

Let Freedom Ring!

14. Milton Hershey: a Taste of Chocolate and a Doer of Good Deeds



Scripture: Ephesians 2:8-10

I. Introduction

Milton Hershey was born on his family's homestead near Derry Church, Pennsylvania on September 13, 1857. He was only surviving child of Henry and Fannie Hershey. Young Hershey's father moved the family frequently as he pursued numerous unsuccessful business ventures. During eight years of grade school, Hershey attended seven schools and completed no more than the fourth grade.

His deeply religious mother raised Hershey in the strict discipline of the Mennonite faith. In addition to instilling the moral values of Christianity, she also taught her son the value of hard work and

perseverance. At age 14, Hershey's father, Henry, apprenticed him to a printer. It quickly became apparent that young Hershey's talents did not lie in printing. Then his mother found him a position as an apprentice to a candy maker in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Four years later, at age 18, Hershey opened his own candy shop in Philadelphia. Though he worked hard, that business failed after six years. Hershey accepted a job with a local caramel maker in Denver, Colorado. Here he learned the importance of fresh milk in making quality candy. In 1883, Hershey moved to Chicago, then to New Orleans, then to New York City. Each time he attempted to establish his own candy business. Each time, he failed. To all outward appearances, Hershey was following in the uneven steps of his father's many failed business attempts. But with each failure, Hershey was learning those lessons which would not only allow his future success, but also give him a heart of compassion for others who struggled.

In 1886, Hershey returned to Lancaster where he had begun his apprenticeship as a candy maker. He was 28 years old and penniless. With the help of relatives and a bank loan, Hershey raised the necessary capital to launch the business that would establish his reputation as a candy maker and set the stage for his future accomplishments. At first, it seemed success was about to slip away again. Debts mounted and the bank informed Hershey they would foreclose within a few days, seizing and selling his candy making equipment to pay his outstanding debts. His aunt's house, which had also been pledged as collateral for the loan would also be seized.

At this critical moment, Hershey received a large order for caramels from a British candy importer who offered to market Hershey's candies abroad and placed a large order. With proof of opportunity for marked success in hand, Hershey walked into the bank that was about to foreclose on him and obtained a loan that allowed him to expand his business instead. Within four years the Lancaster Caramel Company was a booming success and Milton Hershey was one of the leading manufacturers of caramels in the United States.

In 1893, Hershey traveled to the Chicago World's Fair where he became fascinated with German chocolate-making machinery on display. At the close of the fair, he bought the equipment that had been on display and

moved it to his Lancaster plant. Soon he began producing a variety of chocolate candies. The more he worked with chocolate, the more convinced he was that this Swiss luxury product would be mass produced and sold to the American public. When the opportunity to sell his caramel company for a million dollars in 1900 presented itself, Hershey sold out. This allowed him to concentrate his energies exclusively on his chocolate business.

Hershey knew the need for an abundant supply of fresh milk which would be needed in his milk chocolate. Where better to set up his factory than in his birthplace, Derry Church, Pennsylvania? There he knew he had access to a crucial ingredient for milk chocolate--the large supplies of fresh milk from the area dairy farmers.

While Hershey had learned something of the general process of manufacturing chocolate at the World's Fair, the Swiss chocolate recipes were closely guarded trade secrets. Hershey began a years' long trail and error process of creating his own formula for milk chocolate. In 1903, he began constructing what was to become the world's largest chocolate manufacturing plant. Completed two years later, the Hershey chocolate plant was designed to employ the latest mass production techniques. Soon Hershey's Milk Chocolate was being marketed all over America, the first product of its kind. After so many early failures and hard blows, the taste of success was surely sweet!

Once he had established himself as a businessman, Hershey could turn his attention to personal matters. On a trip to New York, he met a beautiful auburn-haired beauty with a sparkling personality. Catherine Sweeney, nicknamed "Kitty" soon captured the older Hershey's heart. They married in New York City May 25, 1898. Their marriage was a good one and the two traveled the world together. But they faced two disappointments: First, they remained childless. Second, Kitty fell into a long and debilitating illness that would eventually cost her life.

