

Sermon on **Psalm 24:1-6**  
Joyful Generosity. The Earth is the LORD's.

Who was your first boss? Maybe you are still at home with mom or dad, so they're your boss. Robin was one of my first bosses at the newspaper. He picked me up to sell papers at the State Fair and brought me home. He was my boss for two days until he had a verbal altercation with the police officer directing traffic outside the State Fair. I never saw Robin again. You can learn a lot from your bosses. I learned from my boss at Burger King that sometimes you have to throw food out, even if it looks good. We rarely did that at my house, so that was new to me. My boss at the golf course taught me about the importance of the finished product and how it looks, as well as managing time so that you can get all your jobs done even if it's not perfect. My boss who taught me to drive Zamboni taught me about handling very expensive equipment and the care it takes. My bosses at the factories taught me about quotas and workplace safety. You learn something from all of them and apply that to your work today. Whether you are working a job, self-employed, an employer, part-time, retired or doing chores at home, today David reminds us that our ultimate boss is none other than the LORD God.

**The LORD God is my owner and boss.**

**1) That matters in my stewardship of me.**

**2) He redeemed me to be his saved steward in all I do.**

*Psalm 24:1-6 Of David. A psalm. The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters. Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god. They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.*

These past weeks in Confirmation Class, in our Lutheran Elementary School, in Sunday School and Confirmation Class we learn about...Creation! In six days God created the heavens and the earth. An amazing, miraculous, feat by our God to create by his Word – with such wisdom, order, and providence! *The heavens declare the glory of God! The earth is the LORD's.* He owns the world and also *all who live in it* – you and me! The fall into sin blinded mankind to this fact and robbed us of the knowledge of who is in charge. The image of God – his holiness and righteousness - was lost when Adam and Eve fell into sin. But God by his grace has made us new so we see we are God's purposeful and purpose-filled creation. **The LORD God is my owner and boss. That matters in my stewardship of me.** Do I always remember this truth and live it?

David asks, *"Who may ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place? The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not trust in an idol or swear by a false god."* The LORD is your owner and boss. To approach him, you must have clean hands, a pure heart and not trust in idols or be deceitful. At first glance in the mirror, we might think we've got that down pat. Our *hands* look pretty *clean* to most people – we're not as bad as others. But this is the God of all creation, the LORD, who we approach. Let's look more closely. Do we have *pure hearts*? Have we wittingly or unwittingly trusted in idols?

Greed stalks all of us. *"The love of money"* which Jesus warned all of us about has become a common guest in our hearts. *"More money"* dwarfs Jesus' promises as the source of security for our hearts. Just a little more money and we can buy the house, the cabin, the phone, the clothes, things, toys – whether a Tonka Truck or an F150 that will finally make us happy, until we get it and initial happiness evaporates all too quickly, or don't get it and we sulk. What is worse is what we are willing to sacrifice to get these things.

Are you willing to sacrifice your God, or at least your time with him, your confidence in him, finding your contentment in him? Too often we are. If time in God's house has become scarce for you, it might be time to look in the mirror and remember to whom you belong. If time in God's Word is a chore for you, or is the first thing to go by the wayside in our pursuit of things, check your spiritual pulse. If you see opportunities in sports, academics, or fun as more important and productive than having your child in God's house each week, you are in danger of spiritual neglect. If you think gathering together with fellow believers to worship and receive the sacrament is a waste of time, there is spiritual cancer deep within us. If worship has become just checking the box we have become blinded to our own need and God's greatest gifts. God help us. How soon we forget who we are, and who our boss is!

There were too many times in the jobs I've had where I'd become lax in what I was doing, spend a little too much time talking things over with a co-worker, or take my job for granted, and the work I was hired to do wouldn't get done as well or in a timely fashion. You know how I know. All it took was for the boss to walk in the room. I

straightened up and tried to look busy. I blushed. Co-workers scattered. But the evidence was there. I'd been a poor steward. Would they write me up, or even fire me? What about God? I deserve to have God fire me, or put me in the fire.

