

Calvary United Methodist Church  
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## **WHERE IS YOUR TREASURE?**

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### **Children's Message:**

Luke 12:34

I invite our children to come forth for the children's message. I saw a few over here. Come on up. Thank you for coming up this morning. Good morning. Good to have you all here this morning.

You probably will be better looking at the screens, the ones in the back are a little dim, it's harder to see them a little bit, but today's message talking about the treasure and where our... what does it say? Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

There are a lot of things we treasure in life and I'm wondering if you could think of some things that you really like. Do you treasure this? I thought so. And I don't blame you a bit. What are some things you treasure? Your family. Those are good things to treasure. What else? Are there some things in your life that you treasure a lot? Do you have a favorite bicycle? You treasure homework? There are some happy teachers in here. Learning is a great thing; it's a good thing to treasure. Yes? Your friends? Good things.

You know what? It is really beautiful that you are all saying that instead of stuff. That's a wonderful thing, because those are the things we should treasure. But you know, I have to confess that I'm in this world and there are a lot of things I treasure like my recliner chair at the end of a long day. Some of you know that, right?

Sometimes we treasure...when I was young I treasured my bicycle because it could take me all kinds of places to see my family, to see my friends. Some of you might have a favorite piece of sports equipment or something. (Child speaks.) A message chair, now see that takes it up a notch from my recliner. You have all these good ideas. Thank you,

There was a song when I was a young boy, it came from a movie called *The Sound of Music*, it was like a lifetime ago and it talked about the favorite things we have and sometimes it is our blankie. Sometimes it might be our favorite bike. Sometimes it might be some sports equipment. I was just trying to imagine what it would be like to have the favorite piece of sports thing that you knew had good luck for you.

Did you ever have something that felt like good luck? Like, you've probably all played Ping-Pong or table tennis before. And you can imagine if you've won time and time again against your friends, your family, maybe even in tournaments and it's like: this is my game. And if you thought you are going to keep that very special thing because it was your winning ball. And imagine if I took it and crushed it. You'd say, "What? You asked me to borrow it and

then you destroyed it?"

And we get sometimes upset when people take our things and break them, like that's why we typically don't do stuff in houses like throw balls and run and chase, right? Because we don't want to break things. Not that they are all that important, but it is also kind of wasteful.

But the things we have in life sometimes can be quite numerous and yet we still want to cling on and a part of the message today says: Where your treasure is, there your heart is also.

And what happens in the stuff I've had in my life if I get something very special and if it lose it, then I worry. Have you ever worried? Sometimes you think: where did I put my favorite thing? Where is this whatever? And we get all upset about those kind of things. And Jesus was telling us again through that scripture that we shouldn't worry about things. We want to be responsible, of course, but when we worry sometimes it brings heartaches, it brings tears, and God says: Look, I'm going to care for you, even if you lose your favorite things, even if you lose stuff that you have worked for, even if stuff breaks, you are going to be okay because I will provide your needs.

God gives us so many gifts through our family, through our friends and throughout life that we forget how great God is. For instance, how many of you farm every day so you have something to eat? Not a lot of farmers here anymore, are there? And yet, I bet if you open your refrigerator, now mine isn't that neat and it's not the vegetabally either. There are a lot of vegetables in that thing. But I bet you have stuff in your refrigerator, don't you? And God says: Why would you worry about what to eat because there is probably still stuff in a closet, but He said: If you look to the birds of the air and the animals of the fields, who builds a house for an elephant? Anybody? I mean some people do build bird houses but overall, birds just fly wherever they want, they make nests, they go into trees, they go into shrubs and bushes. He says: If I take care of the birds, aren't you more important than that?

And then as beautiful as we like our clothing to be and colorful it is, God says: Have you ever seen a field of beautiful flowers like sunflowers or any flowers? If I clothe them in all that beauty, why would you worry about clothing? I am your God. I will take care of you. Right? Right? (Right!) You must be...it's almost 11, we should be awake.

