

## Your Treasure Chest

### *Prayer*

Good Morning, today I would like to speak to you about your treasure chest.

Open the lid and you will find that your treasure chest is divided into many sections. There are treasured memories, There is integrity, there is family, there are investments, There are treasured times, there are treasured items and there is money. Essentially, you are blessed with a treasure chest of things that you hold that have significance and value to you. We all have. I am not talking about the material object here, but the feeling of treasure that you have for things in your heart.

Ask yourself this morning, what in my life do I treasure?

You know as hard as it for some to handle the Lord has given us lots of advice on the subject of what to treasure. As Christian disciples we listen to what the master has to say and then we choose to obey or stand in disobedience to his will.

Matthew 6:19-21

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

What makes up your treasure?

- Time with your family?
- Your guitar collection?
- Time away in the wilderness away from everything?
- Fellowship with good friends?
- Time spent in prayer with the Lord?
- Playing sports?
- Accumulation of Wealth?
- Having the best house?
- Having the best Job?
- Having more than your neighbor?
- Your role at work?
- Your role in your social club?
- Your accomplishments?
- Time spent reading?

Look inside right now and see what matters to you...

Now think about what will transcend this life into the next?

I am not saying we don't need to focus on sports or investments or money or anything else, but my job is to shepherd your souls, so I want each person here today to walk away with God's perspective on what is important.

I have been counseling most of my life, much more so since I became a pastor. I must say that there is often a huge disparity between how people present themselves to others and what is actually going on in their lives. No one wants to feel less. No one wants to be open and share or receive support in these difficult times because no one likes to feel less. The truth is that this world has taught each of us in this room, not to be vulnerable or open. Each time we do, we get hammered down and so learn a lesson really quick about being open.

My friends this is not the way it is in a culture of honor. We are all family and we take care of each other. If someone is gossiping or calling down a brother or sister we shut it down and do not entertain this behavior.

After years of counseling, I can honestly say that the lack of Money or even too much money can be a major cause of stress in our lives. If you don't have enough you worry about feeding your family or your kids. You worry about providing necessities and so on. If you have too much, you never know if people are your friends or if they are simply friends with your wallet. Too much makes you worry about whether or not your kids are at risk for abduction or manipulation of some kind. Most of us would rather live with excessive finance than not enough, but I have seen husbands and / or wives so consumed by their jobs that their real treasure, that which endures is not cared for. Their family or their marriage is often the price for success. Not having enough creates stress and causes breakups and hurt.

There are several North American surveys where the statistics clearly show that North Americans worry more about money than marriages or their health.

So what is the solution? Speaking personally, I have experienced lean times and I have been in abundance. Abundance is better.

So why is money or property or investments or accumulation of wealth bad?

Simple answer: It is not... provided it doesn't get in the way of what is really important? Is a man's income worth his marriage? Is missing your child's school events worth it? Let's say a man's wife is having trouble with a pregnancy and she is scared. Is your wife your priority or your job?

In case any of this is vague to anyone... It is always people over things...

So as a pastor I get concerned about anything that can distract the souls that God has placed in my care as their spiritual father, from him. In the treasure chest of our lives, is God a priority? Are your kids a priority? Is your spouse a priority? What do you put into your treasure chest?

Some of you might be astonished to learn that Jesus actually had a great deal to say about the subject.

Consider:

- 16 out of 38 parables dealt with the handling of possessions and money.
- God knew this was a major stressor and that it would be an ongoing challenge for his children. There are more than 2000 verses in the Word that deal with this subject.
- It is appropriate to talk about to avoid the pitfalls

Consider the rich fool. Jesus clearly shows us an amazing lesson on the problems involved in self-indulgence. You see he was concerned about what he could gain in this world. His treasure was focused on acquisition. In the parable in Luke 12:13-21 which reads:

*Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."*

*But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."*

*Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry." ' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?' "So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."*

Notice his repeated use of "I"?

- What shall I do?
- I have no Room
- I will do this
- I will pull down my barns
- There I will store my crops
- I will say to my soul

Is this man God centered or self-centered?

What about that trap of Covetousness? I like that word covetousness; it is big enough to hide behind. Do you think that person is self-aware enough to think something like: I want what you have, in fact I want something better or greater or higher priced than you so I can validate myself through accumulation of possessions instead of dealing with my self-worth and identity issues.

