

You Are Treasure

Margo and I went to purchase her engagement ring together. The diamond was not the largest in the store, but she liked it a lot. Regardless of the size of the diamond, the ring was much more than jewelry. It was a symbol of our love and commitment to be married. For this reason, it was our treasure.

Today in our Bible reading, we consider the Lord, the Gospel, and God's Kingdom as treasure. In two short parables, these three things are compared to buried treasure and priceless pearls. In each case, the treasure and the pearl are so valuable, the one who finds it willingly gives everything away to have it.

Would we living in modern day mostly middle-class America, be willing to give everything we have away for such treasure? What if the treasure or the pearl were the Gospel, or the Kingdom of God, or even the Lord Jesus himself? Still, I think it would be extremely hard for us to give everything away for anything.

But the truth is, it would be worth it, if we did. For example, I know a woman who has been struggling for many years with feelings of worthlessness and low self-esteem. She remembers being yelled at a lot as a small child, and then being told as a teenager by her dad, that she would never amount to much.

Now today, her job seems menial and uninteresting, her husband and children are so busy that she feels more like a cook and a maid than a wife or mother, and she wonders if anyone really loves her anymore. So, what if she found a treasure in a field, opened it, and found a wonderful, beautiful surprise – Jesus.

And, what if Jesus came out of that treasure chest with wonderful news, a surprising reversal. That really, she is the treasure, she is the priceless pearl, and it is the Lord Jesus who gave everything,

including his very life for her. That in Jesus' eyes she is valuable, worth everything to him, because he loves her that much.

What would she give for that? What would you give for that? Would you give anything, everything? The truth is that you can give nothing for this. It is rather a gift from Jesus, who was beaten, flogged, crowned with thorns, spit upon, crucified and dead in the tomb, to make such a wonderful surprise possible.

You see, my friends in Christ, the stories of the treasure in the field and the priceless pearl, help set us straight. We cannot afford the Gospel, the good news of God's love for us, because it is a priceless gift given to us by Jesus, and through his cross. Not even Bill Gates or Warren Buffet can afford this treasure.

Yet, the real surprise is that you are the treasure of the Lord. Why else would Jesus die on the cross for you? You are so valuable, so loved that Jesus gave everything for you. He was wounded, he was insulted, he was mistreated in every way, and finally, he was killed, all so he could claim you today as his treasure.

It's a reversal that is almost too much for humans to understand. We think we should have to buy treasure, like I bought Margo's engagement ring. Some people will even kill for treasure, a bank robber or jewel thief, for example, might shoot someone to get away with their treasure – money, gold, or diamonds.

I am reminded of the "One Ring" of the books and movie, "The Lord of the Rings." In Tolkien's story, this ring is so powerful that many have killed to possess it. In one dramatic scene, we see Smeagol kill his best friend to get the "One Ring" from him. He loves the ring so very much that he calls it, "My Precious".

We see in this story that people are sinful and will do anything to possess what they treasure. People will do anything to possess

money, gold, silver, power, prestige, and fame. We will hurt each other, take advantage of each other, even take each other's life, to have whatever we might believe is our precious.

But the parables today remind us of the reversal of the Gospel. The Lord Jesus does not kill for what is treasure, what is precious. No, he gives his own life for it. Despite our sinfulness, the Lord gives his life for us, his precious treasure. We see he will go to any length to take us back from sin, evil, and death.

This is what faith is all about. Realizing that the cross is for you. Recognizing that Jesus died on the cross to forgive your sins, and to forgive the sins of people everywhere. Remembering that there is nothing you can do to earn God's love and favor, because the Lord has done and given everything for you.

This passion God has for people is amazing. A favorite Bible passage of mine from Isaiah 49 shows this passion: "Can a woman forget her nursing child? Or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands."

In other words, you are more valuable to the Lord than you can ever imagine. You are so valuable that your name was written on his hands, which were nailed to the cross to save you. In this way, he died especially for you, and he died with you in mind. In this way, you are indeed his precious, priceless, treasure.

What would you give for such a Lord who would do this for you?
What would you give for a Lord who:

Forgives all your sins
Heals your diseases
Strengthens you to face each day
Walks with you through every challenge

Holds you hand or carries you through every struggle
Protects from evil and the evil one
Gives you a new and eternal life in heaven after you die?

I suggest you give him your whole life. I suggest you give him your heart, your mind, and your strength. I suggest that you make a place in your heart for him to live. I suggest that you give him your trust and your faith. I suggest you give him your service, by loving other people, all other people, as he loves you.

Some of you maybe have noticed I not only wear a wedding ring, but a ring on my other hand. This ring has a cross on it, and it was given to me as a gift after I did several funerals for a certain family. At first, I did not wear it because I wasn't really a ring person, but then one day when I put it on, I never took it off.

Like my wedding ring, it's a symbol someone loves and treasures me. It is a symbol that I am treasure to the Lord and that he died especially for me. I will not suggest you wear such a ring, but I encourage you to consider what you can wear or have on your person, to remind you that Jesus loves and treasures you.

People of God, the Lord Jesus died for you because you are what he treasures most. Do not forget that you are his priceless pearl, that the Lord has given everything for you, overshadowed you with his love, and he wants to be part of your life today and always. You can hardly imagine how precious you are to Jesus.

You are treasure – Amen.