

## Ripon & Lower Dales Methodist Circuit

### Worship at Home

4<sup>th</sup> August 2022

What comes to mind when you hear the word 'treasure'. I'm pretty sure that you think treasure means something precious, something highly valued.

In today's Gospel reading, Jesus talks about treasure. He makes the insightful comment that wherever your treasure is, there you will find your heart. In other words, whatever or whoever we value has a high priority in our life. This treasure engages our minds, our senses. It influences our behaviour, and/or how we choose to spend our time. But Jesus isn't talking about treasure in a worldly sense; he is talking about what we gain from doing the work of God's kingdom. Today we explore what it means to look for this treasure.

### Call to Worship

As we come into God's presence, let us open our hands and hearts, let us invite God to fill us with the treasure of his Spirit – the treasure of his compassion for others, and the treasure of his unconditional love for us.

### Gathering Prayer

God of all,  
we thank you for being here with us.  
We thank you that in your presence we find heavenly riches beyond any earthly treasure.  
As we come to worship,  
help us to seek and find the treasure of your kingdom,  
so we can live our earthly lives holding treasure that will transform us –

right here and right now. **Amen**

### Hymn StF 34 O worship the Lord

- 1 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim ;  
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,  
kneel and adore him : the Lord is his name.
- 2 Low at his feet lay your burden of carefulness,  
high on his heart he will bear it for you,  
comfort your sorrows, and answer your prayerfulness,  
showing the pathway your feet should pursue.
- 3 Fear not to enter his courts in the slenderness  
of the poor wealth you would count as your own ;  
truth in its beauty, and love in its tenderness,  
these are the offerings to bring to his throne.
- 4 These, though we bring them in trembling and fearfulness,  
he will accept for the name that is dear ;  
mornings of joy give for evenings of tearfulness,  
trust for our trembling, and hope for our fear.
- 5 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness,  
bow down before him, his glory proclaim ;  
with gold of obedience and incense of lowliness,  
kneel and adore him : the Lord is his name.

John Samuel Bewley Monsell (1811–1875)

### Prayers of praise, adoration and thanksgiving

Right here, right now, we worship you, God of wealth and treasure, we adore you.

Together, we come before you  
to share the riches of your glory;  
to feel and see and hear and know  
that you are in our midst.  
You are not seated high on some  
heavenly throne, or in a palace hidden  
behind walls.  
You, Lord, are in our midst – alive,  
living and being among us.  
We worship and adore you, here and  
now, no appointment needed.

Our hearts overflow with praise and  
thanksgiving as we realise  
that You are not 'out there', distant and  
seated high above us,  
but here with us in this moment, not  
distant but close.

Our hearts overflow as Your love  
warms us, shelters and comforts us,  
as Your Spirit gives us strength and  
hope, passion and purpose.

Our hearts overflow as we know we  
need not fear our God,  
that God's treasure is closer than we  
can feel and deeper than we can  
know,  
wider than we can see and more real  
than we can imagine.

Our hearts overflow to know that the  
place we have searched for is this  
place,  
and that the time we have been  
searching for is here and now.  
Our hearts overflow with praise and  
thanksgiving. Amen

### **Prayer of Confession and Assurance**

We strive in life for things to make us  
comfortable, for things that give us  
pleasure.  
We save in life, if we are able, for rainy  
days and stormy times.  
We work to make life better, always

hoping it will make us happier.  
We burden ourselves with so much so-  
called 'treasure'  
that we cannot see the wood for the  
trees.  
We work to give enjoyment, but  
struggle along the way.  
Forgive us, Lord, and help us in a  
moment of reflection to see the  
damage that our 'treasures' can cause,  
if they become the centre of our living.  
Forgive us in our busy-ness to store up  
treasure here on earth,  
if we lose sight of the treasure that is  
you in the here and now.  
Forgive us if in our busy-ness we fail to  
share your treasure with family, friend  
and neighbour. **Amen.**