Hershey's turned their pain into the profit of those about them. Since they couldn't have children of their own, they determined to establish a boarding school for orphan boys—those least likely to be placed for adoption at the time. Hershey had brought his great grandparent's original homestead again. In 1909, they established what is known today as the Milton S. Hershey School. Three years after his wife's premature

death in 1918, in the midst of horrors of World War I, and with no publicity, Hershey endowed the school for orphans with his entire fortune of Hershey Chocolate Company stock.

Hershey's early Christian training under girded the moral responsibility and the philanthropy that made his legacy as sweet as his chocolates in the years that followed. Hershey was a different kind of industrialist. He was interested in more than simply making chocolate and money. He dreamed of a new community, a model town for his employees, an inexpensive public transportation system, a quality public school system and extensive recreational and cultural opportunities.

Unlike other industrialists, Hershey did more than house his workers in a faceless company town in rows of houses. He wanted his workers to have the benefits he had not during his early growing up years, a real hometown. For Hershey that meant:

- **Tree-lined streets**
- **Attractive brick houses of varying shapes and designs rather than faceless tract homes**
- **Green grass lawns**

Hershey believed all work and no play made unhappy workers. So he built his workers an amusement park. It had amusement rides, a swimming pool, and ballroom. Soon Hershey's park began attracting people from outside the community as well. Trolley cars and trains brought thousands of out-of-town visitors.

During the great depression when so many across America were out of work, Hershey determined to put people to work rather than firing them. He began his "Great Building Campaign" when many of the town's most impressive structures were constructed. The Hotel Hershey, the theater, the community center, the sports arena and stadium were all built during this time. These not only provided work to many to support their families, but also transformed the town into a major tourist attraction that continues to grow long after the Great Depression ended.

Hershey measured success not in terms of dollars, but rather in terms of a good product to pass on to the public, and the usefulness those dollars could achieve for the benefit of his fellow men. His workers said, “Mr. Hershey took care of everybody.”

II. Christian Good Deeds

What made Milton Hershey so different from the other industrialists of his day? Surely a root from which his legacy grew included the practical expression of the ideals of the Christians values he learned from his Mennonite mother. The Bible teaches religion is to be practically applied to real life decisions that affect ourselves, others and honors our Maker. Ephesians 2:8-10 says:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

We do not do good works in order to be saved. That is a gift of God. But there is a reason we are saved. We are created in Christ Jesus to do good works which God has prepared in advance for us to do. Being a Christian should rightfully make a major change in our lives for the benefit of those around us. Others should benefit in practical ways from the fact we are Christians.

III. The Four T's of Stewardship

What are the good works God has prepared for us to do? Certain good works differ according to our abilities and God's leading in our lives. Other good works are the expectation for anyone who would follow Jesus—particularly as a Seventh-day Adventist Christian. Tonight we will look at an overview of the practical kinds of actions faith in Jesus and obedience to the Word of God makes in a person's life. We will consider “The Four T's of Stewardship”.

What is “stewardship?” someone might ask. Simply put, a steward is

one who has possession and control of something that, in fact, belongs to another. The steward or stewardess who brings you a bag of peanuts on a flight does not own the plane. They don't own the drinks or food they serve you. They don't decide what they should or should not say about safety precautions. They may not even own the uniforms they are wearing. All of these things belong to someone else. They have responsibility and control of them for the benefit of the passengers on the plane.

In the same way, a Christian is a steward for God Himself a manager of what belongs to someone else. Psalm 24:1 says:

“The earth is the Lord's and all it contains.”

This basic fact, that God owns everything and in all we do we are responsible to Him, is foundational to a correct relationship to the Christian life. Not even our own bodies belong to us. Paul says:

**“You are not your own.
You were bought with a price.
Therefore, glorify God in your bodies.”**

Knowing we and everything we have and every ability we possess is a gift from God makes a huge difference in the life choices we make. Now let's look at each of the “Four T's of Christian Stewardship” in turn to see what some of these differences include.

