

Treasuring Christ in all of life

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[0 : 0 0] so I mentioned quite a lot already in this service it's the last time we're meeting together in 2024 and once again we've got that period that is always a little bit odd isn't it the time in between Christmas and New Year perhaps I don't know for some of us we might maybe have that slightly more time to reflect on the year that's passed and also think about what lies ahead I mentioned as we prayed some of us for 2024 2024 would have been a great year lots of happy memories but for others it might be a year we want to forget lots of difficulty and stress but probably the reality is first it's been a mix of both with the start of a new year it is always good to reset to make a new start have a vision perhaps for the year ahead maybe what we want the year ahead to be all about the reality is we don't know what 2025 will bring it would be good if we all had great years and no difficulty the reality is it will be a mix it will be a mix we're not in control of what happens as much as we'd like to be the different sense the different sense is not trying to control things but approaching 2025 I think with a clear vision of how we want to face hopefully the many ups the peaks but also the downs the troughs of life and my suggestion for 2025 comes from reflecting on this bit of the bible the bit of the Matthew gospel that we've read earlier it's my vision for 2025 and I hope and pray it's a vision from the church and perhaps us individually and it's this to treasure Christ in all of your life to treasure Christ in all of your life before we go ahead I just want us to pause for a moment and I want us to consider what I mean by treasure

I'm going to define treasure as this that treasure is anything that you place a high value on anything that you place a high value on that's how I'm going to define treasure and we do that with all sorts of things it could be things we own but it doesn't have to be you might place I don't know maybe you place a high value on the car you drive you love your car you value it and it's shown by it's spotless you keep it clean and in good condition but there's other stuff isn't there things that we value maybe you place a high value on other things that are important to you relationships they mean a lot and are important or maybe you place a value on your kids always being happy it's a good thing so a lot won't have happy children and you love to see them with a smile and you'll do anything to keep it that way that's what I mean by treasure that's what I'm defining as anything anything you place a high value on and all of those things are your value there's nothing wrong with having a nice car it's good to want good healthy nice relationships with people and like I said we all want our children to be happy but here's what Jesus says about treasure this is what he says not it doesn't come from what you read just earlier on he said this where your treasure is there your heart is also where your treasure is there your heart is also what you treasure is shown in how you live and it reveals what you love and your actions the way you live reflect that what's going on in your heart we live in ways to protect our treasure if you treasure keeping your car in good condition then you'll keep it that way you'll make sure people have clean shoes or they're not allowed to eat in your car

I've tried that but it doesn't quite work for the little ones if you treasure your relationship you'll work extra hard to keep peace and resist conflict perhaps if it's your child's happiness you probably give in more than often when they get upset and give them up very long perhaps that's how it fleshes itself out what you treasure in your heart comes out in the decisions that you make about your life that's how it is what I want to suggest in these verses from these two parables is that Christ Jesus Christ is worth treasuring above all he's worth treasuring above all else in the circumstances of our lives we're treasuring above all in all the circumstances of our lives and we want to flesh out how we go living like that how we go living like that treasuring Christ in all of life there are a number of parables that Jesus tells to explain what the kingdom of heaven is like you see that's how those parables start the kingdom of heaven is like

Jesus is used in parables picture stories to explain the value of God's kingdom the important thing to remember here is when you're learning about the kingdom of heaven and what it is like it's not

just abstract learning about a place what you're really thinking of what he's really explaining is what the people in the kingdom of heaven are like how they live and importantly what the king in the kingdom is like if you know the king if you want to know what the kingdom is like you look up the king who rules the kingdom and what his people are like so that's what we're really thinking about when we think this is what the kingdom of heaven is like and in just these few verses we have these two parables they're very similar there's small differences between the people and the first thing that I want you to know is what Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like he says it's like hidden treasure he says it's like hidden treasure verse 44 look with me he said it's like treasure hidden in a field in those days there were no banks or safety deposit boxes if a farmer or a landowner had a stash of gold or treasure precious metals they would bury it in one of their fields for safekeeping that was a pretty normal way to go about things in verse 45 we don't get a man looking and finds treasure we get the merchant a trader a dealer it's common for people in that line of work to travel the world looking for merchandise to acquire both to sell or to keep for themselves in an amongst all that there was on offer there would be hidden treasure in this case a pearl of great value and the kingdom of heaven