So, God is reminding us that God will take care of us and yet sometimes I have needs and you have needs and it's not stuff. For instance, if we saw a friend like this, what do you think we could do? Cheer them up. And sometimes it is not just words, it's just sitting with the, period. It's just sitting there because they know you are there, present with them. They know someone loves them.

If you saw someone that hardly had any money and they wanted to get food, we can either try to help them find food or some things they need. There is always something even small because most of us can't imagine that there are people in the world who literally have to get

through trash and stuff around the world, in very poor countries, looking for something for their families. That would be difficult. So that's why God says: Where your treasure is, your heart is also. We need to treasure things, but we also need to share whatever it is that God gives us.

When Jesus was going around there were people who were hungry and a couple of times he said, one story 5,000 and another time 4,000 people plus, because he learned to share.

Jesus had a little story once. He said if you saw a man walking down the road and he didn't have shoes and you have two pair of shoes, I imagine most of us have 2 pair of shoes, I'm not going to get into that number, and you saw someone who needed a pair of shoes, what do you think we ought to do? (Child speaks.) You guys are right on top of it. You give them one of your shoes.

If you saw someone struggling and they didn't have shelter or clothing much and stuff, what would you do? Offer them. Some of you, if you didn't walk over, the United Methodist Women of our church had a clothing exchange, a wonderful gift. No money. A gift to those who had need. We thank God for those who gave so much of themselves to do that.

And perhaps sometimes...did you ever meet someone who is lonely? They might not have family and friends around, so what can you give them? Yourself. Your time. You visit them and guess what? Most times you will end up seeing a smile like that. (Child speaks.) It can be very lonely if you don't have much family, so it's nice that you could be a friend.

And so the thing that God wanted us to learn to do is choose to love, choose to care, choose to love others, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

And so the more that we learn to not just treasure the stuff in our life, but treasure, and you were always on top of that even before I started today, it's about our family, it's about our friends, it's about others that need us.

Serving God makes others happy. It makes us...when you help other people you always feel happier, right? (Right.) And so that's a good cue from God that I will be happy as God and God was very happy when we help others. So I pray this week you will always think: who is it that I can touch on behalf of God.

Thank you for coming up. There are snacks over here if you'd like to take one back, and God bless your week.

**Message:**

Luke 12:32-40

This message is a two part thing that Jesus was telling people that we do treasure things of this world...I do, you do, I suspect. We work, we accumulate our home and the things that some of them are just stuff and some of them are memories. And they are wonderful memo-

ries of things from a childhood to adulthood to whatever. But he's also telling us don't get too attached because some day he's coming back that we might go home and we know that happens at unexpected times.

I was sharing in the first service I remember as a young pastor a couple I had spent time with. They went home. The husband went in the door and sat on his recliner and said, "Would you go get me a drink of water?" The wife walked from here to the door to get a cup of water. She comes back and he was with the Lord. Oh, we can hope that quickly.

That's how quick life changes. So, God says: Life is temporal. Even though it might be 100 years, it is temporal. Where are you putting your treasures? My discovery this later in life is: I have more treasures than any couple of people need and I still like them. I love my recliner. I have my knickknacks and my things I've collected and my sports memorabilia and I have things from...we just have stuff, and it becomes a problem if it is so much a part of our life that we can't go on to enjoy other parts of life, being our family and friends. But more so, God said, the Kingdom. The more we bring the Kingdom, the more we have that as our treasure the more blessed we shall be.

So, when you are looking into your chest of life, where is your security? Where are your blessings? I knew we live in an age where we want more security all the time, correct? And yet God said there isn't security on this land. There will never be security, treasure, place your heart in that which will last, which is God's Kingdom, both in heaven and on earth as we bring it here.

There are a lot of things we treasure. I would like to treasure more of these things. Most of you would like that too. Because, this is some of our security. We like a place to live, we like our clothing, we like our food. We like going out. We have to have so much. But sometimes we keep saying I need more, I want more and more and more and it's amazing. Some people live on 20 or 30,000 a year and some can't live on millions a year. We see it in the news. It's just not enough.

