**Unwrapping Christmas – wk3 – Wasting Wrapping Paper**

**Do you ever lose track of time? You ever find you waste a day or time…? This year almost over… Where did the time go?**

**Dec 2004, 4 families (34 people) emerged from Cambodian jungle. Running in fear for their life from soldiers during the Vietnam war. They had been hiding in secret - not knowing the war was over. They wasted 25 yrs. They said the most import thing was to “just survive…”**

**Most of us live like that - we live in a jungle… at work, at home, in our family – just trying to survive… then we wake up and realize we’ve wasted a lot of our life.**

**Today I want to talk about how to make the most of your life this coming year. \*\* Video from 2004 - Save the Wrapping – flashback vid.**

**Every year we end up wasting our wrapping… I am not talking about paper, but our life. Wrapped and designed for purpose!**

**Luke 2:11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”**

**The life giver of life - wrapped in swaddling clothes - wrapped in human skin - with purpose… a mission to save us.**

**Eph 5:15 Be very careful, then, how you live - not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.**

**Careful - \* Gk word for careful – “do not stumble through life”**

**Be carful how you use your wrapping – your life!**

**Today I want to answer**

**3 Questions that Insure We won’t waste your wrapping… (Life)**

**1. What does God want?**

**What does he really want from me? How much of me?**

**Ro 6:13 Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument (tool) of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness.**

**What does God want? Answer: Everything (my whole life!)**

**I want to tell you a story… Pass out brownies… as you eat… Parent w/two teens: He smelled like pot – Mom upset – he says, “it was just a little.” Daughter came home in early morning… Mom upset – daughter claims, “it was just a little bit.” Next morning in a jester to show she still loves them made some brownies (cookies) they ate them… but they tasted horrible… they taste like dog poop… the mom says, “well maybe just a little bit”**

**That is what we do with God – “I know you want all of my life – but I want to keep my relationships, finances, work, my sin… God it is just a little bit.” We make excuses all day long… not 20, 30, 50%...**

**Song 80’s movie Breakin’ – 991/2 Won’t Do – by Carol Lynn Townes**

**In Luke 14 – story of a Master calling people to a party (the kingdom) no one would come – Excuses: I just bought a field… I have 5 oxen that need to be worked… I just got married and I’m super busy… 3 people - 3 excuses…**

**Jesus goes on to say that we tend to do this in our lives**

**We give excuses as to why we don’t - But God wants to be # 1**

**Matthew 6:24 “No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other or be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. (Mammon – earthy possessions and wealth)**

**This is not really about money - it applies to everything…**

**What is the number priority in your life? It will either be God or something else. But Gods says it is to be Him.**

**What are our excuses? We try to fit God into our spare time… When we do make him our priority - he gives us more than you can imagine…**

**Proverbs 3:5** **Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. (find success) Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and shun evil. 8 This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. (Sense of wellbeing) 9 Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops: 10 then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine. (Fresh and timely provision)**

**What Does God want? He wants our whole life - relationships, marriage, dating life, finances… He wants you 100%.**

**\*\* We are all at different places in our spiritual journey – start where you’re at.**

**2. What does it take? - to not waste our wrapping**

**1 Tim 4:6 If you point these things out to the brothers and sisters, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, nourished on the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed. (what is to be pointed out?) 7 Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. 8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. 9 This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. 10 That is why we labor and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Savior of all people, and especially of those who believe.**

**What does it take? Answer: Discipline (A word we don’t like)**

**1 Tim 4:8 For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.**

**It is value for all things – your spiritual life affects everything! This life and the next! Your job, marriage, friendships, daily life – is all affected by your disciplined walk with God.**

**You might think – I’m just not a disciplined person… Show of hands…**

**Well, I think most of you are more than you realize - Do you have a job? If you were not disciplined you would be fired. Do you pay bills? Do you go to school? Do some of you work out? Disciplined in our TV shows… can’t go to the Bible study… my show is on –**

