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October 17, 2021

Sermon Text: Hebrews 13:5-6

Know your Treasure

(Praise be to Christ) – From the fullness of his grace, we have all received one blessing after another. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

If you've ever seen on of those TV shows, where people bring their valuables in and experts tell them what they are worth, then you know those can be full of surprises! A man brings what he thinks is an expensive, beautiful picture by a well-known artists, only to find out it is a fake, worth next to nothing. But then an elderly lady has a dull looking plain bowl that turns out to be a rare, priceless artifact, worth a fortune!

What some think to be treasure is only trash, and what some consider trash is genuine treasure. Therefore, you need to **Know your treasure**. And since that is the case with what our hearts might depend on, our lesson from Hebrews helps us to remember the only **Treasure** that will last forever and never disappoint!

Speak of **treasure** and we might think of **money**, or gold or other valuable. But when our lesson speaks of **money**, don't think just of green pieces of paper or numbers in a bank account, but also possessions it can get us, or the pleasures and experiences it can purchase.

In love for us, the Lord teaches us to be careful about our attitudes toward **money** and earthly treasure. **Keep your life free from the love of money.**

Notice it doesn't say **Keep your life free from money**. Money and possessions are not evil or wrong by themselves. They are gifts and blessings from the hand of our gracious God! The problem comes when the naturally sinful human heart gives money and stuff the trust, love and importance that should go to God alone. That's the start of **the love of money**.

Now **the love of money** makes attractive promises. It says: if you just have some more, if you get enough, if you have the latest and greatest, then you'll be happy, then

you'll be satisfied. **The love of money** claims that **money** will give you security and freedom from worry. Just have enough and you'll be all set!

But what earthly treasure can never keep *this promise*: **I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you.**

The happiness and satisfaction **the love of money** promises *does* and *will* leave and **forsake** us. Think of the child who is convinced he needs that new toy or latest game, and is so certain that if he can just get that toy or game he'll be set, maybe even says to mom or dad, if I only have that I won't ask for anything more! Then he finally gets it, but soon that thing becomes old, boring or broken and he needs something else new. Of course, we've all been that child haven't we, indeed we still struggle with being that child today.

And **Money** can never say (and mean): **I will never leave you.** Stock market crashes, theft, rising inflation, job loss, unexpected medical bills make wealth disappear. Death makes us **leave** all our money and possessions. History shows us **money** cannot guarantee security.

God warns us against the **love of** money because it harms both our lives and our eternal lives. Families and relationships can be ruined by greed-fueled fights or when always wanting to have more steals away quality time. Worst of all, always wanting more, never being satisfied can lead to money and activities squeezing out time spent nurturing faith in God's Word, which can lead to unbelief and eternal ruin.

How much healthier and happier it would be to follow what Scripture says: **Keep your life free from the love of money, and be content with what you have.**

Instead of worrying and striving for more, upset with what you don't have, **be content.** That is be at peace, happy, satisfied with what you do have, recognizing it is a gift from God you can enjoy with thanksgiving, and that He knows how to care for you whether you have lots or a little, whether times or good or times are bad.

Being content doesn't mean we won't ever set goals to improve or work to get something, but it does mean not getting bent out of shape if we're not allowed to get it. We can still be satisfied because our peace of mind doesn't depend on our stuff or our situation, but on something truly guaranteed: the promises of the Lord!

Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have. It's not complicated. It makes sense and we know it is right, and we know God says it for our good, to warn us against sinful, misplaced trust in what can never save us.

And yet we still struggle so much to actually do it! That we so often sin by giving money and stuff the love and trust that belongs to God alone should be obvious by in how many places God has to teach us this so many times in the Bible! How apt our old sinful hearts are to listen to the world's call of, "more, more, more!"

The proof that we struggle to **be content**, to be satisfied with God and His promises is proved by the way worry and fear so easily creeps into our hearts. Worry about money, the future, the economy, or whatever else means we're trusting in something else than the Almighty and Eternal Lord!

