

The Object of Desire

Have you ever been on a treasure hunt? Have you ever lost something extremely important – your Bible, your wallet, your purse, your keys, and did you notice the unrest in your heart and mind? When that happens, you search and search and ponder and ask around, “Have you seen such and such?” And when the obvious options are exhausted, you start pulling out all the stops – you look in closets or drawers or trunks of cars – places you know your treasure can’t be, but you’re getting desperate.

Sometimes, other people try to help, but they don’t have the same intensity of desire so their search is pretty lame and they ask, “What was it again?” or “What color is it again?” This is your treasure, not theirs.

But then there’s the exclamation point – “I FOUND it!” Your heart leaps, your mind just dances for a moment and the soothing gladness of having your treasure secure settles in.

Now, imagine that we’re not talking about keys or money or credit cards or your ID. Imagine that we’re searching for something 100s or 1000s of times more precious to you perhaps something of more value than can be spoken. Immediately, most of us will begin to picture someone rather than something...

So now, your search becomes far more intense – you don’t want to play ANY games – you want absolutely nothing other than perfectly truthful guidance and understanding, sincere help. But when the consequent discovery comes, it is likewise far more elating.

This is why Jesus said to lay up our treasures in heaven, for where our treasures are, our hearts are compelled to follow. Sad to say, however, many today have treated this command as optional or given it only an intellectual assent. For

some, their focus is predominantly to obtain the most out of this life, to pursue personal agendas (sometimes with a spiritual façade), and they slide from the ambassadorship in God’s kingdom to citizenship in this world for their treasures are mostly rooted in the planet.

William Wilberforce wrote, “*It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective in this one.*”

The most famous of prayers says, “Thy kingdom – come!” Nevertheless, the Bible tells us that the last-days church called the Laodiceans is one in which people think they don’t need God’s kingdom; they are well off – they’ve bought and sold and planted and built. And in fact, they are pictured as fully engrossed in this activity.

Now, Jesus also said that in the day in which the Son of Man is revealed (that is, His second coming) it would be, “*as it was in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built...*” and soon afterward He followed it with, “*Remember Lot’s wife,*” who turned to look longingly at Sodom when it was judged and ... well you know the story. (Luke 17 and Gen 19)

In this, was the Lord just saying that the sinful world would be acting normally – unaware of the coming Judgement? Sure, but that’s certainly not all, for that has been the world’s behavior ever since we left Eden. The unique and identifying things are that:

- Lot was physically removed from the judgement and ...
- His family was doing the same things as the world – that is, their treasures were in Sodom. That’s why Lot’s wife turned back.

Lot’s family became ‘Laodicean’ so to speak. Now, clearly, the Laodiceans are pictured in Revelation as a faithless church and that makes Christ’s question concerning His return for His church

thunder, if we’re listening -- He asked, “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18)

He’s NOT talking of the world, He’s exhibiting His concern for His last-days church which becomes indistinguishable in behavior from the world.

Now, earthly treasures may be such obvious things as homes, careers or finances, but they can also be represented in such attitudes as, “I just want to get married first” or “I want grandchildren first” or “I just don’t want this ministry to end” – that is, heartfelt desires or even in some circumstances, ministries – anything here in this life that is more important to us than the return and reunion with our Lord.

A.W. Tozer wrote, “*The church is constantly being tempted to accept this world as her home, and sometimes she has listened to those who would woo her away and use her for their own ends... We do well to think of the long tomorrow.*”

***There’s peace in my eternal home
On the outside, only war
And when I gaze in Your eternal eyes
I find my evermore.
-- Anonymous***

Do you know what you’re looking for? You see, everyone’s looking – however, most folks don’t realize what they are really seeking, really longing for. That’s why they fill their lives with the pursuit of substitutes – things that give at best only a momentary pleasure or satisfaction.

- They look for houses when what they unknowingly desire is the comfort of home – a forever home.
- They look for possessions of all kinds when what they most

deeply long for is the permanent inheritance of all things in Jesus.

- They look for temporary pleasures, for fun, for escape from boredom when what they truly yearn for is the eternal joy and forever growing ecstasy of God’s presence.
- They look for recognition, success and the praise of men in their job or studies when what their heart earnestly desires is the satisfaction, fullness of purpose and sense of accomplishment in hearing these simple words, “Well done, good and faithful servant...” from God Himself.
- They look for ministerial ‘applause’ and ‘success’ when what they most deeply want is the awesome privilege of placing a beautiful crown at the feet of their Lord – a crown formed only by a loving and obedient relationship with Him, not by how full their schedule is or by numbers of people or buildings or dutiful works or the spotlight.

So why don’t most of us recognize what we are truly longing for in our inner man? Why do we fill our time with the pursuit of poor substitutes?

Perspective.

Why do we work so hard to build what will only one day burn? Why do we hide from deep and tender relationships behind the wall or mask of busy-ness? Why do we spend so much effort to accumulate that which is only dust in the wind?

Perspective.

Back in 1649, Richard Baxter wrote, “*If there be so certain and glorious a rest for the saints, why is there no more industrious seeking after it? One would think, if a man did but once hear of such unspeakable glory to be obtained, and believed what he heard to be true, he should be transported with the*

vehemency of his desire after it, and should almost forget to eat and drink, and should care for nothing else, and speak of and inquire after nothing else, but how to get this treasure. And yet people who hear of it daily, and profess to believe it as a fundamental article of their faith, do as little mind it, or labour for it, as if they had never heard of any such thing, or did not believe one word they hear." (emphasis added)

It is an eternal perspective that Jesus directed us to embrace. He said, "Seek first the kingdom of heaven..." and "Set your mind on things above..." Paul wrote, "while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal." And John exclaimed, "Come Lord Jesus." You see:

- When we see the consequences of our sin in the light of eternity, we hug the cross.
- When we ponder God's heavenly kingdom, we actually catch glimpses of it.
- When our motivations are brought under heaven's holy spotlight, we can see the gems and the chaff.
- When we earnestly pray, "Come, Lord Jesus!" it's because we are no longer a friend of the world but an anxious bride to be.

Christ is coming very soon. Will you be watching and ready or like Lot in Sodom, will He have to PULL you out overcoming your reluctance? (What a terrible way to enter into God's presence.) Let's set our minds on things above and place the treasures of our trust, our time, our toil, out 'tender' – indeed, our all, in heaven. Let's look for His appearing sincerely, even eagerly and in faith. This pleases God.

Be "looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God" 2 Pet 3:12

"Let temporal things serve your use, but the eternal be the object of your desire." Thomas a Kempis

If you have never prayed to receive God's free gift of eternal life. Do it now! Simply confess to Him your sins, your need for forgiveness, believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God Who died for you and rose again – open your heart to Him – the consequences are eternal.