A. Time

***The first T of Christian Stewardship is Time.* The God of eternity, who possesses everything and gives us every moment of existence, requires that we acknowledge His ownership by returning to Him a specific portion of time. The first portion of time He requires is the seventh day Sabbath. Every seventh day is set aside from the other six for His special use. Exodus 20:8-11 says:**

"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither

you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Just which day is the Sabbath is plainly taught throughout Scripture. It is the seventh-day Saturday Sabbath, the same day the Jewish people have been observing in synagogues all over the world beginning even before Moses brought the Ten Commandment Law down from the smoking heights of Mount Sinai. It is observed from evening to evening—from sunset Friday night through sunset Saturday night. This time belongs especially to God.

Some say, “But I keep every day holy.” Notice that the Sabbath is observed as holy to God through refraining from work during its hours. Unless one is unemployed, it is impossible to keep every day holy. Notice also that the command God gives concerning time is for our own benefit. In the Sabbath, God provides for mankind’s rest, relaxation, worship and well-being.

Jesus’ example of Sabbath observance, though at odds with the many manmade restrictions the religious leaders of His time had heaped upon it, is a pattern for the Christian to follow. How did Jesus observe the Sabbath? Luke 4:16 notes He went customarily into the synagogue and participated in public worship. If we would observe the Sabbath properly, regular active involvement in public worship during its hours is the place to begin.

Jesus also spent time with His disciples in scenes of nature—in the fields and along the lake shores. As the Sabbath is a memorial of creation, spending time among scenes of nature during a portion of the Sabbath’s hours is also an appropriate use of this sacred time. Jesus also did works of mercy and performed healing. The use of the Sabbath for the purpose of meeting genuine human need and in bringing cheer and hope to others would be an appropriate use of the Sabbath’s hours.

Beyond the Sabbath, we have a pattern for further use of time specifically in recognition of God. Ancient Israel offered morning and evening sacrifices, which provide a pattern to us still for devoting some

time morning and evening in prayer, the study of God's word and in family or personal worship of God. We may also choose to devote time on a regular basis in volunteerism that is for the glory of God and the good of mankind. In all these ways, we honor God through our use of time.

As Psalm 90, verse 12 says:

**“Teach us to number our days aright,
that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”**

B. Talent

The second T of Christian Stewardship is Talent. Each of us has been given some unique ability, or cluster of abilities that allows us to fulfill the place God designs for our existence and to complete His purpose in giving us existence. When we employ this unique gifting for His glory and the good of those around us, we honor God as our Maker and also find our own highest satisfaction in life.

In the Old Testament, we find the record of those with unique natural abilities enhanced and directed by God for His purposes.

- **Moses had a passion for justice. He stood up for the underdog slave being beaten by the Egyptian taskmaster. When God took Moses' instinct for justice into His own purposes and sent the shepherd back to face Pharaoh, Moses' smaller passion for justice became the instrument of God's greater justice in delivering Israel from 400 years of cruel bondage.**
- **Esther was beautiful. God employed that gifting to enable her to influence the king of the greatest empire of her day to save God's chosen people from a cruel plot for their utter extinction.**
- **Solomon was wise, and that God enhanced wisdom allowed him to lead God's people to their height as a nation so long as he continued looking to the God who had given him that good gift.**

- **The shepherd boy, David, knew how to herd sheep and to fight bears and lions with nothing more than a staff and a sling. That came in very handy in facing down Goliath and in serving as a king over God’s people.**
- **A look at the 12 judges of Israel reveals a most unique cast of characters with markedly different abilities and capabilities that God employed for the benefit of His people and to achieve His purposes.**

In the New Testament, these varied abilities—both natural and supernatural—are referred to as “Spiritual Gifts”. They include a wide range of capabilities. Romans 12, verses 4 through 7 says:

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

Other listings of gifts and abilities appear elsewhere in the New Testament. There are certain basic principles involved as we consider these talents.