Jesus said is like this it is hidden it must be found in one way another that I've seen for what it is just a moment earlier that's exactly just a moment earlier when Jesus is saying that's exactly what Jesus says about the reason he speaks in parables all the way through this chapter verse 11 look back with me this is why I speak to them in parables though seeing they do not see though hearing they do not understand I will open my mouth in parables he says in verse 35 I will open things hidden since the creation of the world verse 9 whoever has ears let them hear to find the hidden treasure the pearl of great value you must not just hear what is being said but you must listen there is a difference to find the hidden you must hear you must you mustn't just hear but you must listen we know that from our own experience right there are people in our world for whom the kingdom of God the kingdom of heaven

[7 : 58] Jesus Christ remains hidden the reality of the significance of it is that God has designed it that way that the kingdom of God is heaven Jesus knows who it is and he speaks in a way that separates those who will listen and those who will only hear I suppose my question is for all of us and not just for today but ultimately when we hear the Bible is are we listening are we listening or just hearing because there is a difference we all know what that type of listening is or we're just hearing if you're on your commute to work you've got the radio on a podcast there are times when you're engaged there are times when you're really listening you're interested into what you're being said and you're thinking it through there are times when your mind is on your work or when you're going to have to take on something else where you're not really it's there you're hearing it but you're not really listening to it you're thinking about something else and you're not pondering or reflecting and it's not memorable if that is true if that is true to listening to the radio or podcast how much more important how much more true must it be when it comes to listening or just hearing you when Jesus speaks when we hear a sermon or read the bible

Jesus is present spiritually speaking so it must have bigger consequences because we're not just talking about random information that sort of tickles your mind we're thinking about understanding Jesus and his kingdom and having it remain hidden that's what we're thinking about is it and so I suppose the point is to really think about when we're reading when we're listening are we hearing or are we really listening however the kingdom of heaven the kingdom of God is not only something that stays hidden it is something that is found it is something that is found the first that was the first hidden treasure the second thing we're going to think about is discovering valuable hidden treasure in both parables the thing that is valuable the treasure the pearl is found and yet there's difference in it the first parable verse 34 the man he finds the treasure in the field but notice he isn't looking for it you see that he just sort of comes across it yet notice seeing what it is after he finds it he realises it's secret he then buries it in the field however the merchant in verse 45 you notice he is looking the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for a fine girl the kingdom of heaven is both found by accident someone not looking and found by someone who is actively searching actively seeking both are true both are true in Isaiah 65 that is exactly what God says he will do he says I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me I was found by those who did not seek me to a nation that did not call on my name I said hear that and yet in Deuteronomy he says if from there you seek the Lord your God you will find him if you seek with him with all your heart and glory somehow somehow in God's kindness in wisdom in his providence with God in charge of all things

both are true before people are interested in anything to do with spiritual things they're just going about their own lives their own business maybe you remember this before you came to know the Lord not even giving God a second thought living life looking after number one not asking for God not seeking after him and yet through a circumstance a situation a person it is God who gives an awareness an insight and desire to look into the things of him to consider something they've never even thought before he can do that gradually he can do it in an instant he reveals himself as the thing that you really need to treasure is him things that you've never even thought but we also know perhaps there are people who spend their whole lives searching they have a genuine desire a heartfelt desire to find and seek after that is true yet it's the conflicting philosophies and ideas that make Jesus just like look like one idea amongst a thousand they won't treasure but there's so many claims out there that it puts them off when they don't really seek after him in that true way then will be it is

Jesus the pearl of great price the treasure he's looked at more closely for some reason he sparkles more than ever before and the pearl like it's held in the eye of the merchant sees what he's been looking for how he's missed it this whole time but what a great value the truth about the kingdom of God is seen as it really is it has the answers it's revealed by the living God God is in charge of how someone comes to know who he is he reveals himself in different ways to give all people some will say it was just like what I explained they knew they needed him others will have deliberated for years it's more of a process however what is common to them both are the kingdom to see the kingdom of heaven as infinitely valuable is to see the king of the kingdom of infinite value because it's gonna say that again to see the kingdom of heaven as infinitely valuable is to see the king in the kingdom of infinite value it is to be persuaded and convinced that

Jesus Christ is the greatest treasure. Are we persuaded this morning that Jesus Christ, and having a relationship with him, having him in your life is worth treasuring? Are we persuaded of that?

