

Lesson 13

Acquiring Treasure

Icebreaker:

Visualization helps people to learn. If you have a treasure chest of sorts bring it to the meeting and ask the group what the object is. After it has been properly identified ask the group what a treasure chest is for. Then ask the questions, “As a child what was your most treasured possession?” and “Why?”

Introduction:

Jesus continues the Sermon on the Mount.

Reading The Scripture:

The Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 6:19-23

(Gospels forged together into one seamless story, in collaboration with New American Standard Bible, authored by Michael Gibson, Founder of Spirit & Truth, dba Key 2 Changes: “Follow Me: A Message from God”, a Journey with Jesus)

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your **eye is clear**, your whole body will be full of light. But if your **eye is bad**, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

Eye is clear (good). The meaning of this is “being generous”. Proverbs 22:9 says, “*He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor*”.

Eye is bad. The meaning of this is “being stingy”. Proverbs 28:22 says, “*He that hasteneth to be rich hath an evil eye and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.*”

Group Discussion:

1. According to the Scripture passage just read where are the two places that treasure can be stored?
 - a. Earth
 - b. Heaven
2. Name some treasures that can be laid up on earth.
 - a. Gold
 - b. Silver
 - c. Precious Jewels
 - d. Money
 - e. Clothing
 - f. Houses
 - g. Cars
 - h. Furniture
 - i. Toys of all kinds ... for male and female of varying ages.

The Commands:

1. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth.
2. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

The Lesson – Part 1:

As with most of Jesus' teachings He starts on an elementary level, then moves the hearer to a deeper level and then on to the core of the issue. It is no different with this one. As the disciples listen to his first statement they can easily understand the meaning of it. *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.*

To begin with Jesus is talking about treasure, precious things, not ordinary things. He is not talking about the necessities of life. Generally, the things you need are being used on a regular basis; therefore moth and rust do not destroy them because they are not sitting idle. And thieves don't normally risk breaking in somewhere to take things that are not valuable. For example, thieves may break in and steal money but usually won't take your undershirt.

Group Discussion:

3. How hard should a person work to gain treasure?
4. How much is enough?

The Lesson – Part 2:

Jesus' next command forces the disciples to think on a little deeper level. *But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.* This presents a few problems. The ancients, from commoner to Pharaoh, had precious things buried with them for the afterlife. But these things all remain in the earth to this day. How then will the disciples get their treasures from earth to heaven? Does God beam them up?

A second problem comes to mind. In the first command it appeared that He didn't want them to be accumulators or hoarders of treasure, but now He tells them that's exactly what He wants them to do. It seems it is just a matter of where He wants them to store the treasure. But what good are gold, silver, precious jewels in heaven? Surely Jesus must be talking about more than these things. The treasures in heaven must have eternal value.

These eternal treasures are alluded to throughout the Scripture and the Apostle Paul summarizes them in his first epistle to the Corinthians. *But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.* Faith is likened unto gold, hope to silver, and precious jewels to love. Faith like gold is refined by fire. Hope like silver needs to be purified by removing the dross. And love like precious jewels comes in all kinds of sizes, shapes, and colors.

Group Discussion:

5. Name some actions that require faith.
6. Name some actions that require hope.
7. Name some actions that require love.

The Lesson – Part 3:

Jesus concludes the two commands with the core issue *“for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”* He wants His disciples to understand that a person has a choice to value temporal or eternal things. And whichever they choose, that is what they will work for.

Can a person see that things such as: faith, hope and love which last forever are of more value than gold, silver, and precious jewels which are temporal? According to Jesus it depends on the

kind of eye an individual has. Either it is good or evil, clear or bad, or full of light or full of darkness. The eye sees what the heart values!

Jesus used the Hebraic expression “good” or “clear eye” to indicate that a person is generous. An “evil” or “bad eye” indicates that a person is stingy or greedy. References to this can be found in the book of Proverbs. In chapter 22 versus 9 it says, *“He that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed, for he giveth his bread to the poor.”* Likewise, in chapter 28 versus 22 it says, *“He that hasteneth to be rich hath an evil eye and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.”*

The spirit that is controlling a person determines whether he is generous or stingy. It takes faith in God, hope for eternal rewards, and love for others to be generous. This is especially true when a person is poor. Jesus would later refer to a poor widow who contributed two small coins to the treasury as having given more than all the others. Why? She was rich in faith towards her God.

The Point Of The Lesson:

Choose your treasure and store it in the appropriate place.

Application:

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15

Before the next group meeting perform one act that requires faith, one that requires hope and one that requires love. Record your actions and share them at the next group meeting.