

## Wasted Annual Meeting March 3, 2019

1 (Start)

This is a post a recently read on Facebook  
from one of our own.  
Can you identify with her feelings of being defeated?

Do you grieve over wasted years?  
Wasted resources?  
Wasted energy?

It *is* defeating?  
Doesn't it make you say,  
    “What's the point?”  
    “Why go on?”

- You've poured yourself into raising this child, and then he/she turns away from you and makes foolish choices that they may or may not survive.
- You've poured yourself into a business and it fails.
- You've invested deeply to that project and it blows up in your face.
- You've given years to that relationship, and then it dissolves into a profound ache.
- You've given your all to serve others,  
    but then you're slandered and misunderstood.

You didn't get the success that you hoped for,  
the recognition you hoped for,  
the sense of accomplishment you hope for,  
the money you hoped for,  
the love you hoped for.

Everything in you at that moment wants to shrink back and you say,  
“Why would I want to give of myself like that anymore?”  
“It's was such a waste!”  
“No more; I'm no fool.”

So, are we all feeling thoroughly wasted and defeated?!

This is our annual meeting, and as you have seen,  
there have been some outcomes that were not what I expected or had hoped for.



My annual pastor's report to the district certainly doesn't make me look like the sterling example of success.

I've had to report that:

our finances are down

our attendance is down

If the joy I'm allowed is based on the *numbers*,  
then I'm not a happy camper.

So, was this a wasted year?

Perhaps the question is:

Do outcomes get to determined what's wasted and what's not?

I've shared with you before that my expectations are always exceeding my reality.

I expect **THIS**, but I get *this*.

That means I'm forever teetering on the edge of feeling defeated all the time,  
on the brink of declaring, "What a *waste!*"

Then it dawned on me; I'm addicted to *outcomes*.

I'm holding the joy of today hostage to the outcomes I expect tomorrow.

If I don't get the desired outcome,

then I get robbed of all the joy I was having in the doing.

How self-defeating!

This was a new revelation for me, so I started checking it out with Scripture.

It was *everywhere* I turned.

Do you know the story of David's Three Mighty Men?

So David and his rag-tag army are fighting the Philistines when David laments,

2 Samuel 26:15-17

"Oh, that someone would get me a drink of water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem!"

So the three mighty warriors broke through the Philistine lines,

drew water from the well near the gate of Bethlehem and carried it back to David.

But he refused to drink it; instead, he poured it out before the Lord.

If you are the three mighty men, what are you saying?

We go to all this trouble at great risk and he pours it out?

If he didn't want to drink it, he could at least have given us a sip!

What a *waste*!  
But David says,  
“Far be it from me, Lord, to do this!” he said.  
“Is it not the blood of men who went at the risk of their lives?”  
And David would not drink it.

This should remind you of another story from the life of Jesus.

Remember Mary who had an expensive bottle of perfume in an alabaster jar?  
She broke the vile and poured the oil on Jesus' Feet.  
What did Judas say?  
WHAT A WASTE! That could have been used for the poor!  
(Not to mention lining his own pockets as well!)

And then consider this.  
One prescribed ritual in Jewish tradition described in Leviticus 1  
called the Burnt Offering.

Unlike the sin offering, which was eaten by the priestly clan,  
Or the fellowship offering, which was eaten by the family who brought it,  
The burnt offering was an animal which was to be completely consumed by fire.

You are taking a prized, flawless animals (not one that was lame or sickly)  
that is a valuable resource,  
and burning it up.

This animal would be like a farmer's pick-up truck today.  
It's of great value to his livelihood.  
It would be like going out and buying the best pickup truck you can afford,  
and then you give it to the wrecking company and demolish it.

That has to strike you as incredibly wasteful!  
Why would God want them to do this?  
Is he somehow wanting to challenge their core assumptions  
about how the universe works?

You do get this at some level.  
Men, have you ever bought flowers for someone you love?  
Why?  
Sure, they are pretty for a few days,  
but then they wither away.

So, *why* do you spend your money on them?

I mean, what a waste!

You do it because you love your wife.

You do it because you're a smart man!

That's what love does.

*(poor John)*

And consider this.

Why are you here today?

Why waste your time at church?

People outside of the church may look at us as being crazy.

Don't you have better things to do?

What a waste of time and money!

But . . . that's what love does.

But ultimately if we want to know how God views "waste" we look to Jesus.

He died when he was only 33 years old.

Some people must have thought,

**"What a pity Jesus had to die so young."**

**Just think what he could have accomplished if he had lived longer."**

Like the man on the road to Emmaus we think,

**"We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel."** Luke 24:21

What a shame!

