

706 What Treasures Do You Possess?

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God's Answers to Life's Questions

Of all the things you possess, what is your most treasured? What are the things you simply could not live without? We're going to look at some spiritual treasures, so stay tuned.

Today we're asking the question, "What treasures do you possess?" Last fall my 87-year-old mother, who lives in Oklahoma, brought to Jackie and me a treasure of a lifetime that she made with her own hands. It was a beautiful quilt made from silks and satins, her thirteenth quilt since her stroke. It has bright colors—red, blue, green, gold, pink and purple. Each stitch, she said, was made with love. I treasure that quilt, not only for its own beauty, but even more so because she made it. You see, I treasure her. Now the quilt is valuable in its own right for the materials and the hours she put into it. But that is not why it is valuable to me. To me, it is priceless, an irreplaceable heirloom, because my mother made it for Jackie and me.

There are many kinds of treasures. Some are valuable monetarily; some are valuable to the heart; but I want to talk about the treasures of the soul. These are treasure that last beyond this life; they are eternal. The treasures of the soul are the real treasures. First, I believe **God is a treasure**. Having a relationship with God is so valuable. God is my Creator, my Savior, my sustainer, my hope, and my life. God is the one who loves me, who hears my prayers, who provides for me, and who guides me. Isaiah said in Isaiah 33:5-6, "The LORD is exalted, for he dwells on high; he will fill Zion with justice and righteousness, and he will be the stability of your times, abundance of salvation, wisdom, and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is Zion's treasure." It matters that the Lord God, the one you read about in your Bible, is your God. If money is your god, you will be disappointed, because you can never get enough of it. Solomon said, "Better is a little with the fear of the LORD than great treasure and trouble with it (Prov. 15:16). If pleasure is your god, you will tire of it. If your job is your god, what will you do when you get too old to work? The only God of any value is the God who will not perish, the One who is above this physical world—the God of heaven, the God of the Bible—Jehovah God. God is so good to us all.

Second, **Christ is a treasure**. Paul wrote to the church at Colossae in Colossians 2:1-3, "For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." There is nothing, my friend, more precious, more spiritual, wiser, purer, or more loving than simple New Testament Christianity. We ought to be so thankful we have Jesus as our Lord and Savior. He is indeed the Christ, the Messiah, who came to bring life and truth and salvation to this world. We may easily say that in CHRIST we have—A LOVE that can never be fathomed; A LIFE that can never die; A RIGHTEOUSNESS that can never be tarnished; A PEACE that can never be understood; A REST that can never be disturbed; A JOY that can never be diminished; A HOPE that can never be disappointed; A GLORY that can never be clouded; A HAPPINESS that can never be interrupted; A LIGHT that can never be darkened; A STRENGTH that can never be enfeebled; A BEAUTY that can never be marred; A PURITY that can never be defiled; A WISDOM that can never be baffled; RESOURCES that can never be exhausted.

No wonder the apostle Paul, in spite of all that he had as a Jew, gave it all up for Jesus Christ. He was indeed a blue blood, a Hebrew of Hebrews, a Pharisee, a persecutor of the church, blameless, and respected. However, he said in Philippians 3:7-8, "But whatever

things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ." To him nothing was more important than knowing Christ. Christ was on his heart and mind day and night. He said in Philippians 1:21, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." Paul gladly sacrificed himself for the cause of Christ. He did not count his life as dear to himself, if he could but fulfill his ministry to preach the gospel (Acts 20:24). He said in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That was the focus of his life—it was his treasure! I hope that it is also yours. I know that I can't live without the Lord Jesus in my life.

Third, **heaven is a treasure**. Jesus said in Matthew 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 neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." We live only a time on this earth, and we must prepare for the time when we cross to the other side of life, beyond this life. We must treasure our eternal home. What treasures are you laying up for heaven? They won't be physical ones, they will be spiritual. Perhaps it is a friend whom you have converted. Perhaps it is a gift you gave to the Lord to bless others. It is only what you give to God that survives this life. All else will perish with time. Your life here is just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Don't waste your life today by failing to prepare for eternity.

Luke 12:13-21 tells this event in Jesus' life: Someone in 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 arbitrator over you?" And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions." And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God." My friend, you may think you have all the right strings to pull, but there is one that never belongs to you—your soul. You'll either spend your eternity with God or without Him. What are you doing with your life?

