



*The Estate Sale*  
*I Chronicles 29:1-20*

Sunday, April 15th, 2018 ~ Third Sunday of Easter  
First Federated Church of Peoria, Illinois  
The Rev. Dr. Forrest Krummel, Jr.

I had a birthday this past Friday. Some people would call it a milestone birthday. I tried to play it “low key” but it didn’t really work as at a Caper Club dance that night my wife conspired with one of my daughters and arranged cherry and chocolate pies from the Kickapoo Cafe to be served during the first intermissions!

I am at that stage of life where when I am asked, “What do you want for your birthday?”, my reply is that I really have no “wants”. If I want something, I buy it or at least learn to do without it. Both my wants and needs are getting simpler with each passing year. However, when pressed about a present, I tell my family to give me something that I can eat or drink or that will sell well at my estate sale. For many, if not most of us, when our time here on earth comes to a close there will be two estate sales; one of our worldly good and another of our soul.

When my folks died, my wife and I were left with the responsibility of sorting through over 50 years of accumulated “stuff”. We did the best we could, my wife more than me because it was just so emotionally draining to me as memory after memory rose up within my heart with each dresser drawer, nook and cranny. In the end, though, we had a professional come in, organize and conduct an estate sale. In the process, I am sure that some of their most prized and precious “heirlooms” were under-appreciated or not recognized by me and those things they ended up not be treasures at all..

That is one kind of estate sale. Our Old Testament lesson, though, speaks of a different kind of “estate sale”, one that can best be described as being of the soul. The story comes at the end of King David’s life. His crown is about to be passed to his son, Solomon. In this farewell address David charged the assembled tribes of Israel to see life in terms of eternity. They were merely fleeting shadows. The land they possessed, the Promised Land of Abraham, was not really theirs but God’s. All that they had was not because of what they had done, but because of what God had done for them.

In this farewell address David began with a doxology which served as the model for the close of what we call the Lord’s Prayer. “Yours, O lord, are the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heaven and on the earth are Yours; Yours is the Kingdom and You are exalted as head above all.” (v.11)

In his address David reminded his listeners they all of us are aliens and transients before the God, as were our ancestors. And no matter the number of our days, against the clock of eternity, we are like a fleeting shadow. (v. 14b)

God is the source of all wealth and power. No one truly pulls themselves up by their own bootstraps because no one can choose the families into which they are born, the time in history, the circumstances of our birth, or parents or grandparents, the nation or era of our birth.

Jesus' various parables to workers in the vineyard and talents is more true than we wish to admit. Through no action or fault of our own, we begin life with certain opportunities or talents, if you will, based on the color of our skin and our family of origin. This does not negate our responsibility of how we use or do not use the opportunities bestowed upon us. And, in Jesus' parables, there is a day of reckoning, of accounting, in which we are judged on how well we used the gifts of God to make this world a richer or poorer place. Have we built others up and made them small so that we would look large. Have we been selfish or generous? Did we see the naked and the hungry and walk by? Did we care not only for ourselves, our kin and kind, our generation or did we remember our responsibility for the generations that will follow us? Did we give more than we took or did we live in such a way that those around us and this world are the poorer by our passing by here? These are the eternal questions that each of us will be asked when the number of our days draw to a close. These are the elements of our spiritual estate, the estate sale of the soul.

David closed his soliloquy by calling upon the people to bless the Lord with their offering, to give liberally of their wealth in the work of the temple, to give with no strings attached but out of joyful response to God's blessings in life. And their response was, in the words of one commentator, "extravagant"; a thousand bulls, lambs and rams -- an extravagant demonstration of their devotion and dedication.

One cannot help but to wonder if the apostle Paul was thinking of David's challenge when he wrote to the Corinthians regarding their offering to the church in Jerusalem, "Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver." (II Corinthians 9:7)

The truth of the two estate sales of life, one that is fleeting and the other that is eternal is that a life dedicated to stewardship in the Lord is a life of joy, peace, hope and celebration. Amen.