

“Come and See”

John 1:43-51

Presbytery of Transylvania – March 9, 2010

Beaumont Presbyterian Church, Lexington

The Rev. Howard W. Moffett

Good morning! Welcome to Stewardship Tuesday!

Stewardship Tuesday – the meeting of the Presbytery of Transylvania where most members of the presbytery think the discussion changes from “The Sermon on the Mount” to “The Sermon of the Amount”.

Stewardship Tuesday – the meeting of the Presbytery that the General Presbyter dreads. “I just don’t feel comfortable asking for money. Good grief, it looks like I’m just asking for money so that I can get my salary raised.”

Stewardship Tuesday – the meeting of the Presbytery the Stewardship and Finance Committees dread. “Should we really ask for money?” “Will everyone stay home because they don’t want to be asked for money?” “Will we meet our projected budget needs?”

Stewardship Tuesday – the meeting of the Presbytery that everyone dreads. “They are always asking for money. Can’t they just stick to Scripture?”

Good Morning – Welcome to Stewardship in the Presbytery of Transylvania.

But please, be perfectly clear – Stewardship is more than money – more than dollars – more than budgets – more than wills and annuities and trust funds – more than a program – more than a technique. Stewardship includes all of these but it is more. Stewardship has horizontal dimensions – person to person and people to people. Stewardship has perpendicular dimensions – God and people. Stewardship accepts the reality of the symbol that occurs wherever the horizontal and the perpendicular meet – the cross.

**Christian Stewardship therefore is everything we do after we say: “I believe”.**

Scripture Lesson: John 1:43–51

Nazareth? You have to be kidding! Get serious!

Nazareth! “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?”

When Philip told his friend Nathanael, that he had found the long awaited and longed-for Messiah, Nathanael reacted as so many others would respond to Jesus later – with skeptical, but understandable doubt.

“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Maybe Nathanael was just being flippant. But maybe not. Maybe there was something deeper under his skeptical retort. Perhaps old Nathanael had seen so much of life to even begin to hope that the age-old promise of God might actually be fulfilled in his lifetime. Perhaps he was simply guarding himself against another let down, another disappointment, calling the grapes sour even before tasting them. After all, then as now, false messiahs were a dime a dozen.

Did his friend Philip really expect Nathanael to be so naïve? So quick to believe? So quick to follow? But Philip persisted. “Come and see,” he invited. The fact that Nathanael went shows that, beneath his armor of understandable doubt, there was still a speck of hope, enough hope, at least, to be willing to come and see.

On this Stewardship Tuesday, the connection with this passage is the understandable question that this stewardship question raises in our minds: Can any good thing come out of the Presbytery of Transylvania?

**Christian Stewardship is everything we do after we say: “I believe”.**

**Stewardship is what we do in 92 churches across the Presbytery!**

Come and see!

Come and see a family of faith that takes God’s word and Christ’s message seriously, lovingly and responsibly.

Come and see Sunday School classes, Presbyterian Women’s Circles, Men’s Bible Studies, Spiritual Formation Bible Study groups, all studying scripture with minds as well as hearts engaged responsibly with God and God’s Word.

Come and see a family of faith struggling to be “doers of the word and not hearers only.

Come and see adults, youth and children actively serving others as Christ has served – right here in the Presbytery of Transylvania.

Come and see Habitat for Humanity houses being built, meals served, spiritual counseling and prayers shared with strangers as well as members.

Come and see a family of faith actively reaching to include and value children and youth. See the biblically grounded, theologically sound, church school classes, youth church, Godly Play, Sunday evening youth groups, Vacation Bible School, and spiritual camping experiences at Burnamwood.

**Can any good thing come out of the Presbytery of Transylvania?**

Come and see ministries of care, compassion and support through Day Care Centers, English as a Second Language programs, Church Women United, Narcotics Anonymous and Alcoholics Anonymous, Homeless Shelters, Children’s Homes for at-risk youth.

Come and see a family of faith giving of their time and resources to undergird a wide array of ministries through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance, the Five Cent a Meal offering for hunger, God’s Pantry, clothes closets, the Living Waters for the World program, the Haiti Relief Fund, the Peacemaking Offering, the Joy Gift Offering, The Pentecost Offering and the One Great Hour of Sharing Offering.

Come and see a family of faith reach out in care and love through the Kentucky Refugee Ministries, the Christian Peacemaking Team, the Shepherding Ministry, Heifer Project International, Meals-on-Wheels, and countless trips to work in the gulf coast areas ravaged by Katrina.

Come and see, or in this case, come and hear. Hear the glory of God proclaimed more powerfully than ever through the spoken word by our pastors and Lay pastors and the sung and played word of Bell Choirs, Children’s Choirs and Chancel Choirs. Come and hear. Let yourselves be inspired by angels ascending and descending.

Come and see Nathanael. Come and see Presbytery of Transylvania. Come and see the love and grace and healing of Jesus Christ being lived each and every day – not just on Sunday – not just on Stewardship Tuesday – but 365 days a year.

Can any good thing come out of the Presbytery of Transylvania?

**Christian Stewardship is everything we do after we say: “I believe”.**

**Stewardship is what we do in and through the various committees of the Presbytery and with, by and through the staff of Presbytery!**

Come and see!

In the year ahead the members of the various committees of Presbytery, the chairpersons of each of those committees and all of the staff of the Presbytery are committing themselves to being more than the rooms of the Presbytery located at 2480 Fortune Drive, more than four fairly dull meetings a year, more than an organization interested only in the amount of money you send in through your per capita or Unified Mission Giving. They are committed to being centered on building relationships rather than conducting business.

Come and see staff and committees committed to being in and among you, exploring with you what it is that you, our 92 churches want and need to help you function as the body of Christ in the Presbytery of Transylvania.

Come and see. If your church needs help with your Christian Education program or to evaluate your Sunday School materials – ask.

If your church needs help in starting or taking a new approach to your Vacation Bible School – ask.

If your church needs officer training – ask.

If your church needs help in setting up effective use of e-mail, or a Website, or Facebook, or twitter, or Skype, or Podcasts – ask.

If your church needs help in learning how to be a more welcoming and friendly church – ask.

If your church needs to begin an evangelism program to more effectively share your work and mission in your community – ask.

Come and see. If your church wants to be involved in a work project in the Gulf Coast, or with Living Waters for the World, or any other project – ask.

And also – Come and share. If your church has a program that has been effective, if your church has physical or personal resources and expertise that can be of help to another church – talk to our Presbytery staff .

Can any good thing come out of the Presbytery of Transylvania?

Come and see! Believe and recommit!

All of our numerous and various ministries happen with great dedication and commitment by you the members of this Presbytery. Your time, your prayers, your skills, and your money are the resources that God uses to be Christ's angels ascending and descending between heaven and this particular part of God's earth.

Can any good thing come out of the Presbytery of Transylvania?

Come and see!

Together as a Presbytery let us pledge – pledge ourselves – our hearts, and minds, and souls, and yes our purses and pocketbooks, to God's future, to the amazing transformations God has in store for us, and through us, not just for the Presbytery of Transylvania, but for the world.

Can any good thing come out of the Presbytery of Transylvania?

Come and see!

**Christian Stewardship is everything we do after we say: "I believe".**

In the name of the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.