

Luke 12:32-42 ³² "Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ "Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys. ³⁴ "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ³⁵ " Let your waist be girded and your lamps burning; ³⁶ "and you yourselves be like men who wait for their master, when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks they may open to him immediately. ³⁷ "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Assuredly, I say to you that he will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. ³⁸ "And if he should come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. ³⁹ "But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰ "Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." ⁴¹ Then Peter said to Him, "Lord, do You speak this parable only to us, or to all people?" ⁴² And the Lord said, "Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his master will make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of food in due season?"

The young financial analyst watches intently as the stock ticker runs across the bottom of the screen. The simple difference of one quarter of a percent could make or break him. He has placed almost all his money in one stock. His whole life is wrapped up in a number that follows a three letter symbol.

A middle aged man is exhausted, yet he opens up the paper to read page after page of commentary of the local sports team. After all, he is a season ticket holder. He has been to every game for the last ten years. He has nearly every shirt they have every made. As the team goes, so goes his life.

The young woman stares at her collection. She remembers how she obtained each piece in the set. She is filled with glee as she holds each piece in her hand and examines the intricate workmanship that went into crafting it. She just can't wait for the next piece to be released. It will only make her collection more valuable. Not only would it complete her set, but also make her life in a strange way feel more complete.

But then the stock market crashes. The team's star player is injured and out for the season. The earthquake strikes and turns her collection into rubble. In one tragic moment, their lives are thrown upside down. For where their treasures were, there also were their hearts.

So Jesus says, "Sell what you have and give alms; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys."

Money, time, and talent can be invested in many places. But there is only one place that can truly promise anything more than a temporary return. All earthly investments are simply that, earthly. As is always evident at the grave, “you can’t take it with you.” Put most simply, only money, time, and talent invested in the Kingdom of God can promise a return beyond this world. Only money, time, and talents invested there can survive stock markets crashing, start athletes falling, and earthquakes destroying. Only treasure invested there can survive even death’s destructive blow.

So Jesus says, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and all these things will be added unto you.”

How sad that we all too often invest our money, our time, and our talents in things that will not last. How easy it is to spend an extra twenty bucks on this or that thing, but how hard it is to place that same twenty in the offering plate as it goes around for a special offering. How quickly we can decide to commit ourselves to another monthly payment for this purchase or that purchase but yet struggle greatly over the decision to give freely to a missionary or some charity each month. How easy it is in our budget to set aside large percentages of our money for things that will be gone by the end of the month, but yet it seems almost rationally impossible to set aside something as large as ten percent of our money for the work of God’s kingdom.

Let me ask you a question. For, it is a question that our text asks this day. What if Christ returned today and examined the use of the money, time and treasure he has given to you? Would you be proud of how those treasures have been used for Him and His purposes? Would He judge you a good steward of what He has given to you?

So Jesus says, "You too, be ready; for the Son of Man is coming at an hour that you do not expect. Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit. Be like men who are waiting for their master when he returns from the wedding feast, so that they may immediately open the door to him when he comes and knocks."

We learn today from our Savior’s lips exactly why we are able to invest so radically in God’s kingdom. We are able to do this freely because we know that God knows full well that we need the necessities of life and will give them to us. No one goes broke because they give too much to God.

Jesus says, "Do not seek what you will eat and what you will drink, and do not keep worrying. For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek; but your Father knows that you need these things."

Indeed our God is generous beyond measure. It was his good pleasure to give us, mostly yet babes, His Kingdom at the font. It was His good pleasure this morning to forgive you of all your sins in the word of absolution. It is His good pleasure to strengthen your faith and forgive your sin as He feeds you His body and blood from His table. And all of this is possible because it was His good pleasure to send His only Son to the cross in order that your sins and my sins might all be forgiven. And as our text teaches and our lives show forth, it is also His good pleasure to give you all you need to live and then some.

It is because of God's goodness towards us that we need no longer place our happiness or hope in other things. We need no longer simply invest our money, time, and talent in earthly things that are sure to waste away. But rather we are made free to invest richly in God's kingdom. And as we invest more and more in His Kingdom and His work, we will become more and more invested in that work.

For Jesus says, "Where you treasure is, there also will be your heart."

The more and more of our money that is wrapped up in doing His work, the more and more our hearts and minds will be wrapped up in the success of that work. We will care more about what is happening in our church and throughout the church at large. The more and more we spend time seeking God's kingdom in worship, bible study, and service to our world, the more our heart will be wrapped up in that Kingdom and its truth. The more and more we examine how the talents God has given us can be put to work in His kingdom, the more purpose and joy those talents will be filled with.

Christian brothers and sisters, this message is not aimed at some immediate trouble with the budget, but rather is a call for all of us to reexamine where our treasures are currently being stored. And in that light, to have revealed to us where our hearts are as well. For, as Jesus teaches, the two are unquestionably linked.

Today, we indeed are called to examine our lives and our stewardship. In some areas, we may find the result of the Holy Spirit's work in abundance. Perhaps in the area of using your talents or the area of using your money or in the area of using your time for the good of the kingdom, you are doing quite well by God's power. But I suppose that for each of us, there is a deficiency also in one or more of these areas. As we look at our lives honestly, we realize that there are times where something else in this world has become the place where most of our treasure, be that money, time or talent, is invested.

Today, we come into God house to be cleaned. We recognize today that those deficiencies revealed in our lives are nothing short of sin. And therefore, we need again this day nothing short of our Savior Jesus. And so, we go again today to the One who invested everything He had in the work of God's Kingdom. We go to the One who put His treasure where His heart was. We go to one who was so concerned about you and me and our salvation that He gave not only His time and talent, but His very life for the sake of that kingdom.

Jesus this day forgives us for our lack of richness towards Him. Jesus says anew in our ears this day, "It is my father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Indeed today in this very place, He gives us again that kingdom full of forgiveness and peace. And receiving anew from God this day his richness towards us, our hearts are set right. Our hearts are focused squarely on His Kingdom and His richness towards us. We are made ready to seek the Kingdom first, and trust God for the rest. We are made ready to place our treasure where God has placed our hearts. Amen.