***HOPE & FEAR*** – A Stewardship Message

 -Written by Lee Yates, 1999

***\* Designed to be done at the beginning of service, interrupting the “welcome”***

**SETTING and CHARACTERS**

While the congregation does get a line (they will always say “Good morning” back when addressed. One of the few for sure things in a church!) the two main characters are HOPE and FEAR. Hope should be read by the person doing the announcements or welcome. Fear should be seated in the congregation or choir (a big black shirt with white letters that says “FEAR” is a nice touch). Body language is Fear’s best costume. Fear will need a good microphone. You can also do this from two microphones up front but it works much better if Fear is “interrupting” from the congregation.

**SCRIPT**

**Hope Good morning!**

***Church****: Good morning.*

Fear What do you want?

**H What do I want?**

F Yeah…what do you want?

**H Nothing…I’m just saying “Good morning.”**

F No one says “Good Morning!” like that unless they want something.

**H No, really...this is just an exciting morning for us. This is Consecration Sunday.**

F There it is.

**H There what is?**

F Consecration Sunday…I knew you wanted something.

**H What do you mean?**

F Time to butter me up before you make your demands.

**H Why do you need to be buttered up?**

F You are going to tell me how much I should be giving, aren’t you?

**H No.**

F No?

**H No.**

F What do you want then?

**H Nothing.**

F Yeah, right.

**H Now, what God wants…that is something different.**

F Oh, I get it. You get God to do your dirty work for you!

**H No, just being truthful. Today we will look at our level of commitment to God. And we will look at what God expects of us.**

F So, how much does God expect from me…and is that before or after taxes?

**H I don’t know.**

F You don’t know!?! You are not very good at this. If you don’t know, then you can’t know how much guilt to use in getting me to write my check.

**H You won’t get any guilt from me. But you do get things from God.**

F Yeah, like potlucks, the music, donuts before Sunday School, and a softball team. I can get all those things somewhere else.

**H How about love? How about support? How about salvation?**

F See, there you go with the guilt.

**H No guilt. Just reminding you of what God gives us.**

F And I should pay for that? I thought the best things in life were free! Isn’t that in the Bible somewhere? Church should be free.

**H The best things are free.**

F Then why are we going to talk about tithing, giving and everything else today?

**H Stewardship.**

F That’s not an answer. That’s a committee. How is that an answer?

**H Do you know what it means?**

F Enlighten me.

**H It means taking care of the gifts we are given.**

F But it is not a gift if I am paying for it!

**H It’s the other way around. We give because we have already received.**

 **God blesses us and in response, we use those blessings to share God’s love with others.**

F Did God pay taxes on those blessings?

**H I know it can be difficult to see it this way, but it is true. God’s blessings come in the forms of health, love, support, teaching, learning, playing, and in every breath of every day. Stewardship is how we use those blessings.**

F But, why did God give them to us if we aren’t supposed to use them for ourselves?

**H Well, it isn’t like we are going to live here on earth forever! Even our most prized possessions are just temporarily in our custody. We are just caring for them while we have them. Anyway…in Christ we are one people, one body. My gifts are yours….**

F And mine should be yours?

**H That is your decision. That is why we are here today.**

F But so many have more things…

 or are temporarily watching over more things than me.

 Surely they can afford to cover me this year.

**H It is not about covering a budget. It is not about evening things out.**

 **It is about responding to God in faith. Stop thinking about this as a bill to be paid.**

F But you will send me a bill if I don’t pay!

**H When you were little, did your family ever remind you to say your prayers?**

F Sure.

**H We all need reminders. But that doesn’t change the fact that our giving is between us and God. It is our response. God has given so much. The only question left is how we will use it.**

F I’m not sure.

**H Of course you are not sure.**

F What do you mean?

**H That’s why they call it faith.**

F So, I am supposed to…

**H You are supposed to trust God! If not, you may live your whole life in fear.**

 **If not, you may become so afraid that you even change your name to fear.**

F But my name is fear!

**H See what I mean.**

F What am I supposed to do about it?

**H Let go of your fears…trust God.**

F That is a big jump.

**H That’s what God is looking for from you…big jumps.**

 **Let go. Trust God**.

F But I have responsibilities…a family, a home, a job.

**H And God knows that. God loves your family too! Try caring for them together with God. Remember, your responsibilities are part of God’s gifts to you.**

F I don’t know. Maybe I will wait for the sermon and see what the preacher, my spouse, my accountant and my broker have to say.

**H Okay…but, maybe along the way, you will stop and listen to what God has to say as well.**