[14 : 31] It's worth treasury because the king of the kingdom is worth treasury. Perhaps we're left with the question why is he worth treasury?

Can I tell you why he's worth treasury? Don't flip this parable and see how Jesus fulfills it? You see, the king of the kingdom, Jesus Christ, is worth treasury because of how he fulfills these parables. When we read these parables, often the natural way that we read it is we take the man and the merchant to be us. It naturally fits, as we said before, that the treasure and pearl is the kingdom of heaven, the king is of the censor, and we're the one who finds him.

But what if Jesus Christ is the man? What if he's the man to? What if the man who finds treasure? What if he's the man who is looking for something? This is what God says about his people in Israel.

He says, out of all the people on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasure. Jesus Christ looks on his people as treasure.

[15 : 51] He looks at us, and when he looks at us, he sees something of great value. In fact, he treasures and values you, us, to such an extent that in his joy, he sells all he has.

He allows himself to be sold. He allows that in his death and resurrection, the good news is that he uses his life as a ransom to buy you back from the evil of the world.

So that he owns you. He buys you because of his life. Because he is the one who treasures you. He treasures you by saying that you're of such value, you're of such value there, that he's ready to die for you.

And not only that, he places such value on you, that the value he places on you, it never diminishes, it never drops. It is value and honour placed on you that is constant.

It doesn't have conditions attached to it. You're of such constant value placed on yourself by your creator, by the living God who treasures you.

[17 : 04] You are his treasured possession. Is that not any reason to be convinced, to be persuaded that Jesus Christ is a king who is worth treasuring by himself?

He's worth treasuring in all of life because he treasures you. He treasures you. the final part of both parables.

What we see, we move back towards, we see what the man in the field and the merchant do once they realise how valuable this treasure is. They joyfully secure hidden treasure.

Joyfully secure hidden treasure. End of verse 44, we have the man in the field, he hides it again and then in his joy he goes out and sells all he has and buys the field.

Verse 46, we see the merchant, he goes away and he sells everything he has to buy the pearl. There is a strangeness to their response, isn't there?

[18:07] Because, I don't know about you, if you've ever found something of greater value, that is not normally how I would go about getting something. Not normally how I would buy something normally, I find something of value and I go ask and inquire, how much does this cost?

You go and find the owner of the field and say, excuse me pal, I've seen this great field you've got, I'm very interested in buying your field, how much is it? Or you might go to the trader and say, you've got some great, pour him up a loader, you've got some great things for sale here, could I get hold of that pearl?

It's amazing. You might even try and barter, you do that, you buy a house don't you? You offer, see if you, even you might try to get a good deal.

These two don't do that. You look at their actions and does it almost seem a little bit reckless? It does seem a little bit reckless, doesn't it?

Can you imagine them going home? I've had some grace, some grace that's plenty to their spat. Great today, I just, so everything we have, what for, a field, can you imagine how that goes down?

[19:21] How did you check how much you've got? Just give everything away. Totally reckless. And they do it with joy. They do it with joy, they're delighted to do it. It's no, it's no problem, we'll just do it all with that.

No, beaming, smiling. Invertising. Compared to the treasure in the field, compared to the pearl, in comparison everything they have is not compared.

Everything they, there is a, there is a holy lexiousness. In giving and surrendering, everything, seeking and finding Jesus Christ is your treasure.

He is of infinite value above everything else. To have him as your ultimate treasure is to compare him to everything else in your life and see him as so much more.

The Apostle Paul, you remember what he said when he compared his life to knowing and having Jesus as his treasure? He said everything else to him, he realised, he compared it to Jesus and he said everything else is like rubbish.

[20:29] He uses a great word, he just got to remember this word, it just sounds good, he uses the word, he said it's subalah, he's a great word that means like excrement, like don't, everything else in his life compared to Jesus is rubbish compared to Jesus.

Jesus, an infinite value. So much that they just, they don't care, they see what this pearl is, I don't care, I'm just getting rid of everything, it's nothing compared to what I can, I'm just supposed to get it all to have Christ, to have him.