No matter what investments we have, it will never be enough. No matter how much security cameras we have, no matter how many military compounds are around us, no matter what nation you are a part of, and I love our nation, but hear this clearly: there are no nations that are secure without God.

The people of Israel were God's chosen people and throughout history God said: I don't favor just nations. They would come and go in his love because they were disobedient. They forgot who God was and God said: Okay, I'm not going to cast you out, but if you choose to walk your own way, you go your way.

God always welcome children and nations and people home, but He's not going to hold us back. But instead He would like us to look at this Kingdom, look at this treasure and say:

Jesus alone is my rock and my fortress. I will never be shaken. On him I will build my house. The Lord is my rock. And he said: When you do this, no matter what happens to your stuff...you've seen it: floods, earthquakes, tornadoes, hurricanes, fire, everything going in an instant, and yet folks will stand: well, at least I have my family sometimes. If not I have my God, my rock, my salvation, my fortress. I can stand anything.

And so we can't get caught just on the stuff, just on the traditions, just on the security of what we have and what we know. Sometimes even in our thinking when we don't allow new life to come in, we begin to decay. And I never thought of that until I saw this quote: If I don't expand my mind, if I don't begin to think, I start to go backwards.

God doesn't want us to be unhappy, but he wants us to get away from thinking that things will make us happy. We live in a culture of all cultures that is grab all we can and if there is any more I'll take that too, whether I need it or not.

Most of us have cupboards and freezer and at some point every year we ditch stuff just because it is outdated, right? Because we aren't good responsible stewards. And God's way says what? Give all you can. Things and stuff won't make you happy. But instead, we live for Christ and when we live for Christ we die to self, we give some of our own thoughts, our own desires, our own desires of life away.

There is a beautiful song and I need to find it, I love to sing it. It says: To die to self and to live in Christ is the real gain. The more I get rid of me, the more joy I find in everyone around me. That's very true in life. The more I can let go of me and my desires and my thoughts and my feelings and live for the moment with people and friends and families and even strangers around me, I will find the joy of Christ in others.

This passage today talked both about the treasure and then it had that second part about being prepared basically because God will return like a thief in the night. If you work anywhere and your boss comes in and you are sleeping at your desk, it might not have a happy ending. Although some places it works.

There is a part of this story that says: If your master has left you in charge of the home and went for the day away, they don't want to come back and find you did nothing. God is looking. He is saying: Are you doing something for the Kingdom? Because when I come...I love the billboard: Look busy. Look like you are doing something and be prepared for that day whenever that might come. It could be yet today. We don't know. But be prepared. I'm not talking living in fear, I'm talking living in joy.

When we serve, you've all said it, when we serve God, when we are giving to others, when we are helping others we are happier than any other time in our life because we find purpose and meaning of being a part of the Kingdom and offering God's grace. It is the root of who we are, not taking life but giving life to everyone we can give life to. It's an amazing grace

and Calvary has been doing this forever and God says: I need you even more. Why? Because God said: Look around us. Look around at the broken world we are living in.

God needs Calvary and we...it's not a building it's the family of Calvary. And no, we don't live here, we don't just stay in this building being heavenly minded and not going out doesn't change anything. But God wants us to have the vision to go with what we receive of God every day, through prayer, through study and through giving and through service. God wants us to have a vision to bring his Kingdom here upon earth and be Kingdom focused, not just this world. Be Kingdom focused of what is it that God wants from us today? Why? We know that if this earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God.

This is a short time, 100 years or less for most of us. God says: wouldn't it be great to bring some peace on earth?

I can't take many more weeks of waking up to news like this. I don't know about you. I actually shed tears and I don't know any of these people, because I am just broken. And it's because of the hearts that need changed. We've got what it takes. It's Jesus Christ; it's the love of our Heavenly Father.

