

VOLUME XCIX
October 2019

THE SHEPHERD'S STAFF



Autumn Blessings

Let us not become weary in doing good,
for at the proper time we will reap a harvest
if we do not give up. GALATIANS 6:9

Submit your comments to our Editor,
Jacquie Hinton, about "The
Shepherd's Staff;" and, any other
thoughts you might have about the
publication that you feel will be con-
structive or interesting to our readers.
You may do so by emailing us at:
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Dear Church Family,

In spite of how it may sometimes appear, your pastors are not in competition to see who can prepare/preach/teach the longest message. That being said, I must acknowledge that we both have a tendency to be somewhat long-winded. Having previewed our Associate Pastor's column for this month's Shepherd's Staff, it is obvious that he needs a lot of newsletter real estate to cover the particular Biblical topic he has chosen. So, I will forego my own column this month and encourage you to spend the time necessary to thoughtfully contemplate some implications of the concept addressed in Pastor Caleb's "Harvest and Home."

Serving the Savior,
Pastor Keith

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Harvest and Home

Once upon a time, we had a Family Festival. Okay, we still have the Family Festival each year, but once upon a time, the promotion for said Family Festival highlighted the various booths at which children could get candy and have some fun. No issue here, obviously, nor was there even any issue with the content of this “highlighting.” The interesting factor was the way that certain words were said. At our Festival, there would be “booths for children.” If you’re reading this in your head, there’s still no cause for alarm. Try it out loud: “booths for children.” If you’re still not hearing it, say it faster. Yes, when we speak, sometimes our “ths” sounds a little too similar to “z.” In case there was any question on your end, we weren’t actively giving intoxicants to minors. We tend to frown on that sort of thing around here.

As I’m writing this, it is the first day of fall. Though today is a little toastier than it’s been the past few days (it feels like it, anyway), the weather doesn’t change the fact that autumn is my favorite of the four seasons. I know that it doesn’t last very long here in Southern Nevada (I’m sure there’s a bit more summer waiting in the wings for us in the weeks to come), but the taste of the air changes when the oppressive heat starts dissipating. The whole feel of fall is different than other seasons. I’m not one for pumpkin spice coffees and I’m not a fan of the smell of cinnamon, but who doesn’t love pumpkin bread (with nuts, obviously – I’m not crazy) and the orange, red, and gold-wrapped Reese’s Peanut Butter Cups? Christmas is now on the horizon and the pleasant gift of time with the family is finally only a few calendar pages away.

What does this have to do with booze, er, booths for children? Yesterday in Sunday school, our Young Adult class spent our third lesson in Zechariah 14. The prophet has been going strong since chapter twelve about what all will happen “on that day.” I’m happy to have further conversation with you about just what “that day” entails, but let it suffice here to recognize that much of Zechariah’s prophecy concerns the end of this age when Jesus comes back to conclusively set things right for all time. The created order will itself foundationally shift and all of God’s enemies will be punished for their antagonism of His people. I think that’s sufficient context for you to now read Zechariah 14.16-19:

¹⁶ *Then everyone who survives of all the nations that have come against Jerusalem shall go up year after year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to keep the Feast of Booths.*
¹⁷ *And if any of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, there will be no rain on them.* ¹⁸ *And if the family of Egypt does not go up and present themselves, then on them there shall be no rain; there shall be the plague with which the LORD afflicts the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.* ¹⁹ *This shall be the punishment to Egypt and the punishment to all the nations that do not go up to keep the Feast of Booths.*

Now, there’s quite a bit in that paragraph. Many questions could use answering, but I think foremost for the average Christian are these: 1) What is the Feast of Booths? and 2) Why is it so important? I may have bitten off more than I can chew with trying to condense this from the bulk of a Sunday school lesson down into a Shepherd’s Staff article, but when has that stopped me before? Let’s see what we can do...

1) **What is the Feast of Booths?** I would urge you to read Leviticus 23.33-43 on your own, but I’ll summarize.

> The Feast of Booths goes by a handful of names. If you’re not in ESV, you may know this better as the Feast of Tabernacles. Over in Exodus 23 and 34, you’ll see this referred to as the Feast of Ingathering. There are also places in Scripture where folks call it “the feast” of the seventh month (see 1 Kings 8 and Nehemiah 8).

