

It's About Time...

...You Got Rid of Materialistic Clutter

Matthew 6:19-20

This morning I want to continue in our study of "It's About Time..." These words express the movement from simply discussing something to putting it into action. These words may be something we tell ourselves, or maybe people have been waiting around for us to get a clue and make changes. There comes a time in every relationship with God that we need to put the rubber on the road, that we need to stop talking the Christian walk, and begin walking it out.

It is only when we walk it out that we are able to be examples of the power and truth of God - living examples of the grace of God. And one of those areas, this morning, is in the issue of treasure. **Treasure is the collecting and storing up of good and precious things.** The question is this morning is what do we treasure?

Jack Benny, a comedian who was popular on television in the fifties built a reputation in his comedic role as one who was profoundly stingy, yet in real life he was actually a generous man. In one of his skits he was walking along and a thief came up to him and said, "Your money or your life!" There was a long pause, and Benny did nothing. The robber said, "Well, what will it be?" And Benny replied, "Don't rush me! I'm still trying to decide."

The material things of this world can distort what is truly worth storing up. What do we treasure? Jesus said in **Matthew 6:19-20**:

19 "Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal."

Treasure can be something that is physical or something that is eternal. It tests our desires. In a world where many don't even consider the eternal, materialism runs rampant like a drug that tries to satisfy. Putting our confidence in things costs each of us dearly.

It costs us our thoughts in the fact that we are obsessed with more. It costs us our resources, when our finances can go to help so many in need. And it costs us our time, in the fact that the more we have the more we have to take care of, and that could take time away from things with even greater value.

Having more, obtaining more, receiving more may satisfy for a time, but in the end we will be even more thirsty and hungry than before. Benjamin Franklin once said:

There is nothing in money that will satisfy a person. Whenever money satisfies one desire, it creates two or three more. Yet money is one common denominator that seems to dominate us all. It is a subtle and formidable trap. Like a duped donkey, we trot mindlessly after the carrot of happiness we will never catch.

Even Solomon, a wealthy man, said in **Ecclesiastes 5:10-11**:

10 Those who love money will never have enough. How meaningless to think that wealth brings true happiness! 11 The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!

*5 In the blink of an eye wealth disappears, for it will sprout wings and fly away like an eagle. **Proverbs 23:5***

How many of us have ever felt like that, seeing our money month after month seem like it flies away? **Money and materialism can consume our time, our thoughts and our efforts, yet will never satisfy us.** Why? Because the physical things of this world rot and decay and you and I were made to find satisfaction in something more eternal and substantial.

Instead of finding freedom and release in life we find ourselves cluttered and choked out by more. We need to change where we find our satisfaction from. Solomon wrote in **Ecclesiastes 2:25-26**:

25 For who can eat or enjoy anything apart from him? 26 God gives wisdom, knowledge, and joy to those who please him.

We need to change the type of treasure we store up - treasures that are eternal, treasures that exceed any monetary amount, things that are truly priceless. The only cure to materialistic clutter is to be willing to give it away. That is why Jesus challenged the rich young ruler in **Luke 18:22**:

“There is still one thing you haven’t done. Sell all your possessions and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

Don’t store up treasure, but hold on to it loosely and be willing to give it away. **The less you hold on to it, the less of a hold it will have on your heart.** What do we exchange it for this morning? I believe that there are four treasures that are eternal and worth living our lives for - four replacements for empty materialistic clutter that can choke the true life out of us.

Four Treasures Worth Living Storing

The first is found in **Isaiah 33:6**. It is the very beginning of living a life that seeks satisfaction outside of this temporary world. The writer tells us:

6 In that day he will be your sure foundation, providing a rich store (treasure) of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge. The fear (reverence and respect) of the Lord will be your treasure.

1. A Relationship With God.

Many live their lives without any consideration of God. Others know that he exists yet feel no sense of responsibility towards him. Yet true treasure is not only in giving God time and place in our lives, but through reverence and respect following him, listening to him, learning from him and to given him credit he truly deserves. It is a relationship that no one can buy and purchase, and it is the beginning of an eternal relationship that truly is priceless.

It is a relationship worth giving everything we have for. That is why Jesus asked the rich young ruler to give everything away and follow him. And Jesus' words in **Luke 12:21** tells us:

21 "Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God."