America is like in the top five of nations that have more prisons than anyone in the world. Throwing people in prisons and locking the way is no answer, no answer whatsoever. Changing lives, that people don't need to go to prison; changing the hearts of men and women that they want to love God and love their neighbor above all else will change.

Last year in this nation between 72 and 75,000 young people, a stadium of people, died from opioid drugs. I buried six of them. One of them was a family member. If it doesn't break your heart, what will? We have forgotten the haves and the have nots. We have forgotten our elderly. We have children who are searching for life and meaning and they are not finding it because we are too stuck in our lives to see, to have a vision.

And it's time for repentance: I'm going this way and I am going to choose to go God's way because God's redeeming love, it will take that child and say: I have a purpose for you. I have meaning for you. I have given you life, an abundant live and I will help you find a way to serve to you, find joy and happiness.

And it says to the elderly who feel they are forgotten: I still have meaning and purpose for you and you are still loved.

And it says to those people in prison: Do not lose hope. There is another chance. There is redemption. There is new life.

It says to all of us here today: we are redeemed for a purpose...to do something for God. And we can't do it on our own, but on that solid rock. When we choose to find a new focus,

we will indeed find a way. It needs to be more of God and less of me. Hear that: More of God, less of me. Romans, count yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. There are no times that I feel more alive than when I am with you...with you, serving God in wherever it is we are doing. Whether it is singing in the choir, whether it is the women having the clothing thing here or the food pantry or service to the community, there are hundreds of things to do through this congregation that most of us aren't a part of. But yet we are a part of because we are a family. It is an extension of our ministries together.

A lot of times we think God doesn't speak to us, but I want to tell you, God speaks as boldly today as he did to Moses in that fire, saying: I have a purpose for you. Moses had to go tell people what they didn't want to hear and sometimes we need to tell family and friends and co-workers that we want them to be a part of this kingdom. We've lost our strength to do it because we are not plugged into the power source. Most people here probably have a cell phone and you go a day or so and don't plug it in and you are not going to get any messages. If you are going from Sunday to Sunday and you are not having a talk with God in prayer or study or service or giving in any way, shape or form, you are going to be drained.

We need to be connected to the source so we have something to give and when we give we need to be connected that we are consistent. I don't know how many times I've heard people at work and I've seen it especially in prison ministry, I go in and I can't believe, not that I am better than anyone else, but they know my position and they will cuss even at me. I'm not talking prisoners, I'm talking guards, I'm talking staff and other people and I brought that up to someone in a higher place and they said: Well, that's just the way we are. How are you going to change and redeem people's life? And you know what, I've heard it from people in church: well, I've got to be that way with my employees. No. With our children; with our family; with our friends with our neighbors; with anyone watching us, we should be the same person, a godly person, striving to love and show redemption and grace and mercy. Yes, there are places to be firm, but we don't become Jekyll and Hyde. We are consistent for Jesus Christ. We value what God values and what does God value? Every child, he says, is my child. I don't care if you are just born or if you are 100. I don't care if you are in prison. I don't care if you are along a wall. You are my child.

God's people, he says, have been chosen. You are a royal priesthood. And yet, we look around and we, in our lifestyle sometimes don't do as much. I know we do and I'm not your judge, but we do more.

I typed in for this photo Kentucky hills. How would you like to live there every night? I doubt there is much insulation. We had homes like that up where I grew up. I used to, on behalf of the fire company, we would take turns visiting a man who lived in one of these in the winter to make sure he was okay. Not an easy lifestyle when we have plenty.

I visited this second or third world largest slum, 1.2 million people in Liberia and Kenya, Nyrobi. Worked there for a week with AIDS patients back around 2005. They had 100 and some folks come every day into this one little area. It was too many so they got it cut down

to 70 people. They lost at that time 10 people a week dying. In a million and 2 people there is not water lines, there is not sewer lines. You guess what the sanitation is like in there. And yet, we complain and those people came together and we held hands and praised God. We fed. We sang and delighted.