What a waste of a life!

But . . . that's what ULTIMATE LOVE did.

So we've got this scarcity view of the universe.

Everything is a LIMITED TIME OFFER.

When it's gone, it's gone!

But prophet Joel suggests a different operating principle in the universe.

that gives us an insight on what to do with the waste. Joel 2:13, 25

Joel says,

**Return to the LORD your God,**

**for he is merciful and compassionate,**

**slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love.**

**He is eager to relent and not punish.**

God says,

I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten,

Those locusts gobbled up your time and your resources.

Lost, never to be regained, WASTED . . .

if you think in earthy realities.

But . . . if you think in eternal realities – RESTORED.

Paul understood this alternate view of the universe,

And that's why he was able to write to Timothy toward the end of his life:

2 Timothy 4: 6-8

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering,  
and the time for my departure is near.

I have fought the good fight,

I have finished the race,

I have kept the faith.

Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness . . .

What a great word picture!

Any Jewish person reading this would immediately call to mind

David pouring out the water before the Lord  
from his Three Mighty Men.

In like fashion, Paul was poured out on the altar of sacrifice –

But hear this . . . .

not WASTED!

Poured out, but not wasted!

So I said, I needed to *do* something

to take hold of insight about how God's universe works  
and turn it into a sacred life truth.

I needed a ritual.

What's something I could pour out that I would consider wasteful?

So, I'm at the mall.

I would normally love to spend some money and time

on a hot cup of Starbucks mint tea with 2 Splenda!

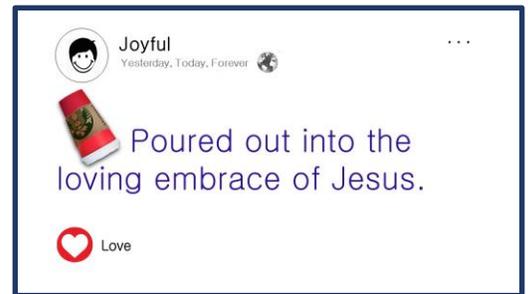
So I walked into Starbucks and purchased my favorite drink.

Then I went out in the mall and found the perfect spot and . . .

So This is what I did.  
I bought the tea and then . . .

## VIDEO

And I said, “Everything that I have labels “WASTED”  
I am pouring out into the loving embrace of Jesus.



The outcome of tomorrow, whatever they are,  
don't invalidate today.

Regardless of the numbers I put on my annual report,  
I get to share my heart with you each week.  
I get to teach you from God's Word.  
I got to love you amazing people.  
How incredible!  
*I get to do this!*

I get to remember, God is not on Eastern Standard  
he's on eternal time.

On an eternal clock, the years the locust have eaten can be given back in a day,  
for a day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years a day.

And in the eternal time zone, there is always sufficiency.  
The oil in the widows jar never runs out.  
The burnt offering doesn't deplete your resources.

The eternal time zone doesn't operate on scarcity  
where there is only this much to go around, and when it's gone, it's gone,  
so I'd better protect mine for all it's worth.  
Rather, the eternal time zone operates on sufficiency.  
a bountiful, plentiful view of the universe.

This is a trinitarian view of the universe.  
There is this constant, inexhaustible giving flow  
between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.  
There a constant, inexhaustible giving flow of love, honor and service  
at the very heart of the universe.  
We're invited to enter that flow  
that endless, inexhaustible circle of self-giving love and sacrifice.  
We don't go there naturally.

That's one reason God gives us the principle of tithing (which simply means 10%).  
which invites us into this bountiful view of the universe.

God gives us this principle:

You get live on 90% of your resources and give 10% away.

You *get* to take that 10% and discover the joyful trinitarian flow of the universe.

God knows our hearts are connected to our checkbook.

You can look at my checkbook and find out if I have a scarcity view of the universe,  
or if I have a bountiful, plentiful view of the universe.

A view of the universe where I can pour out everything I've got  
onto the altar of sacrifice  
and into the loving embrace of Jesus.

So take joy in being poured out today.

In raising that child today, with no idea how he or she'll turn out.

In giving yourself away to that endeavor that may or may not succeed.

Lovingly engage that relationship that may or may not last.

Go ahead.

When the Spirit beckons, pour yourself onto the altar of sacrifice  
and into the loving embrace of Jesus.

A person who has entered into the bountiful, plentiful view of the universe  
is a dangerous person.

The church who has entered into bountiful, plentiful view of the universe  
is a dangerous church.

Jesus is our elder brother who has led the way.