We need to do what we can to develop that relationship – it needs to become our priority. If it doesn't then something else will come and take its place. The apostle Paul told Timothy in **1 Timothy 6:9-10**:

9 But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

Many distractions will come and we must settle in our hearts that God will be our priority in life, and that our relationship with him is the most important. **The cure to materialism is to give our hearts to God.**

2. Receiving Direction and Insight from God

1 My child, listen to what I say, and treasure my commands. 2 Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding. 3 Cry out for insight, and ask for understanding. 4 Search for them as you would for silver; seek them like hidden treasures. **Proverbs 2:1-4***

Getting direction in life can be priceless. While we could be living aimlessly, with no idea what to do next, **we serve a God who has given us direction in life.** He wants to show us how to live, how to serve others, how to make good choices, what to do when life gets unbearable, how to remain faithful when we really don't feel like it. **Proverbs 16:16** tells us:

16 How much better to get wisdom than gold, and good judgment than silver!

Getting some type of map or directions really helps and is priceless. The question for us is “are we listening to him?”

A young man once lost his job, and growing somewhat desperate about his situation, he went to see an old preacher that he knew. As he poured out his heart to the preacher he angrily declared "I've begged and begged God to say something to help me, preacher. Why doesn't God answer?"

The old preacher, who was sitting across the room, spoke a reply so quiet the young man was unable to make it out. The young man stepped across the room. "What did you say?" he asked.

The preacher repeated himself, again in a soft tone. So the young man moved closer until he was leaning on the preacher's chair.

"Sorry," he said. "I still didn't hear you." With their heads bent together, the old preacher spoke once more. "God sometimes whispers," he said, "So we will move closer to hear him."

God wants us to treasure his word. How does he predominantly speak to us today? Through his word, the Bible. And we if aren't in it we are missing some of the greatest treasures known to man. **The cure to materialism is to see character and the intervention of God as our personal goal in life.**

3. Living To Please God.

It is a shame for people to live their whole lives on earth never to find why God put them here in the first place. You and I have been put here to be who we are and to allow God to do something in us and then through us. We each have a task to accomplish. We find a great example of this in the life of Moses. His role was to free the people of Israel and lead them into the promises of God. Look at what **Hebrews 11:26** says about him:

24 It was by faith that Moses, when he grew up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter. 25 He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He thought it was better to suffer for the sake of Christ than to own the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking ahead to his great reward.

Living out God's purposes for our lives requires that we surrender our lives to the author of our lives. Pleasing God was Moses priority, knowing that God would not let his efforts go unrewarded. **The cure to materialism is to seek your reward from God.**

4. Sharing God's Blessings With Others.

Like I said in the beginning, that the greatest cure for storing up earthly treasure and clearing out material clutter is to give it away, which we read about in **1 Timothy 6:17-19**:

17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

Impacting others with kindness and giving to them shows that our hearts are not locked onto the things of this world. **If money doesn't have a hold on you then you will try to find ways to give away what you have left over.** A man once said, "Open Heart, open wallet. Closed wallet closed heart." Jesus said in **Luke 6:38**:

38 Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

God gives more so that you can give more. He blesses you so that you can bless others. **2 Corinthians 9:6-10** tells us:

7 You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." 8 And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. 9 As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever."* 10 For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity* in you.*

We need to let God develop in us a heart of generosity instead of allowing your hearts to be hardened by materialism and the collecting of treasures just for ourselves. **The cure to materialism is to give it away.**

There's a show that comes on the learning channel called "Clean Sweep". In the show a household calls upon this crew to come in and help clean up a room or two, to get rid of the clutter. Many rooms are so full you can hardly walk in them. First they clear out the space and lay it all out to be sorted, yet they are only allotted a certain amount of time to collect what they want to see go back into the space.

The host is really quite amazing. He makes statements like “Give honor to those things worth honoring”, “Your things do not define you”, “Don’t hold onto to the stuff, hold onto the memories.” He has a way of helping people let go of things, while holding onto the true treasures within their hearts. Then by the end of the show a contractor comes and redecorates the room and the room once again become functional.

There are rooms in some of our hearts that have become dysfunctional because we have allowed too much of the world to clutter it up. We need the word of God to help us clear it out so that it can once again serve its function – to love God and love others. God doesn’t want to force us to do anything, but he wants a heart that longs after him and his will.

It’s about time we got rid of materialistic clutter because it stand in the way of living a life that stores up true treasure that will never decay or be taken way. Amen!