Most of us haven't had the privilege and thank God we don't often here, to see people looking through other people's garbage for something to eat. That's not the call for all of us, but my point in all of that is to say: we are not of this world. We cannot love this world. Our love, where does it need to be? Mine started right there. When are we going to recall what God has done for us? Not out of guilt; out of thanksgiving. I have life and have it abundantly not because of anything I have done, but because of a gift that God has given me in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Do I love money? I have kissed a few bills here and there. You have to pay your bills and when it comes as: Oh, Thank you, God, that I can pay my bills. But it can't end there. God is calling us. He is daring us to be different. God wants us to reach out. God wants us to find our call. We aren't called to be like other Christians. We are called to be like Christ. And no matter what our career, no matter what our employment, no matter where we are, we are called to be Christ there and everywhere: at our reunions and our family at home, at bedtime, in the morning, even before coffee. We are called to be living for Christ.

Evangelism begins for all...it should have, if you recall the day you said not I'm joining Calvary: this is the day I choose to follow God. That is an elimination of the wickedness, of our evil deeds, of our foul mouths, of our gossip and our bad behavior. It's a day I choose to know that I'm following Christ and other people know I am following Christ and therefore I am going to be commissioned, I'm going to be sent.

Everything a group of soldiers goes through boot camp, they are commissioned and sent to their first deployment. And as you have entered into the Kingdom of God, you were deployed to make a difference and to understand that you and you alone will reach some people that no one else in this world will meet, because people need to make a difference. But we need to remember the cost.

When I started at Penn State, I grew up in a little town. And I know kids drank alcohol and stuff like that but I never remember the drug issues, until a couple week in someone came up and said do you want some of this? I said: No thanks. They said: Come on, you need to loosen up a little bit. They continued. No thanks. Come on, you are too tight, you need to try it. I said: No thanks. I wish I would have been as bold as this story I read and the young man didn't just say, he said: No, thanks. You have no idea how much my mother and father gave up, working two jobs, that I could come to college. I couldn't do that to them. How about that?

We were bought with a price. God sent his Son Jesus Christ to the cross. And He says:

What I'm asking for you? I don't know. Sometimes, I don't know that I have ever sacrificed anything for God. I have lived a very comfortable life. But sometimes people are called to sacrifice. Most of the time it is just speak up for God. Don't be silent when you see injustice. Act. Provide mercy and grace.

Sometimes when we think I don't want to do this today; I'm too tired. I don't want to help someone who is broke along the road or I don't want to go to visit someone who is lonely in the nursing home and I don't want to go to prison and help those kind of people. Nothing great was ever accomplished without some kind of sacrifice. You see, you need to understand how valuable you are to God. I'm here to say if I could point to every individual here, you, you, you, you are a gift of God for God to bring God's Kingdom in its fullness. You are a part of the missing link, you are a part of the puzzle to be completed, you are a part of making America a Christian nation. You are part of making the world a Christian place. Your family, your children, your grandchildren...the more we become like Christ, the more God's Kingdom will come here on earth.

There is an hourglass. A month or so I saw this beautiful photo, it is a father and a son and on the backpack of both of them was an hourglass and the one was about empty, how about that. And the other one was full. That's life, right. One is coming and one is going all the time. There is a ship passing. To me that's life and it is going pretty fast at this age. What are you going to do with what you have left? Will you bring the Kingdom of God, will you look at the time and say: God, maybe I've wasted a little bit. I want to do something for your Kingdom.

Can we dare to be Christ for others that the society that we live in which is broken, extremely broken, that the nation that we live in which is extremely broken, can find healing and start with you and me. We can do it because Christ who lives in me is greater than me. You know that. He who lives in me is greater than me.

May God live and reign in our lives.

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, you have always called us and you've commissioned us and you've equipped us that we might go out these doors and be a light to the world. Thank you for this family called Calvary. Bless us and strengthen us to be all that we can to bring your kingdom right here, right where we are. We ask in your most Holy Name. Amen.