

## Sermonnotes: Sunday, November 11, 2007

Notes to help you understand Sunday's sermon text

Text: Deuteronomy 8:6-20

Title: The Origin of Our Wealth

I remember the first time I read these verses and how surprised I was that they were in the Bible. The reason I was so surprised, I think, is that I had never heard a pastor use these verses in a stewardship sermon. Yet they go right to the heart of human pride by attacking an assumption I made and that I suspected everyone makes when it comes to the origins of wealth – "I worked hard and this wealth is my reward!"

"You think so" these verses ask; "right then, let's think about this for a moment. Who gave you the strength to work the fields? Who gave you the intelligence to come up with that idea? Who created the resources you use to plant, to harvest, to compute, to Xerox, to text message?"

That's the point of this text. Of course it took hard work on our parts to accumulate the wealth we have, but our ability to work hard itself comes from God. And without that ability, which we had no part in creating, we could not create the wealth we now enjoy.

Why does God remind us of this particular fact? Surely one reason is to off-set our natural tendency to forget. When things are going well, we tend to take the credit for ourselves; when things aren't, we tend to blame. What we are forgetting is that God is sovereign always. Certainly, one of the reasons God has given us the abilities he has is that we might provide for our families and free us from the stress of want. We are right to use wealth for those reasons. But it is always our responsibility to use these resources in the context that they are not ours. They are God's and they are on loan and one day we will have to give an accounting.

I sometimes wonder what my 'accounting' will sound like when standing nearby – and listening in – are brothers and sisters alive today who live not so very far from me, who have barely enough to eat, or wear, or make ends meet with. Will my words 'ring true'? And if I know that they won't, what changes might God be asking me to make right now?