**Blessing or Burden? 7 19 20**

Luke 12:15-21, 1 Timothy 6:17-18

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| Slide | Sermon |
| 1 | Title Slide |
| 2 | Intro – Have you ever watched those shows on TV about hoarding? The most popular one is Hoarding: Buried Alive!  Hoarding s a disease with psychological and mental aspects. Their stuff has become giant burdens on the lives  I can’t watch these shows too much – because I see a part of me right there with them. Writing this sermon in the midst of all the stuff in my office confirms this to me! |
| 3 | And when I think about the amount of stuff I have and look at it, I wonder how in the world I accumulated so much!  When we moved to Greensboro in 2003, I was so excited that the Christ parsonage had a walk-up attic, already floored. SO easy to take the storage boxes of stuff right up – no pull-down ladder to climb, no hitting my head on the rafters, no crawling on hands and knees to find the Christmas boxes in November. |
| 4 | Yet, a when we started preparing to move in 2011-12, it was not such a good attic any longer. I walked up in the attic and it was completely jammed packed with stuff; hardly a path to get to any of it!  Filled with treasures, but so full and cluttered, I couldn’t tell you where anything was nor even exactly what was there. We slowly made progress; going through it; kept a few things for later, gave lots away, sold some stuff on Craig’s list and had enough yard sale proceeds to contribute $800.00 to Riley and Jenica's honeymoon!  And in the process, we went through Wade’s stuff as well. We had been putting off dealing with lots of Wade’s clothing and keepsakes but this has made us face it!  At the beginning of the process all the stuff we had stored felt like a huge burden! And it was! Made me think – Isn’t it odd how the clothing and Christmas stuff, the books, the old toys, old sports equipment, the china, etc. – when we received them as gifts or bought them, were really blessings in our lives which we enjoyed! But as I stood at the bottom of the steps and looked up into the attic jammed full of these ‘blessings’ , oh how they felt like heavy, heavy burdens! |
| 5 | I know I am not alone in this life experience. George Carlin has a standup comedy routine on stuff. And what he says is all too true for most of us!  Carlin says that stuff is the real meaning of life and finding a place for it is our purpose! He says –" Houses, are not to be lived in, but mainly a place to put our stuff with a cover over it."  "Later in life, we move to another house – bigger one because we have too much stuff. Then later we rent or buy a storage unit - because our stuff increases!"  Stuff can be a problem! The good news is that God realized this ions ago and he said some important things about our stuff. |
| 6 | Luke 12:13-21- story of man with an abundant crop; tears down barns and builds new ones to store the crop. But that night he dies. Question: What good does it do to save all his stuff?  Then Jesus says, (12:15) – “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.”  Or today we can change possessions to stuff. |
| 7 | And the world we live in tells us to opposite of what Jesus says.  It says buy stuff! Make more money so you can buy more stuff. Our government even says be a good American, support our consumer driven economy and get out there and buy us out of the recession!  But the real problem behind our stuff is greed and covetousness which means wanting more for the sake of having. Perhaps it is connected to feeling secure. It means the desire to have more than you need or deserve!  When we follow the force of greed in our lives, we end up having too much stuff and don’t really realize it! |
| 8 | Now, why does Jesus say be on guard against greed?  Because greed takes on many acceptable ‘forms’.  1) Greed can be disguised as nostalgia – ex. That letter jacket you got in high school or trophy you got when you won the 220 yard race in the regional track and field meet in 1973 or the suit/sweater you just loved and looked great in 2 sizes ago! Holding on to things we can’t or won’t use – while years ago they were blessings now feel more like burdens.  2) Another disguise for greed is grief. Tough one for us as we’ve gone through Wade’s stuff. AS we’ve gone through his clothes, so many memories and even more as we’ve look at and touched his personal things.  A woman helped us with some of his clothing. She asked a few months after Wade’s death if she could have Wade’s old t-shirts, ties, anything special that he liked to wear. She wanted to take them and make a quilt out of them. Kept some that we wear and want to pass on to Riley’s kids someday. But the rest we gave to her. She brought back a quilt that we can wrap up in and feel close to him.  And that freed us to pass on his clothing to Goodwill, AGAPE, and other places that get clothing to people who need them. It’s good to think how Wade is making a difference in another life through his clothing.  3) Another disguise for greed is thriftiness. How many of you have 200+ Cool Whip/ butter/ or peanut butter jars stored somewhere? Or do you have a broken flashlight or toaster, or a pre-HDTV sitting around that you will never fix or use.  Greed wears many disguises. Jesus says we need to be on guard against these! Greed causes us to accumulate stuff – most of the time good stuff that is a blessing but over time becomes a burden! |
