

The Bulwark

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HOARDERS

Reality television shows have permeated the fabric of society. One can be a voyeur and by open invitation peer into the lives of ordinary people who have, shall we say, “unique tendencies”. One such program is entitled “Hoarders”, wherein the veil is pulled back and reveals an unsightly segment found in a sub-set of our culture. It is one wherein individuals are so possessed by what they have amassed, they put their health and the well-being of others in jeopardy. What is so striking is that in most cases, what has been collected are things others would deem as worthless and thereby cast aside. Over time it accumulates and presents a living environment that overflows with garbage and serves as a major health concern.

In a story worthy of consideration for “Hoarders”, but played out before the program began it’s run, is that of a woman known as “Garbage Mary”. She had that name tacked on to her because she dressed in rags and lived in a run down house that was packed to near overflowing with trash. She spent the bulk of her time rummaging around in other people’s trash cans and taking home her “treasures”. Eventually it was determined she couldn’t or wouldn’t take care of herself and she was placed in a psychiatric hospital. When the authorities went in to clean out the filth in which she lived they discovered stock certificates and saving statements indicating her net worth close to a million dollars. Her living conditions were deplorable and heartbreaking, she didn’t have to live in such squalor, but that was her choice.

Stories like this are seen time and time again, regardless, whenever they are brought to light it causes one to say “how tragic. Step back, and take a moment to see things from God’s perspective. Spiritually speaking God sees individuals who have wealth beyond compare (see 1Peter 1:17-19), yet willingly choosing to wallow in the filth of sin. Bring into consideration, what is found in James chapter one and verses twenty-one thru twenty-two. *“Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted which is able to*

save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers.”

Bear in mind that James is writing to those who are already joined to Christ in His body, the church. They had been redeemed, enjoying the blessedness of a relationship with Christ and all that brings, not the least of which being made *“heirs according to the promise”* as Paul stressed in Galatians 3:29. Indeed a child of God is rich beyond compare. So, spiritually speaking, it is somewhat disconcerting why any one so blessed would opt to hoard the refuse of the world,

In the third chapter of James, he lays out the wisdom from above in contrast to that which is natural, earthy and demonic. When a child of God is controlled by lust, pride, hatred, selfishness, impatience, bitterness and attitudes contrary to the directives of God (see James 3:17; Galatians 5:22ff), the decision has been made to live in filth and squalor and in so doing placed one’s spiritual well being in grave jeopardy.

For the child of God there is no rational excuse that could be offered in defense of a such a decision. After all, the child of God has *“tasted the good word of God”* and *“tasted the kindness of the Lord”*, why hold on to that which is equated as being vile and reprehensible? Those that have a problem with hoarding things in a physical sense, that in the grand scheme of things have no lasting value, do so in part because they made an emotional connection and place a value where, in reality there is none. A process is undertaken to get the individual who is struggling to hold on to the rubbish, to see the condition they have slipped into; then to awaken to the fact that there is no value in what they are clinging to, and a better life awaits. It is the same spiritually speaking. It is time to let go of those things that have no value and embrace the fact that God has desired and prepared something far and away superior. He wants only the best for His child. Toss the rubbish. (wbe)

