

July 31, 2016

**Scripture Lesson**

*Psalm 107:1-9, 43*

*Luke 22:13-21*

**Sermon:** It's Just Stuff

It was harvest time for the crops which Farmer Pete had planted in the spring and he could tell it was going to be a good year for the crops were bountiful. God had provided the rain and the sun for the growing season and the summer heat was good. Farmer Pete was grateful that the crops would be bountiful. He was fortunate that a few years back when he had had a good year he had expanded the barns to hold more crops. Then he thought about his tractor that was starting to show its age so maybe this was the year that he could replace it with a newer and better tractor. He knew that in the years to come he would plant in the spring and had to do the work in the field that new tractor would help. He had been looking at the new Ford truck on the internet and really liked the new S-53 Rancher, but you know, his truck was just fine. There were a few things that his wife, Sally, had wanted to do for the house, so maybe the money could be better spent there.

Then remembered the factory on the other side of town was struggling and layoffs were threatening, so what better way to spend the blessing of a good year to make sure the food bank was well stocked and there were funds to help that might be needed if there were layoffs at the factory. He was thankful to God for the wonderful harvest and all that he could do.

Now down the road there was Farmer Fred who also had a good year and his bumper crop was so big that his buildings couldn't hold all that was harvested. What should he do? He thought he would tear down the buildings that he had and build newer and bigger buildings to hold his entire crop.

He had been looking at cars on the internet and the newest bright red Corvette caught his fancy. He thought to himself, what better thing is to have it to drive around town. Since it was such a good year, he could take off a year from planting next spring and just live off the money that he had made this year. He thought to himself that perhaps he could take that expensive cruise that he had been wanting to take. So he ordered the Corvette and with great excitement he made plans to take that cruise that he had wanted to take. He went to bed that night but he didn't wake up the next morning.

The Corvette was delivered but there was no one there to enjoy it.

Now one of these stories should sound familiar to you with just a little bit of a modern twist. So let's compare them.

Both men had bountiful crops and had storage problems. Maybe Farmer Fred could have approached this problem, a little differently, instead of tearing down the existing buildings, he could have added another building. Farmer Pete had decided to use some of the earnings from his crop to buy the much needed tractor and make repairs on his home. Farmer Fred had ordered that bright red Corvette he had always wanted; and because the harvest had gone so well, he decided he was going to take that cruise that he had always wanted to take. Farmer Pete thought about the factory that was struggling and he decided to make sure the food bank was stocked and that the employees were taken care so he laid aside funds in case the layoff happened. The biggest differences between the two farmers were Farmer Fred was only thinking about himself. He was proud he had done such a good job with his crops that he was splurge.

Farmer Pete was thankful to God for the wonderful crop God had provided the rain and sun to produce his good crop. He wanted to share his good fortune which Farmer Fred on the other hand wanted to show-off his good fortune.

Then there is a story of a quilt-maker who made beautiful quilts and gave them away to the needy. She wouldn't sell them for any price. Then there was man that was very greedy and expected gifts from everyone. He thought the gifts were the road to happiness. But no matter how many other gifts he accumulated he was never happy. He kept looking for that perfect gift that would make him smile. He wanted a beautiful quilt but the quilt maker would not give him one because he was not poor and he didn't need it. The only way that he could get a quilt was to give away all his gifts. It took a lot of convincing but he did just that and the more he gave away the happier he became. He ended up poor in possessions but rich in happiness that comes with giving. Possessions are not everything. We need a house to live in; a vehicle to get back and forth to work.

It is not bad to have wealth. It is how we use it. We need to put God first, then our fellow man and then ourselves. We never know when our time will come. We can't take it with us. We need to remember that it is just STUFF.

There is a saying that one with the most toys in the end wins. But what happens to all the things we have when we are gone? You can't take it with you so perhaps the best approach is to appreciate all that you have and to share with others. Share even if sometimes it is a hug, or a good word.

Amen.