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- > It takes place on the fifteenth day of the seventh month. Keep in mind that the Hebrews use a different calendar than we do, so (depending on the moon) this falls somewhere in either September or October.
- > It is largely a celebration of the harvest (hence the “Feast of Ingathering”). The people were to have gathered in the produce of the threshing floor and the winepress and then to celebrate all that God had provided for them.
- > It’s book-ended by holy convocations/solemn assemblies and full of the feasting just mentioned. It’s also filled with the presentation of food offerings to the LORD.
- > During this Feast, the Israelites were to dwell in booths/tabernacles/tents so that all generations would know that the Israelites dwelt in booths when God liberated them from Egypt.

There’s certainly more that could be said and I pray that this has whet your appetite for more study, but it’s a good primer for us and should provide enough context to understand the answer to the second question.

2) Why is the Feast of Booths so important? Specifically, why is this the Feast that God inspired Zechariah to write about in his eschatological prophecies?

Will this Feast be literally reintroduced at some point in the future? There are many God-fearing and Jesus-loving Christians who believe this. That might be true, but I have a major issue with any assumption of Old Testament-esque practices being reestablished. Without even addressing the logistics of Jerusalem, rain, and Egypt (which I take to be mostly symbolic of the church, God’s blessing, and the antagonists of God’s people), we’re left with this question of the sacrificial system. There are food offerings as part of the Feast of Booths. If you’ll pardon my French, why in the barnacles would God reestablish the sacrificial system when He spent the whole book of Hebrews letting us know that the sacrificial system was a picture of Jesus to come and thoroughly fulfilled via the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world? That makes no sense to me. We’re left with trying to extract the truths that Zechariah was seeking to communicate through his prophecy. In light of Zechariah’s message, the content of the OT prophets, Jesus’ fulfillment of OT prophecies, and John the Revelator’s vision, why is the Feast of Booths so important?

To (I pray helpfully) oversimplify things: the Feast of Booths was about harvest and home. The Israelites celebrated it as annual reminder of God’s bounty with which He blessed them. Crops were brought into the storehouses and a feast ensued. In our great blessedness in this culture, I can’t help but think that the joy of the harvest is lost by most of those not employed in the different farming industries. We get frustrated when the grocery store is out of our dish detergent – to many, the sense of peace of a crop well-harvested only exists in stories. I think we still do get a taste of the joy of the harvest when we celebrate Thanksgiving. We praise God for His bounty and may be reminded of leaner times in our culture by turkeys and pilgrims and Native Americans. The Feast of Booths rejoiced in God’s gift of the harvest.

It was a celebration of present blessings and also a reminder of past blessings. If you like, the “Ingathering” celebrated harvest and the “Booths” celebrated home. The theme of the exodus from Egypt runs throughout Scripture. Indeed, for an extra assignment, see if you can spot the exodus themes in the earlier parts of Zechariah 14. I’m rankled by certain commentators (including *The Prince of Egypt*) who sees the exodus narrative as being primarily about the inherent worth of human beings. Is racial slavery an evil? No question. The story of the exodus isn’t about racial slavery or any other kind of slavery – it’s about salvation. Israel was trapped in a nation that worked ill toward them. God brought them out and then repeatedly told them to not return to this land of spiritual darkness. The prophets bor-

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row this terminology to remind God's people that He saved them from sin and that to return to Egypt (sin) is to deliberately reject God's good gift of salvation.

For Abraham's physical descendants, the Feast of Booths was a reminder that they were no longer slaves in Egypt. It was a reminder of their salvation from that which bound them. They observed the symbol of living in a tent for a week as a way of celebrating that God brought them out of bondage and into the promise. The Israelites received the instructions for the feasts in anticipation of being brought into the Promised Land. They transitioned from Egypt into a place flowing with milk and honey. The booths celebrated liberty, but I think that the trajectory of Scripture helps us to understand why Zechariah was inspired to choose this Feast.

The booths were a mark of salvation, but wandering around in the wilderness and not entering the Promised Land were results of Israel's sin. God always planned to take Israel from bondage into the truest freedom. In a sense, the Israelites camped in booths to celebrate that they were in the Promised Land. Just as going without a shower for a few days makes us that much more thankful for running water, so being in temporary shelters (not squalor, by any stretch, but still not established "houses") reminded Israel to be grateful for the great gift of their home.

When Zechariah spoke of "that day," he did so with the meaning of the Feast of Booths swirling around in his head. He saw what this Feast anticipated and celebrated and carried it to its logical conclusion. When Jesus returns, we will enjoy the harvest and we will enjoy home. All of the promises God has made for provision and blessing find their fullest fulfillment in our Savior. Salvation from our spiritual Egypt (the death in which we dwelt before we were given new hearts) comes through that Lamb of John 1.29. We are sustained until we reach our new home through the God who tabernacle among us (John 1.14). We anticipate that day when we will get to enjoy the New Heavens and the New Earth where Jesus has gone to prepare a place for us (John 14.2). The worship of which Zechariah speaks in chapter fourteen has less to do with the specifics of the feast and far more to do with the recipient of the worship: the King, the LORD of hosts.

