

Our times of worship are tools to keep us focused on where Jesus' treasure is, to keep us focused on Jesus' mission; people. Finding lost people. Loving people. And doing it personally. Jesus came in person.

I'm sure no farmer sees his goal as simply buy a new tractor. A tractor is a very useful tool, and it has helped farmers in many ways. Especially when it comes to putting in a crop. What's the goal of a cereal farmer? To buy a new tractor or to harvest a crop?

It's good to have tools that help, but the goal isn't the tools but the

harvest these tools help reap. Would you agree or not?

Jesus treasure isn't the bible, or a worship service, or a church building, or a data projector. These are all good tools to reap Jesus' treasure. Jesus' treasure is people. That's what he gave his life for. That's what he has commissioned us to be doing; seeking people, so that they might come to know Jesus in a real personal relationship.

"It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up

being." (Matt. 6:21) Thank God he treasures each one of us, and wants to end up being with us.

May our treasure be Jesus, sharing his life with him in an open, honest, vibrant, loving relationship, that we end up being there, with all our family and friends.

Let us pray. Jesus may your treasure be our treasure. May what you treasure shape everything about us; what we say and what we do, both as individuals and as your community. Amen.

9 March 2011  
**ASH WEDNESDAY**  
Matthew 6:21



I'd like to begin by reading the last section of the Gospel using the Message Paraphrase: "It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being." (Matt 6:21)

Now isn't that obvious, the place you want to be, is where you'll seek to be, where you'll work at being? I had to agree with that thought.

Which made me think of King David and his desire to be in God's temple. Each time I read something like that I think; how boring. I couldn't think of anything worse than being stuck in a church building for the rest of my life!

I remember a girl from a confirmation class saying to me that heaven must be really boring if

all you were going to do was sit on clouds, playing harps and singing in a choir. Quite obviously this thought didn't equate with what she saw as having fun, as getting the most out of life. If heaven was partying with her friends, now that would have been a different story.

What's your treasure? Where's the place you would most like to be? What would you most like to be doing?

I wonder how Jesus would answer those questions?

Here's an example of what I believe Jesus treasures. "Passing along, Jesus saw a man at his work collecting taxes. His name was Matthew. Jesus said, "Come along with me." Matthew stood up and followed him. Later

when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew's house with his close followers, a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them. When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus' followers. "What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riffraff?" Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders." (Matt.9:9-13 Message Paraphrase)

This tells me that Jesus' treasure is getting to know you and I. Jesus' treasure is building an open, honest, vibrant, loving relationship with us, and seeing that same

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## Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am  
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Jesus' Disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples, who grow disciples...

sort of relationship flourish between us.

My confirmation girl's idea of heaven probably wasn't that far off of Jesus' idea. How many times does Jesus talk about heaven as a feast? Jesus gave us only two rituals; baptism and communion. Baptism is being born into the Father's family.

Communion is eating at the Father's table, with all the family.

Where else would you expect the Father's children to eat? At a strangers table! It's obvious, the Father wants his children feasting at his table on the finest of food.

I wonder why we usually celebrate communion around an altar, and very really at a table as a family meal?

What does Jesus treasure? Right ritual, or right relationships.

In Isaiah God says:

<sup>2</sup>For day after day they seek me out; they seem eager

to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right

and has not forsaken the commands of its God.

They ask me for just decisions and seem eager for God to come near them.

### What is your treasure?

<sup>3</sup> 'Why have we fasted,' they say, 'and you have not seen it?'

Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?'

"Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.

<sup>4</sup> Your fasting ends in quarreling

and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists.

You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.

<sup>5</sup> Is this the kind of fast I have chosen, only a day for a man to humble himself?

Is it only for bowing one's head like a reed and for lying on sackcloth and ashes?

Is that what you call a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD?

<sup>6</sup> "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and

break every yoke?

<sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—

when you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood? "

Isa. 58:2-7

That sounds to me like God treasures healthy relationships. It also sounds to me very similar to what this parable of Jesus that we find in Matthew.

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him (that includes Australians), and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the

sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something

### What is Jesus treasure?

to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.'

Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in

prison and go to visit you?'

The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you *did during a worship service, no he doesn't say that but;* whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'" (Matt. 25:31-40)

Jesus treasures people. Jesus treasures building a healthy, vibrant, loving relationship, because the opposite of this breaks his heart.

Jesus' treasure is you and I, and all our family and friends. I reckon that's where he wants to end up, celebrating life with us, forever.

What as a church do we focus on? Is there anything wrong with a worship service? I'm sure God is pleased with us tonight. But the goal of the Christian life isn't Sunday worship, rather it is letting Jesus' love, grace and mercy flow into all our relationships, into all areas of life.