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SERMON TITLE: The Hidden Treasure – Our Greatest Possession

Walking as Disciples of Jesus Series

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:44-46

DATE: March 22, 2020

Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

Read also Psalm 139:1-7, 16-18. Check out the service at www.fpcd.org

What is precious to you? What do you love? What do you enjoy and look forward to? What would you cancel something for? Maybe it's a particular concert or band. Maybe it's a place. To go there, you say—"this is a little piece of heaven to me."

It is someplace you discovered—maybe known, maybe not. The mountains or a cabin in the woods or a beach in Florida or Padre.

Or, maybe your special treasure is a child or grandchild or longtime friend.

Perhaps it is as simple your backyard in the spring. You say, "This is heavenly."

Or, a possession—I have my grandmother's wedding ring. It connects me with my family history. It is very old and somehow it made its way to me.

King Solomon acknowledges the value of cherishing precious things: "Precious treasure remains in the house of the wise, but the fool devours it" (Proverbs 21:20).

A prophet in the Old Testament tells us God gives precious treasures even for cities. Ezekiel writes about the city of Tyre: "You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, carnelian, chrysolite, and moonstone, beryl, onyx, and jasper, sapphire, turquoise, and emerald; and worked in gold were your settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. With an anointed cherub as guardian I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked among the stones of fire. (Opals are often called stones of fire.) You were blameless in your ways from the day that you were created, until iniquity was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:13-15).

Precious treasures have been created for our delight. It is a gift of God.

Jesus uses our special treasures to describe the value of the Kingdom of Heaven. Let's read it. READ Matthew 13:44-46

Do you remember the old television show, The Beverly Hillbillies who found treasure on their farm?

Come and listen to my story about a man named Jed, A poor mountaineer, barely kept his family fed, And then one day he was shootin' at some food, And up through the ground come a bubblin' crude. Oil that is, black gold, Texas tea.¹

And so they sold the land and moved to Beverly . . . Hills, that is. We might say that's not the smartest move! But it's not like buying lake property in Arizona! You heard about those "treasures" that go bankrupt and you can never get out of!

But those are not what Jesus is talking about. He's talking about treasure you discover that is worth investing everything you know and love.

But in case land is not your thing, Jesus gives a second illustration of a small business owner; a jeweler. I know a jeweler in Dallas so I called him. He said this:

I love to shop and often go great distances to find a wonderful jewel. Nature provides the most beautiful treasures in the world. The finest emeralds are from Colombia, diamonds from Africa, and pearls from China or Japan. I've learned the best is not always in the place where I think I will find it. A good jeweler has a trained eye for good quality and can see from the raw material what it might be. Then I add my knowledge to cut facets into it to let its brilliance come out, like this aquamarine necklace. (see picture)

Pearls are different because God does all the work inside the shell using an irritant to form the gemstone. While no work is required to make a pearl beautiful, you have to be selective with pearls because not all pearls are created equal! When you find the best and put many together they are more beautiful because they shine off each other.

I asked the jeweler what precious gem he loved the best. He replied, "It is a complex thing to explain their beauty; I could talk forever about what makes them beautiful. I love them all—I value and appreciate them. If I didn't, I could not sell them."²

Jesus said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it." (Mt 13:46)

You might be thinking of the kingdom of heaven as "pie in the sky when I die" but nothing could be further from the truth. The Kingdom of Heaven surrounds you. It is present here, in this world. It's as if the spiritual world is overlaid onto the physical

¹ Source: http://www.lyricsondemand.com/tvthemes/beverlyhillbillies_lyrics.html, accessed March 19, 2020.

² Richard Batky, Batky Jewelers, Dallas, Texas, <https://batkyjewelers.com/>

world. If you could see it, it would be like a glittering luminous sky all around you. But since you can't, you can look for signs; signs that are hidden treasures, like:

- ~ Sunsets after a storm
- ~ Rainbows
- ~ The night sky in Colorado or Hawaii
- ~ A newborn baby
- ~ When you hear encouraging words from someone just when you need them
- ~ When trouble comes and God whispers that everything will be okay
- ~ Coincidences you know are not coincidences
- ~ When someone forgives you when you don't deserve it
- ~ When someone is healed
- ~ In the face of disaster a still small voice insists there's a bigger picture than what is going on here.

These things are just as true in the world today as in Jesus' time.

In case you are not convinced, the Bible talks a great deal about this hidden treasure called the Kingdom of Heaven:

- ~ From Isaiah – "Since ancient times no one has heard, no ear has perceived, no eye has seen any God besides you, who acts on behalf of those who wait for him" (64:4). There's great love in that statement.
- ~ From Paul – "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Corinthians 2:9). God gives purpose. We are headed somewhere.
- ~ From God – "For I am about to create new heavens and a new earth; the former things shall not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating" (Isaiah 65:17-18a). Hidden treasure.
- ~ From Psalms – "You go before me and follow me. You place your hand of blessing on my head. . . . I can never escape from your Spirit. I can never get away from your presence!" (139:5-7). You are surrounded at all times.

Do you grasp the hidden spiritual treasure God has for you?

But you must buy it, invest in it, possess it, for the Bible tells us:

"If the Almighty is your gold and your precious silver, then you will delight yourself in the Almighty, and lift up your face to God. You will pray to him, and he will hear you" (Job 22:25-27a).

Today, let's take these Scriptures to heart and pray to God because He is our treasure. Let's ask **Him** to act and stop the virus.

God not only gives us his special treasure, but God has his own special treasure. Do you know what it is?

Thus says the Lord GOD, "See, I am laying in Zion a foundation stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation: 'One who trusts will not panic.'" (Isaiah 28:16).

We know that precious cornerstone to be Jesus Christ.

The people here today have that same precious treasure:

- ~ Jesus has seen one of us through multiple health issues, including a successful kidney transplant and it's been almost 5 years. She glows.
- ~ Another man moved from El Salvadore to LA and then to Duncanville with his family. His neighbors invited his 4 kids to church here, and soon the whole family came. He has just been asked to head a group at his work for prayer and support—a "pastor" for his company.
- ~ Another man had a period of great discouragement but one night as he was driving, his car glowed with light and a voice assured him all would be okay. And it was.
- ~ Another young woman's father recently died. He was a pastor committed to the Lord. I know if he could speak to her today, he would say—you *stick in there my daughter, it's worth it, the treasure is so worth it.*
- ~ Another young man went to college and a professor said to him, why don't you come sing in our church choir, and paid him a small stipend. When he and his wife got jobs as teachers for DISD and moved here, he said, "That's where we work and looked across the road at FPCD and said, "That's where we go to church."
- ~ The boy who sang today fell out of a third story when he was 4. He is now 13 and every week he encourages all of us with his joy. You can read his story at www.duncanvilleprayer.com. It's called The Pony.
- ~ Another couple serves overseas in missions but has had to return here. I am convinced their work from here will be greatly enhanced because God can make amazing things happen out of any setback.

In this time of panic and fear; in a time of an unknown virulent virus, let us seek truly precious treasure—for it's our greatest possession. Let us pray and be assured that as we seek the Kingdom of Heaven God will answer us and heal our land.

In the name of the Father, who gives us life, and His Son, who helps us daily, and the Holy Spirit who surrounds us this very moment and always, no matter what,

AMEN