God, in his love for us, offers, each of  
us, every one of us, forgiveness for our  
sins, things done and undone, things  
spoken and unspoken.  
God in his love for us offers assurance  
that our sins – even ours – are  
forgiven.  
So, let us go this day sharing the  
treasure that is God, Father, Son and  
Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

### **Hymn StF 57 Let all the world**

- 1 Let all the world in every corner sing :  
my God and King !  
The heavens are not too high,  
his praise may thither fly ;  
the earth is not too low,  
his praises there may grow.  
Let all the world in every corner sing :  
my God and King !
- 2 Let all the world in every corner sing :  
my God and King !  
The Church with psalms must shout,  
no door can keep them out ;  
but above all, the heart  
must bear the longest part.  
Let all the world in every corner sing :  
my God and King !

George Herbert (1593–1633)

## **Bible Reading : Luke 12:32-40 (NLT)**

<sup>32</sup>“So don’t be afraid, little flock. For it gives your Father great happiness to give you the Kingdom.

<sup>33</sup>“Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it. <sup>34</sup>Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

### **Be Ready for the Lord’s Coming**

<sup>35</sup>“Be dressed for service and keep your lamps burning, <sup>36</sup>as though you were waiting for your master to return from the wedding feast. Then you will be ready to open the door and let him in the moment he arrives and knocks. <sup>37</sup>The servants who are ready and waiting for his return will be rewarded. I tell you the truth, he himself will seat them, put on an apron, and serve them as they sit and eat! <sup>38</sup>He may come in the middle of the night or just before dawn.<sup>[a]</sup> But whenever he comes, he will reward the servants who are ready.

<sup>39</sup>“Understand this: If a homeowner knew exactly when a burglar was coming, he would not permit his house to be broken into. <sup>40</sup>You also must be ready all the time, for the Son of Man will come when least expected.”

### **Word**

At the height of the 2020 lockdown there was an interesting reassessment of who should be described as important. People doing jobs once regarded as mundane and often largely disregarded suddenly acquired

real importance as ‘key workers’. Delivery drivers, shop workers, NHS staff and others were the people keeping society together. Celebrities, influencers and film stars, and the like, were superseded by a very different group of people. The pandemic made us reevaluate who we treasured. For a brief period, we – collectively – looked for treasure in a different place.

So, it is possible!

The treasure Jesus speaks about is also found in a very different place. Indeed, Jesus exhorts his followers to get rid of their possessions – or the treasure of this world – and to start collecting new riches.

The passage you’ve just read is part of a long section of dialogue, from Luke 12.1 to 13.21 (You may like to read it all). Jesus is speaking and responding to questions from those who are already followers, those who oppose him, and those who are still trying to make up their minds. He has urged his listeners to seek God’s kingdom, and not to worry about what to eat or what to wear (v.31) – how many today want to dine in the poshest restaurant and wear the latest fashion?

Jesus tells his disciples not to be afraid because God will give them the kingdom, drawing them into a supportive band of brothers and sisters in pursuit of the treasure God holds before them. This treasure is both here now - and off in the distance, but it is theirs because they have set their hearts on it.

The kingdom of God is a gift, but it does not come to those who are passive. As we seek God’s kingdom rather than our own material well-being we need to be alert to what God is

doing (vv.35-48), to be ready for his return - for then we find He is coming to serve us.

These verses have the twin focus of Jesus' first and second coming – and we need to keep this in mind if we're to understand. Verse 35 contains an echo of the Passover – eating with loins girded with no trace of yeast in the house – and hence recalls Jesus' warning to his followers to avoid the Pharisees' yeast – their hypocrisy (12.1b).

Jesus contrasts the alertness of his disciples with the inattention of the Pharisees (vv.36-38). The master (Jesus) came and found the disciples ready, so he served them and met their needs. This is the ministry Jesus has been engaged in throughout – the Spirit of the Lord is upon him and he will proclaim the good news to the poor, set prisoners free and let the blind see.(Luke 4:16-21)

But the banquet scene also has an eye on the future, on the great banquet that the Messiah will throw for his faithful people when the kingdom of God comes in its fullness. Then, social hierarchies that are so precious to the Pharisees will be meaningless.