| 9 | Now is out text from 1 Timothy 6:17-19 we get some help on how to handle our stuff.  Read  First, **17**As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. **18**They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, |
| 10 | **19**thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life. |
| 11 | First, God richly provides us with everything – God is the source of all blessings!  A basic fact that **all of us need to get right**! God gives us everything we have!  You might say – I’ve worked hard and earned it myself –  Who gave you the mind and body to do that?  All we have are gifts from God. |
| 12 | **A second thing** we need to get right in our minds and hearts is:  We all in this room – ARE RICH!  (We don’t really think so, because we always compare ourselves to people above our economic level.)  But we should compare ourselves with those below us. Do you have food? Shelter? Basic medical care? Education?  If yes, then you are rich! The majority of the world can say yes to all 4 of these! |
| 13 | Summary:  1 – God provide all blessings, stuff  2 – We are rich!  So, what do we do? |
| 14 | First realize that God gives us blessings/stuff for our enjoyment! Wow! How many times do you hear this?  Yes ,God wants you to enjoy the blessings of life.  Once you have everything you need to survive, the extra comes in pure joy.  Morning Coffee – sip and enjoy  Well cooked meal – more than substance but an event to shew 15 times /bite  Action packed movie – not essential, enjoy it!  Novel, poem - - - enjoy it!  But along with this joy, God wants us to be generous sharing our blessings with others in need.  And the sharing of our stuff along with times and talent and love – compounds the joy!  Right understanding:  – God gives all   * Meant to bring us joy * Allows us to be generous which brings more joy * And thus, gives joy to others. |
| 15 | Clip – To hold on or to let go? Question  Toy Story 3 – Andy loves his toys when he was a boy – Toy Story 1 and 2  They were always great friends and he played and imagined with them!  And as he grew older, they always had a place in his room.  But in high school he didn’t play with them much – just decorated his room. Now he’s heading to college in the fall.  Mom says has to clear out his room.  What he doesn’t take, put in the attic, throw away. Now there’s one toy, Woody, cowboy, can’t part with that one, decides to slip Woody with college stuff.  But the others he chooses to send to the attic - until the toys want to be loved and played with and they orchestrate a different outcome.  Show Clip - ( have to pick it out)  Of course the toys didn't want to go into the dumpster and be no more. So the movie is all about how they want to sty with Andy even if they are stored in the attic. Maybe some day the toys will get to me Andy's children's toys. But if that doesn't happen they want to be given to other children so they can bring them the joy of playing with them. Most of us in the US have too much stuff like Andy had so many toys. Why do we hold on to it?  - Might need it someday.  - Is it security?  -Is it for comfort?  - Is it for sentimental reasons?  -Is it just plain out right greed? We just want more stuff!  But how much of a burden stuff can become! |
| 16 | Movie Clip here |
| 17 | Es. My friend from college who died 11/2 ago couldn't part with anything? After his death his study had to be attacked. Over the years, he had stacked it about waist high with old programs, music, newspapers, old contracts related to his Choral's concerts, etc. There were some many stacks that you could not open the door to even get in. Why did Waverly feel a need to keep all these papers? I am not sure, but I believe somehow these stacks helped him feel how much he accomplished in his life. they validated him as a singer and director. To get rid of it would have somehow undercut his ego and sense of self worth. Yet these stacks of paper almost literally buried him alive! It had been years since he could use the study for anything! They were a burden on his life and I believe contributed to his medical issues.  If you have stuff, then count it as a blessing from God. But holding on to it is a mistake like the farmer in Luke's story |
| 18 | . Jesus said what use is it to him when his life was taken once all his grain was stored in new barns. Jesus along with Luke and Timothy tell us God blesses us with stuff so we can share it with those who need it! It is God's way of allowing the Church to meet the needs of the disadvantaged.  So, folks, it is time to get rid of the burden of stuff. Clean out. many of you have taken this pandemic time to do just that. Throw away the moth eaten sweater, the broken toys, the old sports equipment, the clothes now too small. And give the good stuff you obviously don't need to someone or some group that can really use it.  During this pandemic cleaning out I received clothing and household goods that are needed in Armenia; especially the great need for children's clothing!  Not only will cleaning out help others but it will take a great burden off your shoulders. The burden of stuff will be lifted and many of you will be freed from a monthly storage building fee! But most importantly, you will be breaking greed's hold on your life. |
| 19 | Become better stewards of God's blessings and know a new joy that comes with helping others! Then you know what will happen?  God will bless you in other ways so that you can continue to share with others!  Don't believe me? Just try it. Clean out your stuff, give it to those in need and experience the joy and God's new blessings! |
| 20 | Amen  (says God Bless You) |