

THE NUMBERS NUMBERS FIVE

Part 4 • June 7, 2026 | Pastor Jason Smotherman

STEWARDSHIP IN THE WILDERNESS

Numbers: Managing What God Entrusts

When most people hear the word stewardship, they immediately think about money. Budgets. Offerings. Giving campaigns. Spending Habits. Starbucks spending.

But the Book of Numbers presents stewardship as something much bigger. Stewardship is not ownership. Stewardship is management. It is recognizing that everything God has placed in our hands ultimately belongs to Him.

Our life belongs to Him. Our family belongs to Him. Our gifts belong to Him. Our opportunities belong to Him. Our influence belongs to Him.

The Book of Numbers is the story of a generation that was entrusted with everything necessary to reach the Promised Land but failed to manage what God gave them.

They had God's presence. They had God's provision. They had God's promises. They had God's protection. Yet they died in the wilderness.

The question of Numbers is not, "What has God given me?" The question is, "***What am I doing with what God has entrusted to me?***"

POINT 1: STEWARDSHIP BEGINS WITH PURPOSE

Numbers 1: The book opens with a census. God tells Moses to number the people.

This was not because God needed information. This was because **God was establishing responsibility**. Every tribe was counted. Every family was counted. Every individual was counted.

Because every person had an assignment. Every person had a place. Every person had a purpose. Before God gave them territory, *He gave them identity*. Before He gave them possession, *He gave them purpose*.

One of the greatest stewardship failures in life is living without recognizing why God put you here. You are not random. You are not accidental. God knows your name. God knows your assignment.

Stewardship begins when we stop asking, "What do I want to do?" and start asking, "What has God called me to do?"

You cannot faithfully steward what you have not first identified.

POINT 2: STEWARDSHIP REQUIRES KEEPING GOD AT THE CENTER

Numbers 2: The tribes camped around the Tabernacle. God's presence sat in the center of the camp. Not on the edge. Not in a corner. Not as an afterthought.

At the center.

Everything revolved around God's presence. Their movement revolved around it. Their worship revolved around it. Their daily lives revolved around it.

The problem today is not that people reject God. Many simply reduce Him to a compartment.

A Sunday compartment.

A church compartment.

A religious compartment.

But stewardship says, ***"God is not part of my life. God is the center of my life."*** Everything flows from that relationship. When God is not at the center, eventually everything else becomes misaligned.

POINT 3: STEWARDSHIP MEANS BEING FAITHFUL WITH YOUR ASSIGNMENT

Numbers 3-4: The Levites all had different responsibilities. Some carried the furniture. Some carried the curtains. Some carried the sacred vessels.

Not every assignment was visible. Not every assignment was celebrated. ***But every assignment mattered.***

The Kingdom of God is filled with people trying to carry assignments God never gave them. We compare. We compete. We envy.

Meanwhile God is simply asking us to be faithful.

Faithfulness is not doing what everyone else is doing. **Faithfulness is carrying what God placed in your hands.**

The question is not whether your assignment is important. ***The question is whether you are being faithful with it.***

POINT 4: STEWARDSHIP OF THE PROMISE DETERMINES POSSESSION

Numbers 13-14: The twelve spies entered the Promised Land. The land was already promised. The issue was never God's ability. The issue was Israel's response.

Ten spies focused on giants. Joshua and Caleb focused on God.

Ten spies saw obstacles. Joshua and Caleb saw opportunity.

Ten spies managed God's promise through fear. Joshua and Caleb managed God's promise through faith.

And only two men entered what all twelve were shown.

Here's the lesson: Faith is stewardship.

God gives promises. We manage those promises through faith until fulfillment arrives.

Many people lose their future because they allow fear to become the manager of

God's promise. ***The difference between wilderness and inheritance is often how we steward what God has said.***

POINT 5: STEWARDSHIP OF INFLUENCE MATTERS

Numbers 16: Korah wanted influence God had not assigned to him. He wanted authority without accountability. Leadership without submission. Position without stewardship.

His rebellion teaches us a powerful lesson. Influence is entrusted, not seized.

Every leadership role is a stewardship.

Every ministry position is a stewardship.

Every platform is a stewardship.

God never measures leadership by title. God measures leadership by faithfulness.

The greatest leaders in the Kingdom are not those who gain the most authority.

They are those who faithfully manage what God entrusted to them.

POINT 6: STEWARDSHIP IS ABOUT REPRESENTATION

Numbers 20: God told Moses to speak to the rock. Instead, Moses struck the rock. The water still came. The miracle still happened.

But Moses lost the privilege of entering the Promised Land. Why?

Because stewardship is not simply producing results.

It is representing God correctly.

This is one of the most sobering truths in Numbers. ***You can still see success and yet mishandle stewardship.***

God is not only concerned about what we accomplish. God is concerned about how we accomplish it. We represent Him everywhere we go.

In our homes. In our workplaces. In our communities. In our churches.

And stewardship means reflecting His heart accurately.

POINT 7: STEWARDSHIP DETERMINES INHERITANCE

NUMBERS 14:24 (KJV)

"But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and hath followed me fully..."

Joshua and Caleb stand as the great stewardship success story of Numbers.

Forty years of waiting. Forty years of wandering. Forty years of watching an entire generation die. Yet they remained faithful. They never abandoned the promise. They never stopped believing. They never stopped trusting God.

The tragedy of Numbers is not that Israel left Egypt. The tragedy is that Egypt left slower than Israel thought.

Their bodies came out. But their thinking stayed behind. Joshua and Caleb stewarded God's promise differently. And eventually they inherited what others forfeited.

The Book of Numbers teaches us that stewardship is far bigger than money. It is stewardship of:

- Purpose.
- Presence.
- Assignment.
- Promises.
- Influence.
- Representation.
- Inheritance.

The wilderness was not caused by a lack of resources.

It was caused by a lack of stewardship.

God had already provided everything they needed.

The question for us today is the same question Numbers asks:

What are you doing with what God has entrusted to you?

Because one day we will all stand before God and give an account.

And my prayer is that we hear those words:

MATTHEW 25:21 (KJV)

"Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

Not successful servant.

Not talented servant.

Not famous servant.

Faithful servant.

Because stewardship is not measured by what you possess.

Stewardship is measured by how faithfully you manage what belongs to God.

*Dig deeper into a Bible Study on The Book of Numbers with us. Be sure to sign up at parkwaycc.com/newsletter. **Select "General (Newsletter + Updates)"** to get notified of additional content for the Bible Study and Sermon Series.*