Fourth, **the Word of God is a treasure**. Solomon said in Proverbs 2:1-6, "My son, if you will receive my words and treasure my commandments within you, Make your ear attentive to wisdom, Incline your heart to understanding; For if you cry for discernment, Lift your voice for understanding; If you seek her as silver And search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will discern the fear of the LORD And discover the knowledge of God. For the LORD gives wisdom; From His mouth *come* knowledge and understanding." Solomon spends nearly ten chapters of the book of Proverbs trying to get his son's attention. He wants his son to hear what he has to say, because he realizes what a treasure the truth is. Solomon said, "Buy the truth, and do not sell it; get wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Proverbs 23:23). Truth is available to all, but it is not

cheap. You have to search it out of the pages of the Bible. The more you study, the greater treasure you will find there. Many people are spiritually impoverished, because they have never studied the Word of God for themselves. They are willing to accept whatever they hear from others, never questioning. If someone tells you a lie, and you believe it, you have missed the truth and the wisdom it brings. Acts 17:11 says that the Bereans “were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily *to see* whether these things were so.” I hope you are also examining the Scriptures.

David said in Psalm 119:11, “Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.” The Word of God treasured up, cherished, has great ability to help us in time of temptation. In Matthew chapter 4, when the devil tempted Jesus, the Lord answered every challenge with a quotation from the Word of God. He boldly told Satan, “It is written.” It is written might be better stated, “It stands written.” God wrote it, and it is still authoritative. It is still true and still tells us how we should live. That’s God’s word. Jesus said, “It is written, man shall not live by bread alone but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). This is still true, the word of God brings life, and it will last. Everybody is interested in things that last. Our cars wear out, so do clothes, shoes, and everything about us. Even the faces of stone on Mount Rushmore have to be continually repaired. Jesus tells us in Matthew 6:19 that all earthly treasures are beset by risks and finally end in total loss. The real treasure is truth, love, and faith. Our emphasis must always be on the values that last. The word of God lasts. Jesus promised in Mark 13:31, “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away.” You can count on God’s word.

Fifth, **the Church is a treasure.** Some people don’t think much of the church, but how people think and how God thinks is two different things. The church is God’s treasure. He treasures the church more than we can imagine. The church, now, is not a building but people. God treasures every member of His church. Peter said to the church in 1 Peter 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” God sees in the church a people for his own possession. They are precious, chosen, cherished, and beloved. He considers every member of the church a royal priest, called out of the darkness of this world and called into His marvelous light. The church is His means of telling the world about the excellencies of God and of His Christ. God treasures His people, and you can tell how much by what He is willing to give for the church.

Peter said in 1 Peter 1:17-19, “And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay *on earth*; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ.*” You, my fellow church member, are not cheap. Gold and silver God can manufacture easily, but the blood Jesus is another matter. The Lord paid his blood for you. I pray that you count the blood of Christ as worthy of your love and commitment. I pray that you will accept the gift of his love and serve him always. We ought always to treasure the things that God treasures and to love the things

God loves. We ought to love the church, because God loves the church.

We should count the church as a real treasure. Jesus taught these two parables in Matthew 13:44-46, “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.” “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.” Hidden treasures today are rare. In the ancient biblical lands, however, they were common. Palestine, which was a land bridge between Egypt and the great empires, was repeatedly invaded, ravaged, and captured. Multitudes buried gold. There were no banks. Invaders robbed the common people often and without warning. Because of this, the people buried treasure in the ground, in walls, in tree trunks, or wherever they could. Then they left, they died, they were captured, and no one knew where the treasure was hidden. Now these parables are talking about the kingdom, the church. I hope you have found the kingdom of God in one of churches of Christ near you. Become a part of a local church and treasure it. Oh, I know that the church isn’t perfect; but it is divine in origin. When the church lives the way God intended it to live, there is nothing in all the world better and more noble than the church of the Lord. I want everyone to be a member of it.

You can tell what a person treasures by watching how they live and listening to what they talk about. You don’t have to ask a grandparent twice to talk about his grandchildren. Why, people volunteer information about the things that matter to them. Jesus said in Luke 6:45, “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.” When I hear people talk about good things, I know they treasure good things. When I hear people talk ugly and speak nonsense, I know they treasure foolish and evil things. The mouth speaks from that which fills the heart. Where a man’s treasure is, there will his heart be also. *How does your heart speak? What is valuable to you? What are your treasures?* I hope that God, Christ, heaven, the Word, and the church are your treasures. I hope that you have obeyed the gospel and have the hope of life. Do you treasure the blood of Christ? the forgiveness of sin? the grace of God? Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:10, “by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain.” I wouldn’t want the grace of God, which He so freely gives, to prove vain in your life. God is good, but God will not tolerate continued rebellion to His will. There comes a point in time when God quits knocking on the door of our hearts, because we have said no to Him again and again. What about you? Are you putting God first in your life? Is He the One you’d give up everything and everyone else to know? Are you assembling with the church? Are you reading your Bible and praying regularly? Have you obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ? You can do that by believing in Jesus, repenting of your sins, confessing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by being baptized into Christ. When you are baptized upon the confession of your faith and in your repentance, the Lord will wash away your sins and add you to His church. There is never a better time to obey the Lord than today. Tomorrow may be too late. Don’t wait another day to put your life in order. Treasure up God in your soul. Cherish the Lord Jesus, and live a life that honors and pleases Him.

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