

Stewardship Moment
July 15, 2012

Lay Readers: Jack Bell (8:30 am) and Jane Miller (11:00 am)

In *Run with the Horses*, Eugene Peterson tells how he saw a family of birds teaching their young to fly. Three young swallows were perched on a dead branch that stretched out over a lake.

One adult swallow got alongside the chicks and started shoving them out toward the end of the branch. . . . The end one fell off. Somewhere between the branch and the water four feet below, the wings started working, and the fledgling was off on his own. Then the second one.

The third was not to be bullied. At the last possible moment, his grip on the branch loosened just enough so that he swung downward, then tightened again, bulldog tenacious. The parent was without sentiment. He pecked at the desperately clinging talons until it was more painful for the poor chick to hang on than risk the insecurities of flying. The grip was released, and the inexperienced wings began pumping. The mature swallow knew what the chick did not — that it would fly, that there was no danger in making it do what it was perfectly designed to do.

Birds have feet and can walk. Birds have talons and can grasp a branch securely. . . . But flying is their characteristic action, and not until they fly are they living at their best, gracefully and beautifully.

The Bible tells us how to be living at our best, gracefully and beautifully. In First Corinthians we read, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” As Christians, we glorify God. Most of all, we glorify God when we believe what He has done for us in Christ. We also glorify God when we live at our best. This includes the giving of ourselves, of our possessions and of our wealth. However, this does not happen naturally.

Our old Adam would tell us differently. He would have us be as the frightened birds. He would have us believe that to glorify God in all things would require us to give up all that makes us feel secure in this life. He would have us believe that to give of ourselves, of our possessions and of our wealth would leave little to sustain us. Our old Adam wants to fill us with fear, the fear that any good work or act that glorifies God would be to our detriment in this life.

But thanks be to Jesus Christ who vanquished the fear of the old Adam through His death and resurrection. The old Adam has been drowned in the works of baptism. We need no longer look bedraggled and pathetic, hanging on to the “dead branch” of the things of this world, including our money and wealth. By the power of the Word, we live our best, gracefully and beautifully.

Now, Christ lives in us, and the life we live in this body is by faith in Him. We need not worry about storing up treasures for this world, for our treasure is in heaven. Through Christ, we glorify God in all things. We go soaring and swooping through this life of

grace with nothing to fear. In response to God's love, in Christ, we glorify God by giving generously of ourselves, of our possessions and of our wealth.