

Treasure ?

7 8 16

O God, you declare your almighty power
most chiefly in showing mercy and pity:
mercifully grant to us such a measure of your grace
that we, running the way of your commandments,
may receive your gracious promises,
and be made partakers of your heavenly treasures.

Our text may be found in today's gospel from Luke chapter 12 and verse 34:

'For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.'

Let me begin today's sermon with an obvious question – what do you treasure ?
What's important to you today, really important to you ? If you were simply to
limit your thoughts to something you cherish, what would you try to rescue from
your home if it were on fire, in danger of being burnt down ?

Well, I guess there will be as many different answers to my question as there are
people here in St Bart's today. It might be that we value our health, that we value
our sense of well-being, those we love, our family and our friends, the people
who are important to us. There may be an object we cherish, something that is
precious to us, a photograph of someone we love, a gift from them. But whatever,
whoever, it is that we cherish, what we cherish will speak volumes about the sort
of people we are so when Jesus says to his disciples, **where your treasure is, there**

will your heart be also he is telling them an essential truth – that where they will invest time and effort and money, there their very heart and soul will be, centred in what they truly value. So what we value most will define the sort of people we truly are.

That said, today's gospel passage contains something that I do value – good advice. I guess, first as a teacher then as a priest, that I've spent my life in giving and receiving advice and guidance so that it is well worth listening carefully when someone else is passing on sound advice to me.

So two pieces of advice from Jesus:

- verse 32: **'Do not be afraid'**
- verse 40: **'Be ready'**

In the context of the passage, Jesus is telling his disciples not to worry about the future: that ultimately all will be well and that they will be part of the Kingdom of Heaven. As such, here and now, they should be good stewards of what they have, of what they have earned through their hard work. As such, they should have the confidence to be generous – giving money and help where it's needed. But I think we can also take heart in the period we're living through where there is a greater sense of uncertainty about the future, about political direction, about security and the threat of terrorism. Fear is something that we hear on the news and it can colour our lives and affect what we do in order to protect from possible violence those who come to worship here at St Bart's. But, as Christians, we should be optimistic rather than pessimistic, confident rather than fearful, well knowing that

what we do is for the good of others, done in a spirit of love for others. Our values are eternal values, valuing good will and brotherhood, a warm and open welcome to all who want to worship here publically or privately. Such love should cast out any possible fear of the stranger.

And the second piece of advice any Boy Scout will recognise: 'be prepared'. In the context of the passage, Jesus is warning about the Second Coming, a time when the Kingdom of Heaven will be restored and we as Christians should be ready for the advent of that day whenever it might come. And for us, today, perhaps the challenge is to be prepared to meet the unexpected, to be ready to face the challenges in our lives – be prepared to be the people God intends us truly to be.

So, today, let us treasure being active Christians and be prepared to pass on the love of God by making the world better for our presence.

I have spoken in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen.

Preached at the Eucharist

St Bartholomew's, Dinard

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G: Sermons 34 : Treasure