The outside, my hands, might look pretty clean to the world, but God knows my heart has gone after idols, and yours has too. And we may conclude "We can't *ascend the mountain of the LORD*. We can't *stand in his holy place*." David too must have experienced this same feeling as he looked at his life, but then he reminds us of who our God is.

One day on grounds crew my younger brother and I were taking a drive along the path in the work cart, holding some plywood sheets steady on the back as we drove. I closed my eyes for what seemed like a second and before I knew it a tree was in front of us. I hit it head on. My brother flew out and hit the tree. I bent the steering wheel and column forward as the plywood sheets bent the seats forward. I didn't know if I was ok, or if my brother was seriously injured. We gathered ourselves together and assessed the damage. The front end was smashed into a "V." We pushed it in. What would my boss say? He was angry. He wanted explanations. But he didn't fire me. He didn't even take it out of my pay. The golf course covered the costs. When the shop mechanic took off the crushed front end, I asked if I could have it. I put it the back of our yard by the wood pile. Everytime I saw it, it reminded me of the mercy shown me and to be thankful to have a job and be ok.

You walk into church and you see something hanging on this back wall, a cross, that reminds you every time you see it of the mercy shown you and to be thankful for who you are, what you get to do, and that you are ok. Our LORD God is our owner and boss. It was more than just a crushed fender and front end. It was all of our sin and sinfulness. We totaled so many of God's good gifts to us, even our selves. Yet what did God do. He didn't fire you or put you in the flames, or even charge your account. He charged his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. He took the hell we deserved and was crushed on Calvary's cross. There our debt was paid. **The LORD God redeemed you and me and made us his saved stewards in all we do.**

Jesus took on flesh to live with perfectly clean hands, and a pure heart. He lived that life for you and me so it would be robed around us at our baptisms so we could stand in his holy place not just now in worship at this house of God, but forever in heaven. Jesus suffered and died for our idolatries, our selfishness, our buying the lies the devil peddles and holding up our hands to greed and materialism. Jesus took God's wrath over our sin on the cross. He died for me. He died for you. Your sins are paid for. You are bought and paid for. The LORD is your owner and boss two times over.

No idol in our hearts could ever help us, no amount of money fixes our problems or great needs. With cleaned hands and purified hearts we hold our hands out to our gracious God and Savior alone. He brings us up that mountain of the LORD to be near him and with him. We belong to him. **That matters in my stewardship of me. He redeemed me and made me his saved steward in all I do.**

*They will receive blessing from the LORD and vindication from God their Savior. Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek your face, God of Jacob.* God has richly blessed you. He has vindicated you from your past, your sins, and has adopted you into his family. He calls you his own, his beloved child. That changes how we think about who we are and what we have. We aren't spoiled brats who take everything for granted, nor are we unwise stewards who forget our master's promises and generosity and run after the fleeting things of this world. We are the blood-bought *generation of those who seek him*, who have been declared righteous in his sight and in turn seek him with all we are, all we have, and in all we do.

Who was your best boss? Was it the one who taught you the most, praised you the most, treated you like an equal, believed in you, cared not just about the work you did, but honestly cared about you? Who was it?

How do you work for a good boss like that, one who shares the earnings with you, one who joys in your work, and gives all their aid for you? You work with joy. You put them and the mission first. You put aside distractions and you do all you can. Our LORD God is that boss.

We, and our time and talents and treasures, belong to him. Use them to honor him and serve his mission. Give yourselves first to the Lord. We stand on his mountain to see the cross and all that he has given us, making us worthy to be there, and giving us time to praise him with all we are and all we have. Give the first fruits of your time – prioritizing his Word and time here in God's house over all the other things that clamor for your attention or your children's. Be reminded of who you truly are and what he has done! Give the first of your talents – finding ways to serve him and bring him glory in all you do. Give of the firstfruits of the wealth he has given to you to joyfully support his work, workers, and mission, willing to share. He promises to bless us as we seek him with our lives, our gifts, our all. **The LORD God is our owner and boss. That matters in our stewardship of me. He redeemed me and made me his saved steward in all I do.** Amen.