

## Wellspring – Life & Teaching of Jesus (46) Sermon on the Mount – Treasure! (Matt 6:19-21)

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt 6:19-21)*

### What do you really really want?

There’s a principle in life that you will get what you really really want. Many people will say that they want something – but they don’t really really want it – they don’t want it badly enough to sacrifice everything else in their lives in order to attain that one thing, they don’t want it badly enough to keep pressing on, despite failures and setbacks until they attain their desire. Most people don’t get the things they want because they are not sufficiently single-minded in the pursuit of those things.

What we really really want is important. David had great wealth and position but he had set his heart on “one thing” – and that one thing was to do with his relationship with and knowledge of God.

*One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple. (Ps 27:4)*

Paul had a similar passion – a burning desire to know Christ and to experience his power.

*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. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ — the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith. **I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings**, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus. (Phil 3:8-14)*

Both Paul and David teach us that there is something far more valuable than riches that we can set our hearts on – and if we truly set our hearts on it we will find it.

*My son, if you accept my words and store up my commands within you, turning your ear to wisdom and applying your heart to understanding, and if you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. (Prov 2:1-5)*

Many people in the world set their hearts on the accumulation of material riches and wealth. If they want it badly enough they will probably get it – but this will often be at the expense of far more important things like family and relationships – and when they find wealth they discover it brings with it no lasting fulfilment or satisfaction.

### The folly of treasuring the things of this world.

Jesus told the story of a rich fool who made his wealth the treasure of his heart.

*Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I'll say to myself, “You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God.” (Luke 12:15-21)*

The love of money (making earthly riches your treasure) is **a root of all kinds of evil** (1 Tim 6:10) and will ultimately profit us nothing.

*Treasures of wickedness profit nothing, but righteousness delivers from death. (Prov 10:2)*

Even wealth obtained by righteous means can become a snare to us if we allow it to take the place that God should have in our hearts. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record Jesus' encounter with the rich young ruler (Mt 19:16-22 etc). He was a righteous young man and there is no suggestion that his wealth had been wrongly obtained, but Jesus touched a raw nerve when he told him to sell it all, give it to the poor and follow Him. His inability to countenance such an act showed that his wealth had taken the place in his heart that only God should have.

### **We have been given incredible riches!**

If we only knew the riches that are available to us in Christ we would lose desire for everything else.

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ... In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. (Eph 1:3, 7-8)*

But these great riches are "hidden" they have to be sought out and desire above all else.

*My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Col 2:2-3)*

These riches have not been obtained easily or lightly – but purchased for us by the precious blood of Jesus.

*For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. (1 Peter 1:18-19)*

The greatest treasure is actually to know Him – this is what Paul and David cried out for – and you have the potential to know God even better than they did – it is simply a question of how badly you really really want it.

*Our highest calling is to be a friend of God. If we become His friends, He will not want to do anything without sharing it with us. (Rick Joyner)*

We start the quest to know Him by how we value and receive the word of God – it is the word of God which will lead us into the knowledge of God.

*I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure. (Ps 119:162)*

### **This treasure is mutual!**

Throughout scripture God refers to his people as his special treasure:

*'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'* (Ex 19:4-6 – also Deut 7:6, 14:2)

Peter refers to us as "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God" (1 Peter 2:9-10). So when Jesus refers to the kingdom as a treasure hidden in a field and a pearl of great price we can interpret this both ways – as a picture of God's attitude toward us and as a picture of our attitude towards Him.

*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. (Matt 13:44-46)*