." So it is about how we serve as faithful caretakers of the gifts that God has entrusted to us. It *is* about how we use our money; that is definitely one aspect of stewardship. But it is also about how we use our *time*, our *abilities* and *talents*. It's about what we do with our *food* and the *environment* and our *relationships*. It's about how we *do our jobs* and how we *raise our kids*. It's about what we do with our *love* and *forgiveness*. It's about

how we use *everything* that God has given to us in a way that glorifies God. It is about *every moment of every day*, every decision that we make. *What will I do with this thing that is in my life? How will I use this in a way that serves and glorifies and honors God and says, “Thank you?”*

We talk about stewardship *every* Sunday, because every Sunday we talk about how we faithfully use the gifts that God has given us; how we serve as good caretakers of what has been entrusted to us. Stewardship does not begin with a letter to the congregation and end when you turn in a pledge. It begins when you wake up in the morning and it ends when you die. It is a way of life. It is what we do with each breath, each moment of each day.

When I go out and mow my lawn, I view that as an act of stewardship. I am taking care of my little corner of creation. When I go to the gym, I view that as an act of stewardship. I am taking care of the one body that has been given to me by God. When I help my kids with their homework, I view that as an act of stewardship, helping to nurture the minds of these three people whom God has entrusted to me for just a little while. *Everything* is stewardship.

And I talked about how *giving* (whether it's giving our money, time, abilities, whatever) is a spiritual practice and discipline that helps us *know* God, grow *closer* to God, and increases our ability to *trust* God. So that's the two-minute version of what I told them in 20.

But one of the challenges with preaching there last week was that I don't know them, and they don't know me. You have heard me hitting some of the same themes week after week for over 12 years. But I had this feeling like, “This might be my only chance to preach for them. I've got to tell them *everything*.” And so when I started making notes for that sermon, I listed all of the

things about stewardship that I thought they needed to know. “I should tell *this* story and talk about *this* and use *this* quote.” I had this whole long list of things that I have talked about here over the course of 12 years. I wanted to do *everything*, but I knew that I could not possibly talk about all of it in one sermon. I had to focus on one or two things. What *really* mattered, and what was God *calling me* to say?

That same problem shows up in other aspects of my life. In *all* of our lives. When I was first starting out in ministry, I was working at a brand new church out in Limerick. They were just starting out and did not yet have an Admin or custodian or other very helpful staff positions. If the phone rang, we had to answer it. We had to print and fold the bulletins. We had to set up tables and chairs. We had to clean the bathrooms. If something needed to be done, we had to do it. And it is *so easy* for me to go back to that place, because that’s how I *learned* it. When something needs to be done, “I can do that. It’s probably just easier and faster for *me* to do it than to show *you* how to do it, and I know it will be done exactly the way I *want* it. I’ll take care of that; you don’t need to worry about it.” There is definitely a tendency in me to want to do *everything*.

But I have learned over the years that I *can’t*. It ends up burning me out, and it isn’t fair to others; it doesn’t empower *other people* to use the gifts that God has given *them*. As much as I might feel like I *should*, I can’t do everything. I have to focus on the things that really matter that God is calling me to do.

I would imagine that all of us, at one time or another, have felt like we have to do *everything*. Whether it is taking on more and more at work, having to do everything at home, having way too much on the schedule or to-do-list and not knowing how in the world you’re going to get it all

done. Taking care of children or aging parents or sick spouses on top of everything else you already have to do. And now they're asking you to serve on this board or this committee at church?! Maybe you *want* to do all of these things, or maybe you feel *obligated* or *guilty*, like you know you *should* do them. But the reality is, *you can't do everything*. It's going to *stress* you out or *burn* you out, and then you won't be any good for all of the other things that you have to do. Sometimes you have to say *no* and focus on the things that *really matter*, the things that God is calling you to do. And maybe your *no* empowers someone else to use the gifts that God has given *them*.