- **All of us have talents, unique abilities God has given us to bless others and to bring Him glory.**
- **These talents are distributed by the Holy Spirit as He wills, so there is no need to compare ourselves one with another.**
- **No one person has all necessary talents, but all persons have some necessary talent.**

- **The use of the talents given to us by God occurs within the context of our fellowship and participation with other Christians. They are a little like roles played by the various parts of the body.**

Or to use a modern illustration, like the positions played by various players on a baseball team. What is the use of a pitcher, if there is no catcher? What is the use of either if there is no one covering first base or shortstop, or right field? Spiritual gifts are given us for the purpose of allowing us to work with other believers to the glory of God and for the good of man.

- **God gives no ability for which there is not a use in His service. By employing our talents in conjunction with others, we find our greatest satisfaction.**

What is your talent? Do you know? You have at least one, perhaps many. The way to discover what talents God has granted is to be willing to do what you can as you are able as an active part of His body, the church. As you do, what you are most gifted at will be expressed.

C. Temple

***The third T of Christian Stewardship is Temple.* This refers to our body temple. What we do with our bodies is a part of the service we owe to God, who has bought us with a price. We do not belong to ourselves. Jesus is Lord as well as Savior. That means He's the Boss, the Coach, the One who calls the shots in our lives. The wonderful thing is that He does so invariably for our own good and the good of those around us.**

What are the basics of Christian Stewardship as they relate to the temple of our bodies? Our care for our bodies is a part of the rightful due we owe to the God who gave us our bodies in the first place.

This includes care for our health through bringing ourselves into conformity with the Bible's directions for achieving optimal physical health. In our last presentation, we talked in detail of the Seven Secrets of Bible health. The most important secret is the recognition that our

bodies are given to us by God, and that an intelligent care for our health is part of the spiritual duty we render to our Maker. We also noted some of the health practices the Bible gives for achieving and maintaining good health. These include such things as diet, drink and dress.

1. Dietary Choices

Does it matter what we eat and drink? Does the Bible have anything to say concerning these things? Yes, it does. There is a distinction between clean and unclean animals, water creatures, birds and even insects. This predated the time of Moses and is mentioned repeatedly from Noah's story in the first book of the Bible to the references to "unclean birds" in the Bible's final book of Revelation. The clean animals may be eaten, while the unclean are forbidden as food.

Beyond this, some may choose to adopt the original diet, the first "fuel" for the living machinery of our bodies given by God in Eden. This is a vegetarian diet. In an increasingly overcrowded planet, the choice to become a vegetarian may be the single most potent thing a person can do to care for the environment as well. Simply put, to eat like a carnivore requires far more resources than to eat as a vegetarian. While Biblically it is not a sin to eat clean meat that has had the fat cut off and been properly bled, there are major benefits in choosing to become a vegetarian. These benefits match well with our overall duty to the Creator both to care for our own bodies and for the world around us.

Did you know:

- One third of world's land surface is being turned into desert because of meat production, and more than half of world's oceans are nearing the point of ecological collapse because of over fishing.**
- Meat consumption is linked to huge problems concerning the environment that the world currently faces, like the global warming, desertification, loss of rainforests and the problem of acid rains.**

2. Drink

The Bible has much to say about the oldest and most common mind altering drug, alcohol. The Bible is filled with stories that illustrate the folly and harm that come from drunkenness.

- Noah planted a vineyard after getting off of the ark. He made wine, got drunk, and an incident arose within his family as a result of his folly that brought a curse on his youngest son. Even good people can do very foolish and harmful things under the influence of liquor.**
- Lot's daughters got their father drunk with fermented wine, then took advantage of him to bear sons. Another Old Testament prophet warns of a curse against those who would employ liquor for the purpose of taking sexual advantage of another person. In order to make good moral choices and not be taken advantage of, we need clear minds.**
- Priest Aaron's two sons were drunk while attempting to perform their sacred duties in the temple in the days of Moses. God intervened and killed both of them for their alcohol-induced impiety. He also instituted a law forbidding the priests to drink lest they also sin in the same way. Plainly, we are held responsible for actions we commit while under the influence.**
- The foolish young Babylonian king, Belshazzar, was drunk the night he ordered the holy temple vessels brought for the amusement of his 1,000 guests and the royal harem. That was the night the handwriting on the wall spells the drunken young king's doom and the fall of his nation.**
- King Herod and his birthday guests were drunken on wine and beguiled by a dancing girl's arts the night the prophet John the Baptist was beheaded in the days of Jesus. Without the liquor, that evil might never have occurred.**

- **In the book of Revelation, the woman representing false religion holds in her hand a golden cup designed to induce intoxication.**

In addition to these and other stories picturing the harm that comes from the abuse of alcohol, there are specific instructions for avoiding this harmful drug that are far more direct.