By implication, they should be meaningless among God's people now.

So, if we are going to lay hold of our treasure, we must lay down all the other things we cling to for security – no building of bigger barns as the parable says in v16-21, prior to our reading.

Still on the theme of being ready, Jesus shifts the focus from the coming of the master to the coming of a thief

(v.39ff). Such a coming is unexpected. Again, both the present and the future is in view. His first coming has taken the Pharisees and the crowds (see 12.54-59) by surprise. Will his second coming similarly catch his followers off guard?

Would you be ready if Jesus came tomorrow?

### **Hymn 566 Take my life**

- 1 Take my life, and let it be consecrated, Lord, to thee ;  
take my moments and my days,  
let them flow in ceaseless praise.
- 2 Take my hands, and let them move  
at the impulse of thy love ;  
take my feet, and let them be  
swift and beautiful for thee.
- 3 Take my voice, and let me sing  
always, only, for my King ;  
take my lips, and let them be  
filled with messages from thee.
- 4 Take my silver and my gold,  
not a mite would I withhold ;  
take my intellect, and use  
every power as thou shalt choose.
- 5 Take my will, and make it thine ;  
it shall be no longer mine ;  
take my heart — it is thine own ;  
it shall be thy royal throne.
- 6 Take my love ; my Lord, I pour  
at thy feet its treasure-store ;  
take myself, and I will be  
ever, only, all for thee.

Frances Ridley Havergal (1836–1879)

### ***Prayers for Others***

Lord, we pray...

for those living on the edge, in fear of the future:

bless them with a deepening sense of hope and trust in you;

Lord, we pray...

for those caught up in the ways of the world,  
relying on worldly treasures:  
give them a blessing of release and joy  
in you;

Lord, we pray...

for those battling with ill health:  
give them the blessing of  
strengthening hope and healing;

Lord, we pray...

for all who have the responsibility of  
leading your flock:  
give them your blessing of wisdom and  
strength.

Lord, you watch and protect.  
Strengthen all who are in need  
with an unshakeable trust in you;  
give them a glimpse of the treasures  
that are theirs when they put their  
hope and trust in you. Amen.

### Lord's Prayer

### Hymn 462 Come with me, come wander, come welcome the world

1 Come with me, come wander,  
come welcome the world  
where strangers might smile or  
where stones may be hurled ;  
come leave what you cling to, lay  
down what you clutch  
and find, with hands empty, that  
hearts can hold much.

*Sing hey for the carpenter leaving his  
tools !*

*Sing hey for the pharisees leaving their  
rules !*

*Sing hey for the fishermen leaving their  
nets !*

*Sing hey for the people who leave their  
regrets !*

2 Come walk in my company, come  
sleep by my side,  
come savour a lifestyle with nothing  
to hide ;

come sit at my table and eat with my  
friends,  
discovering that love which the world  
never ends.

3 Come share in my laughter, come  
close to my fears,  
come find yourself washed with the  
kiss of my tears ;  
come stand close at hand while I  
suffer and die  
and find in three days how I never  
will lie.

4 Come leave your possessions,  
come share out your treasure,  
come give and receive without  
method or measure ;  
come loose every bond that's  
resisting the Spirit,  
enabling the earth to be yours to  
inherit.

John L. Bell (b. 1949) and Graham Maule (b. 1958)

### Blessing

Lord, go with us.  
Help us to seek your treasure.  
Help us to look for all you're doing right  
now.  
Help us – by our example as much as  
by our words –  
to share your treasure and your life-  
giving story  
with the people we meet this week.  
**Amen.**

**Kathy Lowrie**

(based on prayers and commentary  
from Roots on the Web)