

## **Sermon August 10, 2025**

### **Growing Disciples**

Piggy bank

Jesus warned his friends and the people who followed Him about making money the most important thing to them.

He said, "Don't worry too much about building up treasures on earth." He meant, don't worry too much about money and things but instead, spend your time building up treasures in heaven. So, instead of putting money in this piggy bank, let's store up treasures in heaven by putting in things we think would be treasures in heaven. (Luke 12:33)

What might be treasures in heaven?

Give money to the poor

Visiting the sick

Helping to feed the hungry

Being cheerful and thoughtful to someone who is sad

Praying for one another

Being a friend to someone who is lonely

Forgiving someone who has hurt you

Saying you're sorry when you hurt someone

All the things we talked about can be "treasures in heaven." They may not seem like much, but if we do something for someone each and every day, it is amazing how quickly they add up.

Prayer: God, we may never have much money or very many things, but help us to be faithful each day in building up treasures in heaven. In Jesus' name, amen.

## **Luke 12:32-40**

*'Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.'*

*'Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit; be like those who are waiting for their master to return from the wedding banquet, so that they may open the door for him as soon as he comes and knocks. Blessed are those slaves whom the master finds alert when he comes; truly I tell you, he will fasten his belt and have them sit down to eat, and he will come and serve them. If he comes during the middle of the night, or near dawn, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.'*

*'But know this: if the owner of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have let his house be broken into. You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.'*

The Gospel of Christ...

## **Message**

"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." That is the difficult thing about faith – you can't see it or touch it or prove it by the events in your life. You move forward in hope, confident in the things you cannot see or prove.

Or as Jim Wallis, the American Theologian once wrote, "Hope is believing in spite of the evidence and then watching the evidence change."

Abraham and Sarah had this kind of faith. Despite the evidence before their eyes, they placed their hopes in a God who promised amazing things. As they got older and grayer, their faith that God would be true to God's promises would continue. They waited for that promised child, Isaac, born in laughter, and they placed their faith in promises that they would never see fulfilled of descendants that would number more than the stars in the sky and the grains of sand at the shore.

Jesus understood the power of faith and hope. He lived in brutal times, when the people suffered under the tyranny of the Roman Empire. And yet they held tight to the ancient stories of Abraham and Sarah and Jacob and Ruth... they remembered the promises of the prophets... but it was so hard to hope. It was so hard to hold onto the faith of their ancestors. The evidence was stacked against them and they were so afraid that God's promises would never be fulfilled.

We can understand their fears. We may not live under the brutal oppression of the Roman Empire, but we face very real threats. We live in a world where too many children die from gang violence in the streets, from drugs in their veins, or from preventable diseases. We live in a time when resources are snatched from our poorest neighbors and reallocated to the wealthiest 1%.

We live in a world where too often hope seems to be overtaken by darkness.

And into the hopeless darkness, Jesus' words reach out: "Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Over and over again, Jesus tells us: "The Kingdom of God is near!" Not in some distant celestial realm... it is being ushered in here and now and it is blessed by God. Have faith, Jesus tells us, have hope. Watch and the evidence will change right before your eyes. God's promises fulfilled.

The evidence changed from the manger to the cross to the empty tomb. The evidence changed on Pentecost, when tongues of fire came down. And it didn't stop there. The evidence keeps changing, throughout the generations... the evidence keeps changing even today.

Hope is believing in spite of the evidence and watching the evidence change.

And here we are, trying to hold onto our hope. We are the inheritors of the Kingdom, which continues to break forth today. But it's hard to feel the presence of the Kingdom. We have to have faith. Faith in the Kingdom that's not quite here yet.

And what does God's Kingdom look like? It's a place of justice and mercy and mutuality. It's a place where no one goes hungry, everyone is clothed, and no child is turned away. God's Beloved Community is a place where there is more than enough to go around.

For God's Kingdom to break forth in our lives, God needs us to let go of our fears and act in faith. To work together to make the evidence change.

Jesus tells us today to get ready... to let go of anything that holds us back, so we can build the Kingdom together.

How can we do that? Live into the values of our faith. Share what you have with others, because that's how we create a world where no one is in need. Last week Jesus told us to get our priorities straight. This week Jesus tells us that the right priorities are essential to the Kingdom. Where your treasure is, Jesus tells us, our hearts will also be.

And the treasure that Jesus is talking about is not found in our money or our possessions. Jesus wants us to look a little deeper to see that ***God wants to be our treasure***. God wants us to hold onto God like so many people hold onto their stuff. God wants us to hold God in our heart – always. Believe it or not, we are all God's treasure and God wants to be ours too.

And when we treasure God in our hearts, we can see the world the way God does. We can watch the evidence change.

So what is the God we treasure like?

- \* God is like Jesus, who will sit down with thousands of strangers -- prostitutes and Pharisees, Greeks and Jews, peasants and priests -- to share a meal.

- \* God is like Jesus, who was persecuted, tortured, and executed, and yet spoke words of forgiveness to his tormentors.

- \* God is like Jesus, who taught us that the kingdom of God is ushered in not with the political and military power, but quietly raised from mustard seeds of touching the unclean, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, inviting the outcast in with welcoming arms, no matter where they come from, and reconciling enemies.

And we can see the evidence of Jesus' promises at work in our own lives. Just look around because here is the evidence of the greater works that Jesus foretold. Just not how we expect them to be.

\* Jesus healed the sick. I have seen you heal those in despair by sharing a glimpse of the Beloved Community: simply by loving that person, standing with that person, praying with that person... giving that person hope.

\* Jesus fed the masses. I have seen you bring food to share with your neighbor... with one another and with organizations in the community -- just because you know the need is there.

\* Jesus advocated for the poor. I have seen you donate goods and time to help the poor in our community, our nation and across the world, even when you are struggling yourselves.

Hope is believing in spite of the evidence... then watching the evidence change.

If we believe Jesus, then we can live into the reality of Jesus - the Way, the Truth and the Life. We can be the ones who make the evidence change... step by step, prayer by prayer, until everyone God made and loves can tell the story of God's people as their own. Thanks be to God!

### **A Parting Blessing**

God's blessing be upon us  
as we leave as we leave this place.  
May we strengthen and encourage one another  
in our shared vision.

And may the blessing of our Creative God go with us.

And may the blessing of the Son,  
who showed us how to live, re-shape us.

And may the blessing of the dancing Spirit  
joyfully enable us in our renewed living. Amen.