Proverbs 20:1 says:

**“Wine is a mocker and beer a brawler;
whoever is led astray by them is not wise.”**

Proverbs 23:29-35 says:

**“Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaints?
Who has needless bruises? Who has bloodshot eyes?**

**Those who linger over wine,
who go to sample bowls of mixed wine.**

**Do not gaze at wine when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup,
when it goes down smoothly!**

**In the end it bites like a snake
and poisons like a viper.**

**Your eyes will see strange sights
and your mind imagine confusing things.
You will be like one sleeping on the high seas,
lying on top of the rigging.**

**"They hit me," you will say, "but I'm not hurt!
They beat me, but I don't feel it!
When will I wake up
so I can find another drink?"**

Of all groups, alcohol was forbidden to two in particular: priests and kings. God had forbidden priests to drink wine in the days of Moses when Aaron's two sons became drunk, dishonored God in the

performance of their temple duties, and were slain by God's intervention in judgment as a result. In Proverbs 31:4 5, it says:

**"It is not for kings, O Lemuel—
not for kings to drink wine,
not for rulers to crave beer,
lest they drink and forget what the law decrees,
and deprive all the oppressed of their rights."**

Why should priests and kings in particular be non-drinkers? Because of their unique role and the weight of responsibility for the well being of others that rested on them. Their minds must be clear to perform their duties for the glory of God and the good of man. Is it different with the Christian? In the King James version, Revelation 1:5, 6, it says:

"To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen."

In our day, Christians serve the role of both priests and kings in our duties in preaching the gospel and representing God's last message to a dying world. Because of this, Seventh-day Adventist Christians encourage all our members to abstain entirely from the use of not only alcoholic beverages, but also by extension of Biblical principle, to any other mind-altering substance that would interfere with clear thinking and right doing. This includes tobacco products and the use of recreational drugs.

A recent statistic showed that over 1/2 of all traffic fatalities resulted from drunkenness. Another revealed that 90% of all rapes on college campuses involved either the perpetrator or the victim being under the influence of alcohol. A majority of those incarcerated currently committed the crimes of which they were convicted while under the influence of a drug or alcohol. Of every three people who takes a sip of alcohol, one will have their own life or the life of someone else seriously disrupted or ended as a direct result of alcohol. No wonder the Word of God warns against this danger so explicitly!

But what is the use for such things as alcohol and other drugs? Did God put them here simply to tempt us? No. The Bible clearly identifies the

use of these substances as pain killers for those in agony, particularly in the agony that comes with the approach of death. Proverbs 31:6, 7 says:

**“Give beer to those who are perishing,
wine to those who are in anguish;
let them drink and forget their poverty
and remember their misery no more.”**

Who are you? If you are a Christian living in our day, you are a priest. You are a king. For these reasons, avoiding all use of alcohol and other mind-altering drugs is important. God and others depend on you.

3. Dress

Another area of practical Christian living has to do with what we wear. Our bodies are the temple of the Living God. We don't own them. We are their primary keepers, however. God's Word serves as a guide in choice of dress that is modest, neat, and representative for the believer.

Dress should be modest. Jesus said, “He who looks lustfully on a woman has committed adultery with her already in his heart.” We are responsible for dressing in such a manner that we do not tempt those around us into wrong thinking. We should dress modestly.

This doesn't mean we shouldn't be beautiful, however. But Bible beauty is different than the beauty favored by society apart from God. It emphasizes the inner attributes rather than merely what is outward. It has more concern for the soundness of the apple all the way through than merely polishing its peel. I Peter 3:3, 4 says:

“Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight.”