Tom's earlier, back at the beginning, our definition of treasure, treasure is anything that you place a high value on, and that Jesus says where your treasure is, there your heart is also, and we mentioned a few things, a car, relationships, children's happiness, if you don't fit into one of those categories, you can fill in the blanks, you might treasure comfort, or success, or anything else, our lives are directed, our hearts are directed, how we live, the choices we make, by what we place a high value of, and you can't have some treasures, why?

Because if you do, they will compete, the one that takes the primest spot of your heart will win out, so it reveals where your heart is at, if you treasure your car, and your kids' happiness, what happens when they eat in the back seat, and cover it with love?

If you treasure your car, you might get angry with your kids, if you treasure their happiness, you won't, and you let it slide, but either way, only one will take the same stage in your heart.

[22:12] One way or another, what we treasure the most, will direct your response. If Christ is our treasure, his values and his life will offer us direct the way we live and how we respond.

And I'm just going to, push on this one a little bit. This is grabbing my heart, because I know this is being provocative, because I want to think briefly about our children's happiness.

You can't treasure Christ in your children's happiness. And as I've said before, wanting our kids to be happy is even faith, on all of my children to be happy. But there will almost certainly come a time when there's a birthday party, a sporting activity, there clashes with a church or something else, and it might cause very happiness.

It might hit, and that in itself, because you have to sell the particular family, it might hit on your relationship with your family, that you have with them. And so there's a choice, isn't there?

Your child's happiness, competing with worshipping and treasuring Christ, and choosing him as a treasure. Now you might just say, now you might say, but it's just a one-hot, I mean, how many were streaming a bit of a TT?

[23 : 30] You're not just taking a bit too serious. I don't think so. I don't think so, because what we're inadvertently saying, just to bear this in mind, this will be the subtle message that we give to our children, is that Jesus is our church, he's number one, unless there's a clash.

And then, back up with it. Because I don't want you to be unhappy, and I don't have unhappy memories, and think about church like that, and I don't want you to be in a relationship with that family. That's just one example.

But it means with everything, your car, your relationship, your reputation, your time, your career, the list could go endless, so that it's what someone in here, it reveals how new. And when what you treasure, it will rub up against each other, your choice will reveal what you treasure in service.

When we do that, we're swapping a treasure for a truth. Swapping a treasure for a truth. Learn every day to treasure Christ in all of life. It's hard, when you're giving up stuff that you love, but you get Christ.

It will reevaluate you with your life. The money save you, will your reputation treasure you, will your pit happiness give you eternal life, will kind or comfort love you will condition your life. no, Jesus won't, he doesn't.

[24 : 54] He saves you treasure you, gives you eternal life, and you'll see that solution. He's not true, making you the treasure of your life, because he treasures you.

He treasures you. If you're coming for landing, I thought about three things. You said that Jesus is hidden treasure, he's hidden, but he reveals himself.

He doesn't say anything, he doesn't say anything, but he speaks in parables to those who will hear, and those who will hear, but really listen. That's why we listen.

He's hidden, but he's found, and he's found, and the reason he's worth treasuring is because he treasures you, he values you. He puts it, he puts it, the value he places on you, he puts it on you, he says, and he will give his own life for it.

That's how much he treasure, that's how much he values you. And you can't have two treasures. There is a holy record in surrendering all of life and comparing it to Jesus.

[26 : 03] You can't compare it to Jesus because the gap is so big that he is your greatest treasure for everything else, as good as it is, and as thankful as we are of it for God giving the tools, as thankful as we are, it is not compared to the one that he gives him, making it to be like the man, be like the man, you see Jesus, and enjoy him, you may give it all there, and all of life.

I wonder if this could be the vision of 2025, to treasure life, treasure Jesus, if all of you, if this is all of you, is the that will happen at me.

You consider that you are the only thoughts of your life, that you treasure us, that you see us and you look at us, despite who we are and what we've done, and you place so much value on us that you're willing to give your life to, because you treasure us so much, and value us so highly. We praise you for what you've done, for what you've done. And we want to treasure you, we want to treasure you all of life. Sure is what that means for us in our individual circumstances, the life that we live sure is what that means as a church, to treasure you together as a body. So I pray that you bless and help us to equip us and teach us, mold us, make us people who are ready to be shaped by you.

And therefore we will be honored, that we would serve you every one of us. Then we ask your blessings among us, in Jesus mercy. Amen.