Autumn is a time of longing. Some long for cooler weather. Some long for turkey and dressing. Some long for the Christmas Eve service. Some long for family. Some long for peace. Some long for hope. In our movies and our tv shows, we watch scenes in which, for just a moment, everything has been set right. There's more than enough and people are getting along. We hold onto those memories from the past when things were good and then wonder why those are just memories. We look forward to tearing open presents and then that sense of sublime joy fades into the background when family goes home a couple of days later.

Permit me to suggest that the Feast of Booths is a promise. It's a promise for that day when Jesus will make everything new. It's a promise for that day when there will be no tears of want of anything. It's a promise for that day when all of the happiest feelings we can remember will pale in comparison with the joy of the eternal weight of glory. It's a promise for that day when all our restlessness will itself be put to rest, when we'll look back at all the happy endings we've enjoyed and wonder how we could ever settle so for little. It's a promise for that day when we will fully know the height, the breadth, the width, and the depth and we will know the love of Christ that set us free from sin to live for our Creator. It's a promise of harvest and home in our Lord Jesus Christ..

Until that day,
Pastor Caleb



Fall in Germany September 2019

Prayer—Answers

Fall took off with a Navigator Military retreat over Labor Day. The top two photos are friends (couples & singles) meeting at our house to interact with Rusty Bean, one of the speakers at the retreat.



The bottom photo is a young family we spent time with in Bavaria and on their Army Post, near us.





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The home groups through the church we attend are underway - three are studying 'Growing Strong in God's Family' of The Navigators' Colossians 2:7 series. On Tuesday mornings a women's Bible study group is also growing in discipleship in this series.

The focus for these small groups is deepening our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ as well as helping others come to know Him and helping them grow in their faith and in sound doctrine, passing this on to others.

Titus 2:1,2 "...teach the things which are in agreement with sound doctrine [which produces men and women of good character whose life-style identifies them as true Christians]... sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness."

Amplified Bible

Praying forward:

Karen flies to Japan in early October to visit one of our sons and his family. We plan to meet up and visit our daughters and another son in the USA—all as part of the travel to attend our National Staff Gathering (Orlando) in early November!

Thank you for remembering us in terms of 'smooth' flight connections and good family times together— and ministry all along the way with supporters as well as friends in each place we visit and those who visit with us here in Germany, when we are present and in our absence.

Thanks for your part in the growth and progress of those involved.

Mike & Karen Kotecki

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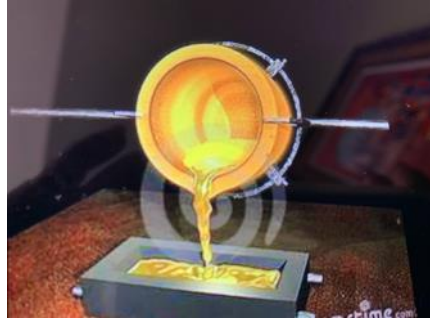
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Mike and Karen Kotecki are Navigator Missionaries in Germany our PCC family supports.



Precious Treasure
By Sharon Ankrum



My husband worked in the mining-milling industry all our married life. We moved from mining camp to mining camp and numerous states. Before we moved to Pahrump, Don had worked in Carlin Nevada where a lot of the gold mines are located.

As I have been studying the book of Job, I am amazed how detailed he describes the mines.

*Job 28:1-11. Surely there is a mine for silver,
and a place for gold that they refine.*

*2 Iron is taken out of the earth,
and copper is smelted from the ore.*

*3 Man puts an end to darkness
and searches out to the farthest limit
the ore in gloom and deep darkness.*

*4 He opens shafts in a valley away from where anyone lives;
they are forgotten by travelers;
they hang in the air, far away from mankind; they swing to and fro.*

*5 As for the earth, out of it comes bread,
but underneath it is turned up as by fire.*

*6 Its stones are the place of sapphires
and it has dust of gold.*

*7 That path no bird of prey knows,
and the falcon's eye has not seen it.*

*8 The proud beasts have not trodden it;
the lion has not passed over it.*

*9 "Man puts his hand to the flinty rock
and overturns mountains by the roots.*

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***10 He cuts out channels in the rocks,
and his eye sees every precious thing.***

***11 He dams up the streams so that they do not trickle,
and the thing that is hidden he brings out to light.***

So descriptive of searching for that elusive gold.