In the Bible, the use of jewelry is sometimes affirmed by God. When the Israelites came out of the land of Egypt, their children all were literally rattling with jewelry, the plunder of the Egyptians God told His people to seek as back pay for 400 years of slavery. In the book of Song of

Solomon and in the 16th chapter of Ezekiel, God Himself is the lover who bestows jewelry on His beloved. So the use of jewelry is not an evil in all times, in all places, and in all circumstances.

But there are many good reasons a Christian may choose not to use jewelry. In other passages of Scripture, God specifically tells His people to take off jewelry that is most inappropriate under the circumstances in which they live. When the Israelites in the wilderness used their earrings to make a golden calf, God told them to remove all jewelry. It had become an idol to them. In Isaiah's day, the women among God's people were loading themselves down with jewelry while there were poor people in need of food and clothing being neglected all around them. In the New Testament, Peter specifically notes that the Christian emphasis on inward beauty dispenses with the need for external adornment.

In the book of Revelation, the woman representing false worship glitters with artificial adornment, rich robes and is decked out with gold jewelry. The pure woman, representing God's true people, is clothed with the sun, stands on the moon, is dressed in clean linen that is identified as the righteous acts of the saints, and has a crown of 12 stars on her head. One is artificially adorned. The other's beauty is that wholesome, natural beauty that never fades. These are things we should consider in determining our own dress.

4. Food for Thought

What we put on our bodies, and into our bodies is important. But what we put into our minds is at least as important. Solomon once wrote:

**"Above all else, guard your heart,
for it is the wellspring of life."**

Proverbs 4:23

How do we guard our hearts and minds? By taking care what we feed them in our choices of reading, listening, and looking. The apostle Paul wrote to the Roman Christians who were living in a most decadent and evil culture:

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be

transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:2

Again, he wrote to the believers in the city of Philippi:

“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.” Philippians 4:8

In the end, we will either judge the Bible by the standard of the culture and world around us and by its values, or we will judge the culture and the world’s values by the teachings of the Bible. Which source we pay the most careful and ongoing attention to will determine whether we are conformed to the pattern of the world, or transformed by the renewing of our minds. God wants to change us from the inside out.

D. Treasure

We’ve looked at *Time*, *Talent*, and *Temple*—the first three T’s of Christian Stewardship. To these we must add the fourth T: *Treasure*.

Remember, God owns everything. He asks us to care for it and to recognize His ownership through our use of material wealth and the care for our environment.

A most basic way we show we recognize the Creator’s claim is through paying tithe. Malachi 3, verse 10 provides the basic principle of tithing:

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the Lord Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.”

The storehouse referred to in the passage, where the tithe was to be brought, was located in the temple. The tithe was used for the support of those whose full time work was ministry.

But how much was the “Lord’s portion”, tithe? Leviticus 27, verse 32 tells us in terms of a shepherd counting a tithe of his flock. It says:

”The entire tithe of the herd and flock—every tenth animal that passes under the shepherd's rod—will be holy to the Lord.”

But does giving of a specified percentage carry over into the Christian era as well? Yes. Jesus affirms this principle for New Testament believers in the process of decrying other abuses among religious leaders of His day. In Matthew 23, verse 23 Jesus said:

"Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former."

What should they have practiced? The important matters of the law: justice, mercy and faithfulness. What should they not neglect? Carefully paying their tithe as well. Plainly, tithing is a universally equitable way of supporting the work of the gospel. Ten percent of one’s income given for the support of God’s ministry allows the gospel to be preached in many places.

While God requires our tithe as a sign of our acknowledgment of His ownership of ourselves and all we possess, He also encourages us to cheerfully give offerings even beyond the tithe. If the tithe were compared with the seventh day Sabbath, offerings might be compared with the added time beyond the Sabbath day that a believer devotes to reading their Bible, prayer, and other religious activities. It is at our discretion. Tithing is a gauge of our honesty. Offerings are a gauge of our generosity. In the Adventist church, tithe is used for the support of the ministry specifically. Offerings are given additionally for the upkeep of the local church and many other activities.