No probably not... and so the problem of coveting what the Jones' have just continues unabated.

Humm... let's go back to the word. Turn back with me to our scripture. Specifically Luke 12:15,16

*And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."*

*Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully.*

Here is stress free advice from the apostle Paul. Philippians 4:11-13

*Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.*

Tie your joy to your faith, not your circumstances.

God says that you are not to place your treasure in the world but in the eternal.

Philippians 4:19

*And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

We spoke recently about Faith. The stress and worry over this is lack of faith. If you find yourself down this road and I have been guilty of the sin of worry, so I know where I am coming from. If you find yourself worrying, STOP and ask the Holy Spirit for the Gift of Faith. And believe on what Paul has said here in Philippians 4:19.

Now I have been presented with the scripture from Psalm 37:4,5

*Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart. Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He shall bring it to pass.*

So... He is not going to give you everything you want, but he will change the desires of your heart to reflect what you need.

Let's look at more of what is said in 1 Timothy 6:8-12

*Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

*But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

Note that he does not say that money is evil... It is the love of money that is the problem.

I am going to go out on a limb here this morning, but I want to be clear...

Money and possessions are not part of God's plan for your treasure chest. Money is a tool for trade and acquisition of necessities. The problem in our culture is that our definition of necessities often outpaces our financial ability inducing stress.

If you are competing with the Jones' Stop because God clearly tells us that Covetousness is a trap. It leads to selfishness.

Now what do you treasure? Is it fellowship? Is it God? Is it Family? Is it life? Is it happiness? Is it fond memories? Is it this church?

Matthew told us in Chapter 6 verse 21 that wherever our treasure is there the desires of your heart will also be.

Luke tells us in Chapter 12 verse 34 exactly the same thing.

In my office it has become evident that it doesn't take a lot of money to start the process and come between each of us and God. If you place money in front of your eyes all the time, you won't see anything else of value. At the end of your life when you look back at what is stored in your treasure chest what will it be?

Pastor Charles Spurgeon once said something that I read, that has stuck with me. He said: "Many a man when he begins to accumulate wealth commences at the same moment to ruin his soul, and the more he acquires, the more closely he blocks up his liberality, which is, so to speak, the very mouth of spiritual life.

Instead of doing more for God he does less.

The more he saves the more he wants, and the more he wants the less he cares for the world to come.”

This is not to say money or accumulation is evil or wrong. But if it consumes you, comes between you and God or if it robs you of the important aspects of an abundant life with family, friends and loved ones, then you have a problem. It is a heart problem in your relationships..

The Word tells us in Matthew 6:33

“...But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

Covetousness and selfishness robs our treasure chests

What does this word actually mean? I mean Covetousness... What exactly is it?

- Covetousness is a dissatisfaction with what is enough
- Covetousness leads us to believe that our happiness comes from things rather than from God.
- It feeds our appetite for pleasure by getting more things
- It makes us want what another has

I read an illustration this week by Robert C. Shannon, which I think is brilliant so I will share it with you:

He said: In Parker and Harts “The Wizard of Id” comic strip you see a monk out front putting up a sign on the monastery message board while another monk watches. The message on the sign reads: “Thou Shall not Covet”. The visiting monk pipes up and says to the other monk: “Boy, I wish we had a signboard like that at our church”...

We are to store up in our treasure chest that which is eternal...

- Wealth is not a permanent possession
- Every Penny is left behind when we die
- Someone else gets what we have

Remember Matthew 6:19-21

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## **Conclusion:**

I want there to be no confusion about this topic this morning.

To be clear:

- There is nothing wrong with a person having a desire and a will to have a better quality of life
- There is nothing wrong with aspiring to a better job that pays more money
- There is nothing wrong with enjoying the better things in life
- There is nothing wrong with being wealthy

But I want you to note that they are ALL wrong if they have become your priority.

This morning this entire sermon is about looking inside our selves and determining where our priorities lie. Correcting them if they are not aligned with Gods will and then living a life of abundance in Christ.

Is God a priority?

Is your family a priority?

Is your church a priority?

Are relationships your priority?

Where is the eternal on your list of priorities this morning?

*Prayer*