

Good morning. I'm Christian Davis. When John Strizver approached me about speaking on Stewardship he said, "Christian, you've been called to give a testimonial." This was followed by the token silence that can often settle in when you're put a bit on the spot.

But I thought about the word "called." In my everyday life, being called can mean someone wanted to talk to me, invite me to a party, remind me of a dentist appointment, remind me that I still owe them \$40 bucks for a stupid bet I lost on the Chargers. However, the word "called" in a church setting can have interesting implications. It usually means being called to responsibility, to stand and deliver for the body of the church. Obviously, this type of calling carries a bit more weight, and with that apprehension at times.

On that note, I've come to learn that the giving of time, talent and treasures has a couple sides to it. Sometimes the way we would "like" to do our part and what we're "called" to do it can be very different. But both types are meaningful nonetheless.

When our family was at Grace Lutheran in San Diego, Janette and I gave our time serving in various capacities (volunteering at the school, serving on the board of education, pressure washing the entire church building, building new ADA compliant bathrooms-which are very nice, you should take them for a spin sometime, being one of the trustees, one of the elders and eventually church president). All of these things we were "called" to do and, with our responsibilities outside of the church, responded---well, reluctantly.

Yet in the background, what I really wanted to do to serve was start a youth worship band. This presented a challenge as the church body at Grace Lutheran San Diego was made up of very young children, and long time Lutheran church members of the more "mature" persuasion. Not much in the middle ground. Of course, there were a few 12 year old clarinet and oboe players, but this wasn't exactly what I had in mind for a youth band. I'm not into playing dirges.

However, an opportunity came at Easter one year to work with the choir on the song "Let the River Flow." The music director decided to go out on a limb and liven up the performance and he asked me if I had bongos. I looked at him as if he were crazy and said, "Well, of course I have bongos, who doesn't?" Finally, I can do something I want to do for the church! Contribute musically! Or rhythmically.

So the Easter service came and I ripped out a passionate performance. It was something out of Africa, man: Soulful, hard hitting, deep jungle rhythm. My smile was so big I got spit in my ears. After the song was over you could hear a pin drop in the church. Later, at fellowship hour I overheard one of the long time members gasp, "Never in my life did I think I'd ever hear BONGOS in a Lutheran Church!" Clearly flabbergasted. However, not everyone felt this way, and gosh I don't care what the restraining order says, I'll play the bongos at that church anytime.

God plopped us in Ramona not long after that. We continued to go to Grace Lutheran but had the opportunity to attend the services here from time to time. It began to dawn on me, "Look at all the teenagers here." I met Chris Castberg and found out that the youth group was actually quite large. I asked him if I could introduce myself and see if any of them were interested in starting a band. The idea was met warmly and here we are, 3rd season into having a youth worship band.

Since then we've upgraded the sound system, bought some new microphones, a monitor system, pretty soon there will be a projection screen and a projector, and if all goes well, we'll be able to move the sound equipment to a more suitable area to maximize the use and functionality of the equipment. All the while, this church body has supported us and given us a chance and not gasped when we play. At least not so we can hear the gasps. This is what I want to do to serve. This was what I wanted to do for the glory of God. Okay, I always wanted to be a rock star, but a Guitar Hero for Jesus, that's pretty cool.

In the background, we enjoy volunteering at the school and feel strongly that that is an important part of our stewardship, since the school is producing little Christians to send out into a dying world. However, even here I'm "called" to do things that leave me asking, "why me?" Last year I was called to speak at the 8th grade graduation. I really, really did not want to do this, nor did I feel that I was qualified. So, I asked for God's guidance, did my best and probably left a few of the parents slightly confused. "Who IS this guy???" But I said to myself, "Hey, Moses had a speech impediment and did what he was called to do. This is nothing like leading the Jews out of Egypt, so I should be able to pull this off."

So here I am again. "Called" to give you my testimonial on Stewardship. Why me? I don't want to do this. I'm not qualified. What am I going to say? God give me guidance. Okay, I'll do my best.

It's okay to admit it. Stewardship has two sides. What we want to do, and do cheerfully. And what we don't want to do, but do maybe because we're needed. So we do what we're called to do, and somewhere down the line it means something or leaves an imprint. We all have a part and a responsibility not only to the things we can do and love to do, but to the things we'd rather not do. Answer when you are "called," ask for God's guidance, and do your best.

Fortunately, I haven't played the bongos for you. I know that breaks your heart, but next week I get to play the guitar for you with the band, Janette gets to sing with Leah Cullen. God, I love doing this for you.

Thank you!