**How many of you have eaten in the last 24 hrs? Did you go hungry yesterday? We make sure to take care of what is important to us.**

**What would happen if for 40 days you committed to spiritual discipline? For 40 days I have a challenge for you - keep a quite time (prayer and reading – 2/3 times a week), to come to church every week, intentionally connect in community - It will transform your life!**

**1 Tim 4:7b – …train yourself to be godly. (NLT - Spend your time and energy in training yourself for spiritual fitness.)**

**God wants us spiritually fit – but many of us can barely pick up a bible.**

**Heb 12:1 since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us (something we do) throw off everything that hinders (the weights) and the sin that so easily entangles. (they trap us) And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.**

**There are two main things that weigh us down in life:**

1. **The Hinders- the weights, burdens, they add up and distract us**
2. **The Sins – our habits and sins we coddle and keep**

**We have weights and traps, and God wants us to free ourselves. But we can’t run when our foot is in a trap – and we are loaded up with the weights and cares of this world.**

**Luke 10:40,42 – 40 Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Jesus and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone?**

**(Have a major distraction enter… a crazy guy running in… maybe a distracting video while I speak) What just happened? Were you distracted? That is exactly what happens in our life…**

**41But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are distracted and bothered about so many things, 42 but only one thing is necessary…**

**A Challenge – 2022 Living the way when the new group starts.**

**The class and the principles will transform, rearrange, and breathe fresh life as a follower of Christ… what will it take? Discipline…**

**3. Why should I do it? Why not waste my life? Answer: The Cross**

**2 Cor 5:15 And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but to live for him who died for them and was raised again.**

**He died for us so that we could have a transformed life… not to just have fire insurance. We live for Christ – because of the cross. You died for me – I will live for you!**

**He gave it all for us… it cost him everything - Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption (liberated – set free through a ransom – a buy out!) through his blood, (shed on the cross) the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace 8 that he lavished on us. (Poured out, overflowed. NLT showered his kindness on us) With all wisdom and understanding. (He knew what he was doing – it was not foolish to offer it to the foolish)**

**He paid the cost to cover our failures but what does it cost us? We can’t buy it – work for it – deserve it - but it does cost us something… our life… and that is reflected in our discipline**

**Ro 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship.**

**To offer my life is the only reasonable response for what he has done. We are created to know and walk with the creator. Christmas was the first step to that relationship.**

 **How do you offer yourself to God? Simple: God here I am…**

**I challenge you to offer yourself to him for 40 days and see…**

**Be here every week if possible (discipline) - Establish a quite time – grasp the principles that will be shared…**

**This Christmas let God… break you out of survival life and into living life - the way God has designed…**

**Jesus Emmanuel – God with us. God is still with us!!**

**Christmas is the first advent (arrival) then lived, died, rose from the dead and left… there will be another advent.**

**But he gave a promise… John 16:5 I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6 Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. 7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate (the HS) will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. (Eph 1:13-14 the HS is proof of the promise of God)**

**God is still with us:**

**As we Gather**

**Matt 18 - when we gather together God is in the midst of us.**

**When his people filled w/ the HS gather together - we Know God is with us.**

**As we Grow**

**The HS is sent to convict, mature, and empower us for growth!**

**When God is working in us – using us – when we respond to the word with, “Yes Lord” – God is with us.**

**As we Go**

**Matt 28:18-10 – Go make disciples… I am with you always…**

**When we lave this place – go our homes, jobs, friends house – we go with clear instruction and encouragement.**

**We can know that wherever we God – for those in Christ - God is with us!**

**I believe God is going to take us to a new level here and change lives…**

**Embrace the cross and give Christ your whole life.**

**I challenge you do not to squander what God wants to do in your life and in our church in 2022**

**Attend 5 wks in row and watch what God will do… Starting January 9 (have everyone repeat date…) Friend Factor**