Every form of selfishness, greed, worry, and a lack of contentment proves that we cannot keep even the first commandment, for we fail to perfectly trust and love God above all else!

And so it would makes sense and only be what we deserve if God would say: "I'm done with you. I leave you to what your sin deserves. See how well the money, people and stuff you want to love so much will save you from death and hell."

But instead, in the entirely undeserved, startling love of our God, the Lord not only warns us against the **love of money**, but He also calls us to repentance, to acknowledge our sin and then He steps in to save us from it!

This very day the Lord comes to us weak and struggling sinners, full of worry and misplaced love and trust, and gives us the most undeserved and amazing promise, God says to you: **I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you.**

Unlike the **love of money** and all its empty promises, God actually does what He says. He always keeps His promises. The Lord has not **left** us to what our sin deserves. Instead He came to our aid and has given His greatest treasure: **His only begotten Son** to rescue us (John 3:16)!

In Jesus Christ, the eternal God did not **forsake** us, but came to our side to rescue us. The Holy God took on a true human nature to not only live with us, but live for us and in our place.

In our place, Jesus was perfectly content in every way, even though He left heaven's riches to live in humility and poverty, so that He could say: "**Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.**" (Mt 8:20)

Jesus alone lived a life of perfect godly **contentment**. He always kept His Father first in His heart. Christ's love for God was perfect and undivided—free from worry, fear, greed or guilt of any kind.

Jesus' perfect and sinless life of obedience to God's will is a priceless golden treasure that He gives and counts for you and me. And then on the cross Jesus Himself paid the debt and punishment of our every sin, including every time we've been lured by the **love of money**.

There at the cross, we find the most shocking proof of His saving love and His promise that He will **never forsake us**. In our place, Jesus was **forsaken** so we would not be separated from God in hell. In the dark hours of Good Friday, Christ was abandoned instead of us, suffering the pangs of hell as He cried out: **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.**

In love for you, Jesus was **forsaken** so that you would not be. He was **forsaken** so that we are forgiven. Not a little bit, but fully and completely, made entirely pure and holy through the Holy Spirit given treasure of faith in Jesus! **Know your Treasure**—there is no Treasure greater than Jesus' life and death to save us! Christ is our **Highest Treasure**.

Remember, even if we could have all the money in the world, it would still **leave us death**. It cannot help us in the **grave** or what comes next.

But Jesus, our dearest treasure left death defeated when He bodily rose on Easter morning. Christ who conquered death and grave, lives and rules eternally to keep His promise to you: **I will never leave you, and I will never forsake you.**

Never means never. Even in the valley of the Shadow of Death He will be with you, to bring your soul safely home to the Father's heavenly mansions! And Jesus will not abandon your body to the grave either, but on the last day will bodily raise and glorify our bodies like His risen bodies, so that body and soul, in endless life and joy we will forever be with Jesus and share in the treasures of His Kingdom that knows no end!

Money and the security it promises can **leave** us in a heartbeat, but Jesus will **never leave** you for all eternity! This gospel truth not only save us, but it changes us. It gives us hearts that can trust even if we don't have all we think we want, we have the Lord as our greatest treasure and therefore have more than we could begin to imagine for all eternity!

As we focus our eyes on Jesus and hear and trust His promises, His Spirit helps us in our daily battle to cast fear and worry aside and rest on His never failing promises to never **forsake us** and to always **help** us in every need, now and eternally.

Dear friends, always remember **Jesus** is your greatest **Treasure**. In Christ, **God has said** to you: **I will never leave you**. And therefore, no matter whether we have a lot or a little, good or bad, we can say: **The Lord is my helper, and I will not be afraid**. Amen.

You know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for (y)our sake(s) he became poor, so that (you) we through his poverty might become rich! Amen.

We confess our Christian faith using the Nicene Creed on page 31 in the front of the Hymnal.