

Lent can be a time of self examination. We look at our lives to figure out what we like or don't like in what we do or say. Some people want to make some type of sacrifice; they want to give something up during this season that will improve their life. So for many people, Lent is an opportunity to take a look at what is important to you.

That is why we begin Lent with a question. What is it that you value in your life?

In our gospel for today, Jesus tells us to not store up for ourselves treasures that are on earth where moth and rust consumes and thieves steal. Instead he encourages us to store up our treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not steal.

We have a lot of things in life that we treasure. At the top of most of our lists is family and friends. For some people, there are stars and athletes. Others put wealth and possessions up there. And if we are honest, there are a lot more that we treasure in life.

So let's spend a little time talking about these lists and how they can be destroyed. Family and friends. We all know that our relationships can be destroyed in the blink of an eye because of a disease, a bad decision or even something that is totally out of our control. I shared a couple weeks ago of how I buried my best friend from high school about 17 years ago. I also buried my cousin's baby who lived for a few days. Two examples of relationships being destroyed by death.

But there is another example out there that is affecting a lot of people right now who are not even personal friends with the individual. Joey and Rory are a country dual who are married. Joey was diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2014 after having a baby. The cancer showed up again last year in her colon and last October, she was diagnosed as terminal. She is still fighting to spend as much time with her family but the end is near. Cancer is destroying a beautiful lady just like it has destroyed many beautiful people here.

Next we have stars or athletes. There are all kinds of examples of how people look up to them and put them on a high pedestal because they have a tremendous gift or talent that people have no problem paying for. But then, some of them do something stupid that makes us wonder why we even look up to them.

We have a perfect example in the 2012 Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel. I don't remember what all happened with the 2012 Heisman decision, but remember that I didn't

put much credit into the Heisman after their decision because of their selection of Johnny Manziel who was not a very good person off the field.

And now he is back in the news again. He was fired from the Browns, refused help for his addiction, and is under investigation for hitting his ex-girlfriend. This is the same guy that many people worshiped because of his abilities as a quarterback.

Wealth and possessions is next on our list and can be put in the same group but they are actually different. Many people lost their entire wealth on Black Friday when the stock market crashed at the beginning of the Great Depression. There were countless stories of suicide because people lost all of their wealth and they did not know how to live without it. I believe that finances is one of the biggest reasons for relationships and lives being torn apart.

But what about possessions? My first car is an excellent example of that. If you are friends with me on facebook, she is my aviator. She was a 1968 Javelin that I drove into the garage when I was 2 1/2. I bought her back and rebuilt her when I was in 9th grade. At one point she was a variety of colors including red, green, silver, and rust. Next she was a very dark purple that looked black at night and on cloudy days but was purple in the sun. It is actually a color I would love to duplicate but that cannot happen because we mixed about 5 different colors of left over paint to give her some protection during the winter. Once the body work was done, she got a nice color of silver and black because of the Raiders. And finally she was painted blue which is how she looks on facebook.

She was an awesome car and had a lot of fun with her. She spent the final three years in storage under a car cover while I was in seminary. I went to get her out before graduation from seminary and she was totally rusted out. The harsh Iowa winters had taken its toll on her even though I removed all the rust I could when I rebuilt her.

The point of all these stories is that everything we have here, our relationships, our heroes, our wealth and even our possessions can be destroyed. That is why Jesus tells us to put our trust in God. When we trust in God and what HE accomplished in Christ, we have the greatest treasure that will last forever.

Even when the things of this world destroys our lives, and it doesn't matter if we are talking about death, diseases, bad decisions, fallen heroes, or loss of wealth and possessions; the treasures that count are still there. We still live in God's forgiveness, we

still have the promise that we will never be alone, and we still have the promise of eternal life.

None of the things that I have been talking about really matters because our hope is in God. This does not mean we will not hurt or cry or worry or even be angry with God or others because of the things that destroy our life. We are going to hurt and be angry because life isn't fair. Life is life and bad things happen in life just the same as good things happen in life.

We are not rewarded or punished because of how we behave. But through it all, we know that we are not alone because God will always be with us offering us the best treasure that we can put our hope in.