The process of getting this treasure is expensive and a long drawn out process. First is the hunt, maybe quartz indicates gold and then the exploration. There are not many hard rock mines anymore, where nuggets just lay in the dirt or bedrock. Now it is much more sophisticated and modern. Most of the gold in Nevada is microscopic and the process of getting it out requires caustic chemicals and heat.

So many mines are open pits where Huge trucks and caterpillars dig the dirt and haul it to a mill where it is crushed, cyanide added and sometimes carbon which reduces the dirt to a liquid. More chemicals are added to separate the gold-silver and other impurity's out. This a leaching method. Once the milling is complete (I won't bore you with the whole process), it goes to the refinery. There it is plated on to steel wool , washed off and it is then the sludge is then run through a filter press and the precip is added to a flux to remove more impurities, then put in a furnace of about 2400 degrees, poured into crucibles, cooled, washed and cleaned , stamped and sent to another refinery. Whew, what a process. No wonder it is so expensive!

As we are the treasure and the apple of God's eye, we have to look at the cost and refining we have to go through to be as pure as gold. Jesus, our Blessed Savior, was ripped, crushed, and took on all our impurities to be refined through death to be raised to make us that treasure, loved by the Trinity to be placed where like Gold , we will shine , bright and pure.

We are His children cherished to be conformed to His image, Being a Christian on this earth is like finding and mining and milling that gold. First comes the search for that precious love that that can ONLY satisfy. Accepting the gift is like finding the vein. Next comes the real test, the crushing of self, allowing God to be in control. Trials and tribulations are like the caustic chemicals used to break down our resistance we want to hang on to. Just like hard rocks we must be broken to be what God wants us to be. Once God has removed the useless things in our lives, He will refine us to be the person He wants. Just like the mining process, we are changed from a hard rock to a refined shining person, cleansed of all iniquities and made pure by the blood of Jesus.

Daniel 11:35 (ESV)
and some of the wise shall stumble, so that they may be refined, purified, and made white, until the time of the end, for it still awaits the appointed time.

Job 23:10 (ESV)
But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come out as gold.

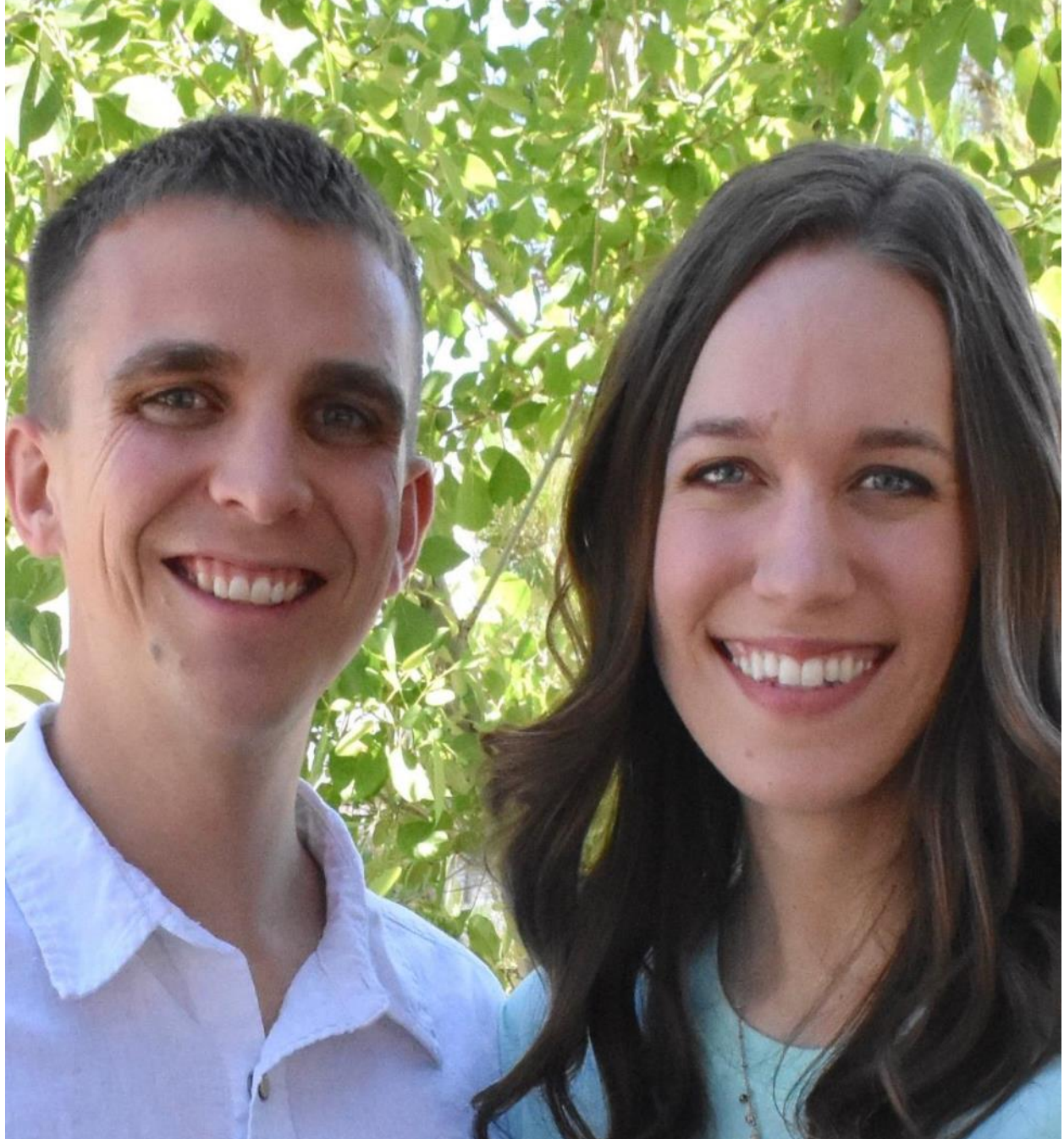
We are the material, He is the Refiner!



