

**New St. James Presbyterian Church**  
**Ninth Sunday after Pentecost**  
**Sunday, August 10, 2025**  
**Guest Preacher: Margaret McGugan**  
**“For where your treasure is” Luke 12:32-40**

*“Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out...for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

Purses.

They come in all sizes and shapes, colours and embellishments. Leather or polypropylene fabrics.

Women need a purse to carry with them, men need wallets.

It is a necessity to always or most times, to have identification on your person.

Driver's license, car insurance slip, health card, debit or credit cards. Money. Point cards, cell phones

Some purses may even carry a birth certificate or a passport depending on what the person is doing or where they are going.

Some purses carry baby needs, extra Kleenex, hairbrushes and cosmetics.

Others carry medications or devises for emergencies.

Some may even carry hats or water bottles.

Wherever we go, purses and wallets come along with us. They are part of our daily lives providing us unlimited assurance and resources.

We tell ourselves that we are always ready for the unexpected.

That we are prepared for the *what ifs* in our lives.

What if the car breaks down. Call for help.

What if I see something in the store I want to buy. Pull out the credit card.

What if the baby suddenly needs a wipe or two. Get out the Kleenex.

The *what ifs* in our lives are many and some days they can take on a life of their own causing us to depend deeply on materialistic things.

Whether cell phones or purses or wallets, we are ready. We are prepared for the unknowns that may be thrown into our lives.

But *what if* something happens when our purse or our wallet is not with us.

Perhaps we forget our wallet on the side table at home.

What if we set our purse down and forget where we set it?

Funny I should bring this scenario to light of leaving my purse behind, but this happened recently to me.

I left my purse, on the floor after my doctor's appointment. I walked out with a hat and water bottle in my hands, and I left my red bag beside the chair I was sitting in.

The red bag that I would never misplace or forget because of its colour and size.

It was a few minutes later when I was making another appointment with the doctor's receptionist that I realized I had left my red bag somewhere.

But where? I panicked.

The *what ifs* came into my mind.

What if someone picked it up for their personal use.

What if my identification is stolen.

Suddenly my security, my dependency was gone.

I was vulnerable to the "*what ifs*" at this moment that I was trying to avoid.

'You may be looking for this,' the doctor said, as he stepped out of his office and handed me my red bag. "I checked and there was nothing of value in it."

"No there isn't," I quickly said, and I left.

Nothing of value?

There is everything of value in it.

I would be lost without it.

I would have to replace everything that I had in my bag which would involve government bureaucracy and new photos.

It would mean contacting the banks and buying the paraphernalia that once occupied my bag. It could cause some explanation on my behalf as to why and where I last left my bag.

Suddenly my life was empty of security.

My dependency on the purse was gone!

'Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out,' Jesus tells us.

I am sure our purses or wallets will wear out, I am sure after extensive use, it will have to be replaced with another. We will always need identification on us, and our documentation must go in something.

But I wonder if this parable is talking about having a dependency on something else.

Jesus always throws a curve ball at us.

And this one is no exemption.

The words talks about some message that goes deeper than leather or polypropylene.

I don't think Jesus is telling us to depend on a red bag or a purse or a wallet to find unfailing treasure.

I don't think Jeus of Nazareth, the same man who possessed no bag no wallet; no identification, no debit or credit card no money bag is talking about security in such a materialistic way.

*Unfailing treasure* introduces us to that other worldly language Paul introduced us to last week.

“Seek the things that are above” or “Our life is hidden with Christ.”

This other-worldly language does not fit into our purses or wallets easily.

Perhaps this *unfailing treasure* is not stored in our bags at all.

Perhaps it is stored somewhere else, in another container. Another carrying vessel.

As I was reading over this passage, I wondered how Jesus was identified by the early Christians.

Perhaps he had a particular gait, whether long strides or short ones.

Perhaps he had a particular sweet tone in his voice or maybe it was the spark in his eyes that drew people nearby.

I wonder if it was the leather sandals he wore or the colours and grade of wool in his prayer shawl.

These items would tell a lot about Jesus particularly what region he hailed from.

Maybe his clothing told of his commitment to God by the dust and mud on his sandals.

Or the condition of His shawl with its snags of woollen threads hanging down telling the story of his hard travels.

There may even be a patch or two that Mary or Martha mended.

Jesus had nothing of value to build up human security. He had no bag, no purse, no wallet to store things for identification or money.

He did not depend on materialistic things to forge on to Jerusalem.

No, He was dressed for action. Standing tall. Praying. Witnessing to the glory and good works of the Father. Looking at the future through God's eyes.

Paul tells the Ephesians that Jesus had the armour of God-- the belt of truth wrapped around his waist and the breastplate of righteousness over his chest to fend off the arrows of evilness.

Jesus had the assurance of things hoped for.

He had the conviction and trust in God of things he could not see.

I wonder where we get this assurance, this conviction, this trust?

Where are we to find unfailing security?

How do we minimize the 'what-ifs' in our lives if we are not ready.

If we rely on our own safe haven, then we are living with false security.

We can not control the what-ifs --they come at the most inopportune times.

We cannot be fully prepared for the valleys or the mishaps in our lives.

We never knows when we may have to make a visit to the Cancer Clinic or to the Ivey Institute or to the hospital emergency room.

We can never be prepared for such inundated events.

But Jesus does not leave us stranded. He does not leave us holding an empty purse.

What Jesus offers us is not a dependency on materialistic things.

But in our human life, we do need medications and emergency devises. We do need ID and money. We do need Kleenex.

In Luke's writing of this parable, Jesus tells us to 'make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven.'

The King James version reads: 'provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in heaven that faileth not.'

Either translation, gives us advise to seek a type of possession that does not perish.

Something that is a lasting and enduring form of wealth.

Not monetary wealth but spiritual wealth.

Not personal identification but Christ like identification.

I wonder if Jesus is telling us to not totally depend on what is contained in our purses and wallets, but instead to *pursue* God and God's treasures (Matt 6:33)

Perhaps what we have in our purse and wallet is needed but there is something else greater that does not rot or rust or break.

Something that no thief can steal nor moth can destroy.

Perhaps it is an intangible thing. A feeling of strength or hope when our worldly possessions fail us.

“Perhaps we should not focus on what is seen but on what is unseen.”

Perhaps we are to become like the purse that holds blinding trust with Jesus Christ in God.

Perhaps this new purse in and of us, holds the what-ifs at bay with the invisible word of God written with Christ’s blood.

Perhaps it is what we call faith in the resurrected Christ.

The man who had no purse or wallet.

The man whose only identity was in God.

The man who spoke encouraging words for those days when the ‘*what-ifs*’ overpower our lives.

The opening line of this parable, begins with ‘Do not be afraid, little flock, (children) for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.’

Perhaps it is this good pleasure that assures us and comforts us that God the Father has given us a kindred spirit of peace, love, hope and eternal life that no leather or polypropylene purse can provide.

It can only come from this other-worldly parent. The One who is invisible, yet very much alive in the Spirit of Christ.

This endearment of faith is already in our lives when we need it.

It will never let us down. It is the best security we can seek.

*“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

*Amen.*