

Theme: Where Your Treasure Is

Text: Luke 12:27-34

27 "Consider how the lilies grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. 28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! 29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. 30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. 31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. 32 "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. 33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. 34 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

At the very end of our Gospel reading for today we heard Jesus say, **"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"** (v. 34). These words of Jesus sound simple enough, yet there are two important words we need to look at so we can understand this verse correctly. The first important word is "treasure." What does Jesus mean when he says "treasure?" A treasure is something that an individual believes is extremely valuable. A treasure is something so valuable that we will go to any length to protect it and keep it. The second important word is "heart." Jesus is not talking about your physical heart that pumps your blood. He is speaking about your emotions: the things you love, and long for, and desire. Our "heart" is all that we feel, and those feelings impact the way we think and the way we act.

We also need to keep in mind the context that this verse fits into. Jesus has just finished speaking about not worrying about what we eat or drink or wear. Instead Jesus encourages us to seek God's kingdom, trusting that God will provide for all our needs so that we can be generous with the things God gives us. Jesus tells his believers to focus on storing up treasures in heaven. According to Jesus, wherever your treasure is that is where your emotions, thoughts, and ultimately your actions are going to be focused. What we treasure not only controls our hearts, but our lives.

That seems to contradict the way we think about ourselves. We like to think that we have control over our hearts. We believe that we are in control of our emotions, and that we control what we think and how we act. But time and again our sinful nature makes it clear this is simply not true. Image you inherited a priceless vase. This vase is not just worth a few hundred dollars or even a few thousand dollars. This vase is worth millions of dollars! Where would you keep that vase? Locked in a cabinet high on a shelf, or on your living room coffee table? Now, image you walked into your living room and you saw your three-year old son, or grandson, or nephew playing with that vase as if it were a toy. What would you feel at that moment? Panic, fear, would your heart start racing as you ran over to grab that vase out of the child's hands? Would you scold the child and punish them for having touched the vase? Why would you do any of that? It's only a vase. But what is that

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vase? It has become a treasure, controlling our emotions and our actions. And it's not really a vase that we see when we look at that hunk of China, it is? We see money; enough money to make us rich!

Let's be honest, we love money, and we love all the things we can buy and do with money. Where the problem comes into our lives is not the money. The problem is that we like to think that our money is separate from our relationship with God. That is a problem because it's not our money. Psalm 24 says, "**The earth the Lord's, and everything in it**" (Psalm 24:1)! If everything in the world belongs to God then our money is really his money. How we use God's money tells is a lot about our relationship with God.

Now, it is certainly not wrong to spend money. God gives us money to provide for our needs, and so we can be generous in helping with the needs of others. The question is how do we spend most of our money? Do we spend it on our needs, or on our wants? Imagine if someone who you don't know would look at your life and how you spend your money. Based on your spending habits what would they believe you care most about the most? Would they guess sports, or restaurants? Would they think you mainly care about your house, or your car, or your cabin? Would they think that your treasure is your T.V. set and everything you watch on it? Or would your spending point to a person, someone you feel is more valuable than anything else in the world? If what Jesus says really is true— "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" —then where is your heart?

Jesus is trying to get us to understand this: how we use our earthly treasures has a direct impact on our hearts, which directly impacts not only our lives, but our faith. It's not a good sign if we are freely spending large amounts of money on sports tickets, vacations, restaurants, or "toys," but then we cringe when it comes to giving anything back to God. To Jesus this is one area that is very black and white. If our treasure is with Jesus, then our hearts are going to be there too. But, if our treasure is not with Jesus, then let's not fool ourselves, because our hearts are not with Jesus either. Jesus said, "**He who is not with me is against me**" (Matthew 12:30).

"**Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also**" (v. 34). How easily our hearts are led to trust in the wrong treasure. When we set our hearts on these wrong treasures they cause us fear and worry. Worst of all they lead us away from our real treasure, our gracious God and Savior Jesus. With Jesus is where we find true treasure. Only in Christ do we have forgiveness for all those times we allowed our hearts to follow worthless treasure. Only through faith in Jesus do we have the perfection God demands to be able to enter his heavenly dwelling.

What is truly amazing is that our Lord gives us so much more than forgiveness. Jesus says, "**Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom**" (v. 32). That's shocking to hear, especially knowing what we really deserve from God. Imagine getting a phone call from the president of the United States and he says, "Don't be afraid, and don't worry about needing anything. I am going to give you the wealth of this entire country!" That's exactly what God has done. God has an enormous treasure

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chest filled with his love, grace, forgiveness, peace, and the eternal happiness of an unending life with him. That chest is filled with every treasure of his heavenly kingdom. What has he done with that treasure? He has given that treasure to us through Jesus our Savior. God has given you his treasure, and where God's treasure is, there his heart is also. His heart is with you! And if God's heart is with you what more could he possibly give you? As Jesus said, this is **"a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys"** (v. 33). In Christ, we have a treasure that we can never lose or break; it will never disappear because it is the treasure of God's kingdom.

Daniel certainly understood this. His treasure was in heaven. Daniel was a believer in God who rose to a high position of power while the nation of Israel was exiled in Babylon. But then the king of Babylon decreed that anyone who prayed to any god other than the king himself would be thrown to the lions. Daniel had a lot to lose: his position, his life. Did he worry? No! His treasure wasn't his position or his life. It was in heaven. So, Daniel kept on praying, even when he was thrown to the lions. That night we're told that the king with all his power and might was tossing and turning in bed, while Daniel was at peace. **"Do not fear, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."** That's where Daniel's treasure was, it was in heaven.

The same was true for the Apostle Paul. His treasure was in heaven. Paul didn't just have a lot to lose. He actually lost everything. When he became a believer in Jesus, he went from being one of the most highly respected Pharisees to being an outlaw. He lost everything, but he had no regrets. He said, **"Whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ"** (Philippians 3:7). Do you think he was cringing or smiling as he said that? Paul also said, **"What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things"** (Philippians 2:7-8). Do you know where Paul was when he wrote those words? He was in prison! Yet Paul's treasure was in heaven.

Like Daniel and Paul how do we set our hearts on the right treasure? Jesus tells us: **"Do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them. But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well"** (vs. 29-31). Do you know what the key is to a worry-free life? Trusting the phrase, "Your Father knows." Your treasure is in heaven! Whatever it is that you need here on earth, your heavenly Father knows what that is. If God is willing to give you his heavenly kingdom, will he not also make sure that you are taken care of here? Jesus doesn't want you to live worried and anxious! So he helps us to focus on God, while helping us trust that God will focus on us.

Knowing that we will be cared for means knowing that we can be generous. Jesus said, **"Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also"** (vs. 33-34). Here's a truth about life: The more you focus on earth and its stuff, the more

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worry and anxiety you will have. You know that's true! So why not give away what you're going to leave behind anyway? Joyful generosity lives in people whose treasure is in heaven. Because **"where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** Remember, your heart controls your thinking and your actions. When our hearts are focused on all that God has done for us, and all he has waiting for us, that is when we are filled with the desire to give joyfully. With your heart and mind focused on your Savior you can be joyfully generous because when you are focused on Jesus that is when you know, without a doubt, that **"your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom"** (v. 32). Amen.