OCTOBER IS
PASTOR APPRECIATION
MONTH



***OUR DEVOTED SENIOR PASTOR FOR 13 YEARS
AND
HIS LOVING AND SUPPORTIVE WIFE, KIM***



***PASTOR CALEB WALKER
AND
HIS LOVING AND DEDICATED WIFE, AMY***



What's Happening



Check out the Samaritan's Purse video on our PCC website.

Contact: Stephen and Tamie Pitman:802-535-4910

SPEAKING OF
"OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD"
YOUTH GROUP CAR WASH
OCTOBER 19—9AM-12PM
PARKING LOT
All funds raised will go to
"Operation Christmas Child"



OCTOBER 26—5PM

Chili Cook-off
Pie Contest

Donate Candy to pass out to the Participants
For more information Contact:
Charlene Rex—303-358-4408



Amy Walker Baby Shower
Save the Date 11/2
More Info Coming
Contact:
Kristi Foust—352-585-6374



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Moving / Relocation

Look at those two words! MOVING vs RELOCATION! What's the difference?!? Don't you have to relocate when you move. Or, you have to move when you relocate! The "Thesaurus" states to "relocate" means "to move, reposition, transfer, displace, shuffle, rearrange, change place, put somewhere else." So, why do we dread the thoughts of "moving" when we do it constantly – even when we are sleeping.

Okay, I know your arguments; and, I agree with most of them. "Moving" means there is a certain "degree" of moving – movement – and/or relocation. For Example:

"Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you. Matthew 17:19/20

Well my move wasn't exactly that momentous – but, it was monumental. Or, at least that is what it seemed to me. And, it makes me more anxious to make *my FINAL MOVE!*

Footnote: We, as Christians, do look forward to our "final" and "eternal" move! But, the time of that move is not our decision. That time has already been predestined in the "*book of life.*"

I worked as a "civilian" for the U. S. Air Force for 15 years. So, I moved quite a bit. But, those moves weren't quite as tedious since the Air Force paid movers to pack up, relocate and unload my goods! As a civilian, I worked for "financial" institutions that also rendered the same services.

So, to paraphrase an already "trite" truism – "no pain" – no gain" I learned the meaning of that phrase when I began to have to provide for my own "moving" transports. I have had to do that for myself for exactly five times since I retired! FIVE TIMES!!!! And believe me, this is my LAST and FINAL time I will move myself. For those of you who have ever "moved" locations – is this a "truism" or not: You say to yourself: "Where did I get all this stuff from?!?" Or: "What is this? And, why am I keeping it?"

Well, I did myself a "wake-up call" – "If you haven't used it in a year or you don't know what it is – then "toss it." If one of your relatives gave it to you and asks you how did you like it? Just answer – "I treasure it!" And, you do – because it remains in your "treasure chest" of memories.

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Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[a] 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. Matthew 6:19-21ESV

Jacquie Hinton – **Editor**

Pastor Caleb Walker and Karen Crispell– **Copy Editors**

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