As a *church*, we cannot do *everything*. As much as we might want to provide *every* program that *everyone* wants, and help every person, we simply can't do that. But that's why there's a bunch of different churches! Wayne Presbyterian does things that *we* can't do and reaches people that *we* don't reach, and that's *great*. Trinity Pres. does things that we can't do and reaches people that we don't reach. Church of the Savior does things that we can't do and reaches people that we don't reach. And *we* do things that *those* churches can't do, and we reach people that *they* don't reach. We are not in *competition* with them, because there are enough people and enough needs for *all* of us to meet. And we're partnering more and more with Covenant Pres. because we can do *more* together.

But we can't do *everything*. The question is what God is calling us to do *right now*. And maybe it means we have to let go of some other things.

In his letter to the Christians in Corinth, Paul does not tell them to *do everything*. "Go save all these people and help the poor and feed the hungry and heal the sick and help the widows and orphans and resist the oppressive Roman Empire and start a small groups program and a new

contemporary worship service and have multiple big fellowship events and organize an international mission trip and maintain a robust social media presence.”

Paul knows that they can’t do *everything*. So he focuses on a few things that are really important. “Be compassionate and kind and humble and meek and patient. Forgive people. Love people. Study God’s Word. Sing. And be thankful.” He doesn’t tell them to *do everything*. He tells them to do everything that they *do* in a way that gives thanks to God. And 2,000 years later, that is the same message that we need to hear. You can’t do everything. But you can do *your part*, the things that God is calling *you* to do. And you can do it in a way that gives glory and thanks to God.

We had a pretty incredible week here in the life of our church. The Outreach Committee gave \$3,000 to Philabundance to help provide food for people who are hungry in the wake of government cuts to SNAP and other programs that help those in need. That was on top of the \$4,500 they gave earlier this year. So, \$7,500 total. That’s pretty amazing. I would have been *thrilled* if that was it. But then someone in the church heard about that \$3,000 and said, “I’ll match that and challenge the congregation to do the same.” Which you not only *did*, but you more than *doubled* it, giving \$7,800. So we sent out an email on Wednesday saying, “St. John’s is giving a total of \$18,320 to Philabundance this year!” That blew my mind! But then someone who is on the board of Philabundance, not even a part of our church, somehow saw that email we sent out and said, “\$18,000? I’ll match that.” So this church has helped provide over \$36,000 this year to feed hungry people. That is going to provide somewhere around 72,000 meals.

The Outreach Committee could not have done *all* of that. *One person* did not do all of that. But Outreach did *their* part, and someone else did *their* part, and other people did *their* part; what

they felt God was calling them to do. And just look at what is possible when everyone does their part.

One person cannot give all the food to the food pantry or all the clothes to the clothing drive. But you can do *your* part.

One person cannot do *all* of Supper at St. John's on their own. But everyone does their part setting tables, helping in the kitchen, bringing desserts, or just coming to eat and share in Fellowship.

One person cannot make this church grow. But you can do *your* part by inviting a friend.

One person cannot serve on every board or committee that makes the life and ministry of this church happen. But you can do *your* part; what God is calling *you* to do.

One person cannot cover our whole budget for next year. But you can do *your* part; what God is calling *you* to do.

You cannot save the world. *One person* cannot fix all the world's problems. But you can do *your* part, and it starts by being compassionate and kind and humble and meek and patient, forgiving others, and loving the person right in front of you at any given moment. You can't do *everything*. And you don't *have* to. Because you are surrounded by people who can *help*. People who want to make you meals and give you rides and listen to you and pray with you and laugh with you and cry with you. This is what it means to be Christ's church. People with different backgrounds and skills and abilities and problems, living life together, doing their part

to help each other, and together, doing our part to help the world in the name of Jesus Christ. Because the only way this world works – the only way the *church* works, the only way *life* works – is with *all of us*, together.

You cannot do everything. *We* cannot do everything. The question you have to ask is, “What is God calling me to do?” And then do *that* in a way that glorifies and gives thanks to God. In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.