

TEXT: Luke 12:27-34

THEME: WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

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.

Dear Christian Friends:

“Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be.” That’s a very well-known phrase. We just sang it five times, so I bet you’ve got it stuck in your head! “Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be.” It doesn’t seem hard at all to understand. Put your heart in the right place, and then your treasure will follow. If your heart is with God, naturally your treasure will follow. Simple.

Except, I want you to say that phrase with me again. “Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be.” What follows what? According to Jesus, your treasure doesn’t follow your heart. Your heart follows your treasure. Listen again: “Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be.” Jesus is not telling us, “Put your heart in the right place, then everything else will follow.” Jesus is telling us to look at where we put our money, because that’s how you tell what’s really in your heart. We can say what we want about what we believe and value, but what you spend your money on is a clear indication of where your heart really is.

There’s a simple way to say that: “Follow the money!” Have you heard that expression? It makes me think of corruption in politics. People can say or pretend whatever they want, but money shows you the truth. “Follow the money!” You know, that’s how you can determine if a married man is having an inappropriate relationship with another woman. Ask him, “Have you given her any gifts?” Why? Because your heart follows the money. “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

So where is your treasure? You don’t want me to ask you that question. I don’t want me to ask me that question. Why? That’s proof right there of how closely tied our treasure is to our hearts! We love money and we love things and we love the things we do with money. And we like to think that my money is separate from my relationship with God. “Don’t talk about money at church!” Except Jesus tells us that the opposite is true. My use of God’s money tells a lot about my relationship with God. “Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be.” Jesus is right!

So where is your treasure? Of course, there are some things that everyone must buy. If you picked up toilet paper at Walmart yesterday, I'm not going to accuse you of making toilet paper your heart's home. You know that's not what God is talking about. It's not wrong to spend money. I want you to imagine, though, that if someone from the outside would look at your life and your finances, what would they think that you care most about? Would they guess sports? Or alcohol? Or your house? Or your cars? Or the cabin? If what Jesus says really is true—"Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be"—then where is your heart?

This is hard to think about, isn't it? But Jesus wants us to know that the way we use our earthly treasures has a direct impact on our hearts—on our faith! It's not a good sign if we don't bat an eye at spending money on sports tickets, vacations, or restaurants, but our faces cringe when it comes to giving back to God, to filling your offering envelope. To Jesus this is one area that is very black and white. "Where your treasure is, there your heart shall be." If your treasure is with Jesus, then your heart is going to be there too. If your treasure is not with Jesus, then don't fool yourself. Because your heart is not with Jesus either.

Here's what's amazing: God is very clear about where his treasure is. It's with you! To our worried hearts torn in too many different directions, Jesus says, "**Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.**" That's really shocking to hear: "**Your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.**" Imagine if the president would call me up on the phone and say, "Pastor, don't be afraid, I'm going to give you the country!" What? That's exactly what God has done! God has this enormous chest of treasures—love, grace, forgiveness, the kingdom of heaven . . . What has he done with them? He has given them to us through Jesus our Savior. God has given you his treasure, and where God's treasure is, there his heart is also—with you! Isn't that cool? What more could God do? What more could God give?

It all comes down to one word: "Give." "**Your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.**" God's love and forgiveness—his kingdom—is free. That's what "give" means, right? There's no fighting. No earning. No worrying. It doesn't depend on you. Grace is God's gift! That's what makes Christianity different from every religion in the world. Every other religion points you to you. "Do this." "Wear this." "Don't eat this." "Pull your share." Even Christian churches have bought in. "If you don't drink, smoke, or dance, you're in!" Except, "**your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.**"

Because of that, Jesus says, "**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.**" Here's a truth about life: The more your focus is on earth and its stuff, the more 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.**" Amen.

Prayer of the Church

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, we, your unworthy servants, give you most humble and hearty thanks for all your goodness and loving-kindness to us and to all mankind. We praise you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life, but above all for your love in the redemption of the world by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, for the means of grace, and for the hope of eternal life. Thank you for giving us your treasure—your love, grace, and forgiveness—for giving us the kingdom, proving that your heart is with us. In response to your giving, let our joyful generosity to you show that our hearts are with you. Then let us walk before you in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life and enjoy the testimony of a good conscience that we did not sit idly by while your church struggled financially to share the good news of the gospel. Dear Father, sustain and comfort us in every time of trouble, and finally receive us into your everlasting kingdom; through your infinite mercy in Christ Jesus, our Lord, who taught us to pray:

THE LORD'S PRAYER in modern language