Another crucial aspect of stewardship of the material world is care for the environment of the world in which we live. In the beginning, God placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. He gave humanity dominion over all the works of His hands, to care for it and keep it. To

behave in such a way that our earth is harmed violates the most fundamental responsibility of a steward. In Revelation 11, verse 18, a passage on the end times and the judgment, the exploitation that destroys the earth is cited as a reason for God's intervention into human affairs. It says:

**“The nations were angry; and your wrath has come.
The time has come for judging the dead,
and for rewarding your servants the prophets
and your saints and those who reverence your name,
both small and great—
and for destroying those who destroy the earth.”**

It is a sin to destroy the world in which we live. Many even non-Christian groups would agree with this basic idea. But the Bible goes even beyond affirming our need to not destroy the Creator's workmanship. It affirms another equally crucial truth often overlooked in our day: It also destroys the earth when mankind sins against God's great moral law. Isaiah 24:4 and 5 says:

**“The earth will be completely laid waste
and totally plundered.
The Lord has spoken this word.
The earth dries up and withers,
the world languishes and withers,
the heavens languish with the earth.
The earth is defiled by its people;
they have disobeyed the laws,
violated the statutes
and broken the everlasting covenant.”**

When mankind sins against God's great moral law of the Ten Commandments, the basis of His covenant with mankind, it affects his environment still. When Adam and Eve sinned in the garden, three things occurred: First, death came not only to them, but to the plant and animal world which supported their life as well. Second, the created world was twisted by sin so that plants bore thorns and thistles and animals grew talons and fangs. Third, they were driven from the Garden in which they had sinned. The Bible repeatedly notes the fact

that when people continue to violate God's law, it will continue to affect their environment.

IV. Conclusion

This evening we've considered the good works God desires of us. These good works are not for the purpose of winning God's favor or gaining heaven. That is given to us freely and fully as a gift by the merits of Jesus' death on our behalf on the cross. Yet God has created us in Jesus to do the good works which He has prepared in advance for us to do. These are an important evidence of the change that occurs in the life given over to the control of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Many of these good works deal with the practical things of life, our time, talents, temple and treasure. It is by these means that the faith we have in Jesus becomes the life we live in this world. They become part of our witness to those around us, and a practical expression of our connection with God.

In Matthew 5, verse 16 Jesus said:

“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.”

God wants us to live lives of goodness, integrity and kindness in this world--lives as sweet as a bar of Mr. Hershey's chocolate. Milton Hershey made one of the great American fortunes through dogged persistence and the courage to pursue a dream. A great entrepreneur and philanthropist, he measured success, not in dollars, but in terms of a good product to pass on to the public, and still more in the usefulness of those dollars for the benefit of his fellow men.

Today, Milton Hershey School, the institution he and his wife founded, nurtures more than 1,100 financially needy boys and girls in grades K-12. The school and the Hershey philanthropy are perpetuated through the holdings of a trust fund, which in turn derives most of its support from the profits of Hershey's chocolate sales and the various

entertainment and resorts that draw visitors to Mr. Hershey's model town still.

Plainly, this was a different kind of industrialist. Hershey took great pride in the growth of his business, the model town he had established, and the school. Product quality, the well being of his workers and the good that his fortune could do others were more important than personal profits.

In short, that's what it means to be a steward: the care for the world we live in and others around us through the use of the abilities given to us for the glory of God.

This evening do you recognize and accept your role as a steward of your time, talent, temple and treasure? Will you give all you are and have to the Lord Jesus Christ who gave His life for you? The apostle Paul makes the appeal to us this evening. In the words of Romans, chapter 12, verse 1 we are urged:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.”

This evening, would you like to say, “Jesus, I know you gave up heaven and your own life in this world on the cross that I might have life. I thank You for this. I now give my life to You, as a living sacrifice. Live out Your life in me that all I do, say, think, and am may be pleasing to You”?

If you would like to present yourself to God to do the good works He has prepared in advance for you to do, please come forward as the music plays.
