

Two Talents of Faithful Treasure-Seekers

✦ **generous** (vv.32-34)

✦ **watchful** (vv.35-40)

In the Name of Jesus, the greatest secret of all treasures, my dear Christian friends:

No need to raise your hand. This is a rhetorical question, just think about it. Ready? Are you in your heart of hearts one of those... those **Treasure-Seekers**? Then maybe you can help us understand what drives **Treasure-Seekers**. No survey needed here. Just watch how raffles, Blackjacks, or sweepstakes snare their victims/customers. “You might have the winning number for millions, so you’d better play – or you might lose your winning number!” Fear is a powerful motivator, isn’t it?

But what about a young woman many years ago whose boss gave her a raffle ticket. There’s no marking on those to say which is the winning one, right? She threw it in a dresser drawer until one Saturday morning the priest from the local parish called to say she won. But she didn’t even have her license to go pick up her bright red Cutlass Supreme with the white pin stripe. Hot car for its day. And one unhappy boss at the bakery who could have kept the ticket. Plus a not-so-happy priest to find out she wanted to sell the car to go to college for a Lutheran school teacher. Jealousy? Discontent? Fear?

Not the **Talents of Faithful Treasure-Seekers**. Jesus wants to give us **Two** today. First...

✦ **generous** (vv.32-34)

Generous is not a natural **Talent** for a serious **Treasure-Seeker**. “Here, take my list of ‘daily clues clipped or copied’ from the paper. Maybe you can find the Saint Paul Winter Carnival medallion before I can. I’m sure you could use the \$10,000 as much as I!”¹

Speaking of “me, myself, and I,” did you catch that in last Sunday’s Gospel lesson? Remember the farmer with the big problem of bumper crops and not enough storage? He’s also in *Meditations* this week.² Jesus said, the farmer “*thought to himself, ‘What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, ‘You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’*” (Luke 12:16–20 NIV84) Shocking and dangerous to store up so much for myself and not be rich toward God!

But when you really want to be **generous**, it’s as if a flock of crows swoops in, all cawing the same thing: “Whaaat! Whaaat! Whaaat! will you do with less?” So between last Sunday’s Gospel and today, our Lord Jesus gives His classic devotion: “Do Not Worry.” Look at the birds, Jesus says. Ravens, in fact, considered by folks back then as foolish and flighty, not even able to remember where their nest was, much less build barns for food. So God feeds them. You’re worth more than birds!

Remember the lilies of the field? They used to carpet the hillsides of Israel in Jesus’ day. Such lavish beauty not even King Solomon could match. God did that, even though lilies are here today and thrown in the fire tomorrow. Won’t God clothe you too, you little-faith folks? “*Seek his kingdom and all these things will be given to you as well.*” High priorities elevate your life. You can be **generous** if you have just one ingredient warming your heart and soul.

¹ <https://www.wintercarnival.com/events/pioneer-press-treasure-hunt/>

² *Meditations-Daily Devotions*, “Live a Truly Rich Life,” Vol. 59., No. 3, p.66-72. – NPH 1-800-662-6022

Trade fear for faith. ***“Fear not, little flock, for your Father delights to give you the kingdom.”*** (TPA) Your cable company, taxes, trade-ins all want to take as much earthly treasure as possible. But your heavenly Father is truly **generous**. ***“He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust”*** (Matthew 5:45 ESV), but God has done something even better for you. He ***“delights to give you the kingdom.”*** God’s **kingdom** is His righteous rule in your heart that gives you peace about yesterday, strength for today, and hope for tomorrow. With God’s **kingdom** comes all the blessing your heart is yearning for and far, far more than you could even ask or imagine.

When faith displaces fear, life is an adventure with God. ***“Sell your possessions and give to the poor.”*** Jesus doesn’t say ***“all your possessions.”*** God knows you need food and shelter. But bulging closets and overstuffed garages – isn’t that more than we need? Jesus wants better for you: ***“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.”*** Taxes take. Inflation steals. If you invest in gold, the bigger your Fort Knox, the bigger the gang of thieves who wants it. Is there such a thing as lasting ***“treasure”***?

Some of the most wealthy people in the world have known this secret. Before his name change, Abraham heard about it. The LORD God said, ***“Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”*** (Genesis 15:1 First Lesson) Abram had just rescued his nephew Lot from four marauding kings. Yet he feared for an heir of the Savior-promise. So God took him out to look at the stars and promised: ***“So shall your offspring be.”*** What replaced Abram’s fear? Faith! ***Abram believed the LORD, and he credited to him as righteousness.*** Not some pie in the sky or “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” theory. What is ***“your treasure”***? On what do you set your affections, your hopes, your dreams? ***“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*** Jesus is our priceless **Treasure**, holding in Himself eternal life and love, joy and peace to spend for all eternity. Jesus is our lasting **Treasure**.

⚡ **watchful** (vv.35-40)

If you knew you had the winning ticket but that you had to hear it announced on TV, but your cable was disconnected, wouldn’t you run to a neighbor for help? And wouldn’t you stand guard all night if you knew a break-in was coming? We worry so about passing treasures from earth’s little day. But God’s kind of **Treasure-Seekers** are **generous** and **watchful** – **Two Talents**. When you least expect Jesus, that’s when He says He will return once more to judge the living and the dead. No “do-overs” after Judgment Day. **Watchful** is the word to guard your lasting **Treasure** from your own unbelief.

For all the **Faithful Treasure-Seekers**, **watchful** for that hour, you will see something awesome and unimaginable if our Lord Jesus did not tell us this Himself: ***“Amen, I tell you, he will dress himself and seat them and come around to serve them.”*** (TPA) Why will Jesus play host and waiter for you and me? Why would Jesus die for you and me? The only reason God gives is this: “I love you.” ***“God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only begotten son in order that everyone who believes in him will not perish, but have eternal life.”*** (John 3:16 TPA) Are you too worldly? Too worried? Too concerned about yourself and not enough about others? Me too! That’s why I’m so glad that Jesus died for me! And why I’m so grateful to say He died for you too.

Be **watchful** because your mansion in heaven can’t blow away or burn or foreclose. Jesus already paid off your mortgage with His holy, precious blood. Is there anything here on this side that you want more? In full faithfulness with Jesus you can be **generous** beyond belief. And as you eagerly await His return, ***“Be dressed ready to serve.”*** Literally, have your belt synched up so you can run with the Gospel. Don’t wear your Christianity like a preacher’s robe to trip you up in self righteousness. Your treasure is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, God’s perfect and holy Son. Day and night ***“keep your lamps burning”*** as the fuel of the Holy Spirit lights up your life with Word and sacrament. You can afford to be **generous!** You have everything! You have Jesus! Don’t make a secret of Him. Jesus is such a great **Treasure** that the more you share Him, the more you enjoy Him. Give Jesus away to everyone in need of kindness and words of encouragement. His love will guide you to see your **Treasure** smiling. Amen.

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New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126