

RUBBISH

SCRIPTURE:

“But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:7-8).

MATERIALS LIST:

- (1) Trash Can
(the more it stinks the better)

SONG: “This World is Not My Home”

MAIN MESSAGE:

We live in a world where we are convinced that we have to have the latest, greatest, biggest, and fastest things in order to be happy. But when all the “stuff” gets in the way of our faith, there is only one place it belongs.

LESSON:

What do you think of when you see a sign in a store that says “SALE! SALE! SALE!”? You may be thinking that this is a great opportunity to save money; however, marketers know that this isn’t the case. Studies have shown that when people shop in stores that have “sales,” they actually spend more money than when they shop in stores that do not have a sale. This is because what begins as a noble thought to save money, turns into thinking, “Wow, I can actually get more stuff for the same amount of money. The more things on sale that I buy, the more money I am saving.” We have all been suckered into this line of thinking before, because our culture is trying to train us that more stuff equals more happiness and satisfaction.

The overriding principle that God tries to get us to see over and over in the Bible is that the material wealth of this world has absolutely NO VALUE to us spiritually. Now you might say, “But having more wealth allows me to serve God in more ways.” I really hope that you have not bought into that lie that Satan is trying to convince you is true. It doesn’t take any amount of money to serve God to our fullest. As a matter of fact, some of the greatest servants in the Lord’s church that I have known are people who have very little material wealth.

The apostle Paul describes what he had to learn when it comes what we physically have or do not have in this life. “I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:11-13). This is why he says in today’s Scripture reading, “I count all things to be loss...and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ” (Philippians 3:7-8). To Paul, if it was going to cause him to lose his focus on Jesus Christ, then it all belonged in the garbage can. Nothing in this world is worth taking our attention away from Christ.

What is it in your life that probably needs to become rubbish? What takes up more of your time than you spend in study of God’s word and in prayer? Is it TV, video games, work, sports or recreation? No matter what it is, I can promise that when you are in heaven, you won’t say, “I wish I wouldn’t have gotten rid of those things.” Do you count it all as rubbish?

PRAYER: Help our family to evaluate what is most valuable and what needs to be eliminated from our lives.