

Sermon: Give as Good as You Get –

Treasure Commitment

November 13, 2022

GIVE AS GOOD AS YOU GET



A STEWARDSHIP MESSAGE SERIES

Recap of Message Series “Give As Good As You Get” – Time Commitment

Today we are continuing this message series on stewardship called “Give As Good As You Get.” Last week we explored using our time to God’s glory and to help our neighbor.

As we looked at the last book of the Bible about the saints in heaven, we found that they have been where we are now. They are now in heaven worshiping Christ. As we are here on earth worshiping Christ by being here, online, *and* using the time we have to help others.

This week, we are going to explore the Treasure Commitment part of Stewardship.

This is when people using tune out during a stewardship sermon or series. When the preacher starts talking about money.

But I hope you won't tune out. I admit it, the topic of money is a hard discussion to have – especially in church.

But it is an important discussion to have, especially today.

This past week there have been two events that reminded me of the importance of recognizing what we consider treasure.

First, the largest Lottery Jackpot in history was won by someone in California. The winner now has money that can change thousands of lives.

And the second was the national midterm elections and all the money that was spent to try to elect candidates to political office.

In the end, both of these things will have, at best, a temporary effect on nearly all the people involved. And usually not a good effect on a lot of people.

Winning a huge lottery jackpot is more of a curse than a blessing – so much so there has been a TV series called “How the Lottery Ruined My Life.” Families torn apart, lives changed– and usually not for the better.

And the elections didn't do a whole lot changing for all the money that was spent. The phrase “rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic” comes to mind.

What We Consider Treasure

Here's a truth for you – we would be better off in this life if we realize that all the things we consider to be “treasure” in this world are actually temporary and perishable.

That doesn't mean they aren't good, useful, or to be sought after. It's okay to seek treasure, usually. Depending on the treasure, it can be very good, even life changing.

But followers of Jesus tend to know better than anyone else that the greatest treasure that we can seek and attain is eternal, imperishable – it is salvation through Jesus Christ alone.



Opening Scene of “Silverado” – the opening of the shack door to the majestic panorama of the snow-capped mountains (and the stirring Silverado Theme). The sunrise on the first day of Autumn in Manitowoc.

The treasure of this world is much more than just mere money or wealth.



One of the best opening scenes in recent movies is from Silverado. After the shoot-out that starts the movie, the hero – whose been sleeping in a dark and dilapidated shack – shuffles to the door, opens it and the camera follows him out to a majestic view of the snow-covered mountains of the southwest as the music swells with the theme of the movie.

I'm not doing it justice describing it, but I always thought *that's* treasure – that's something that money can't buy! A view like that reminds me how incredible this world is.

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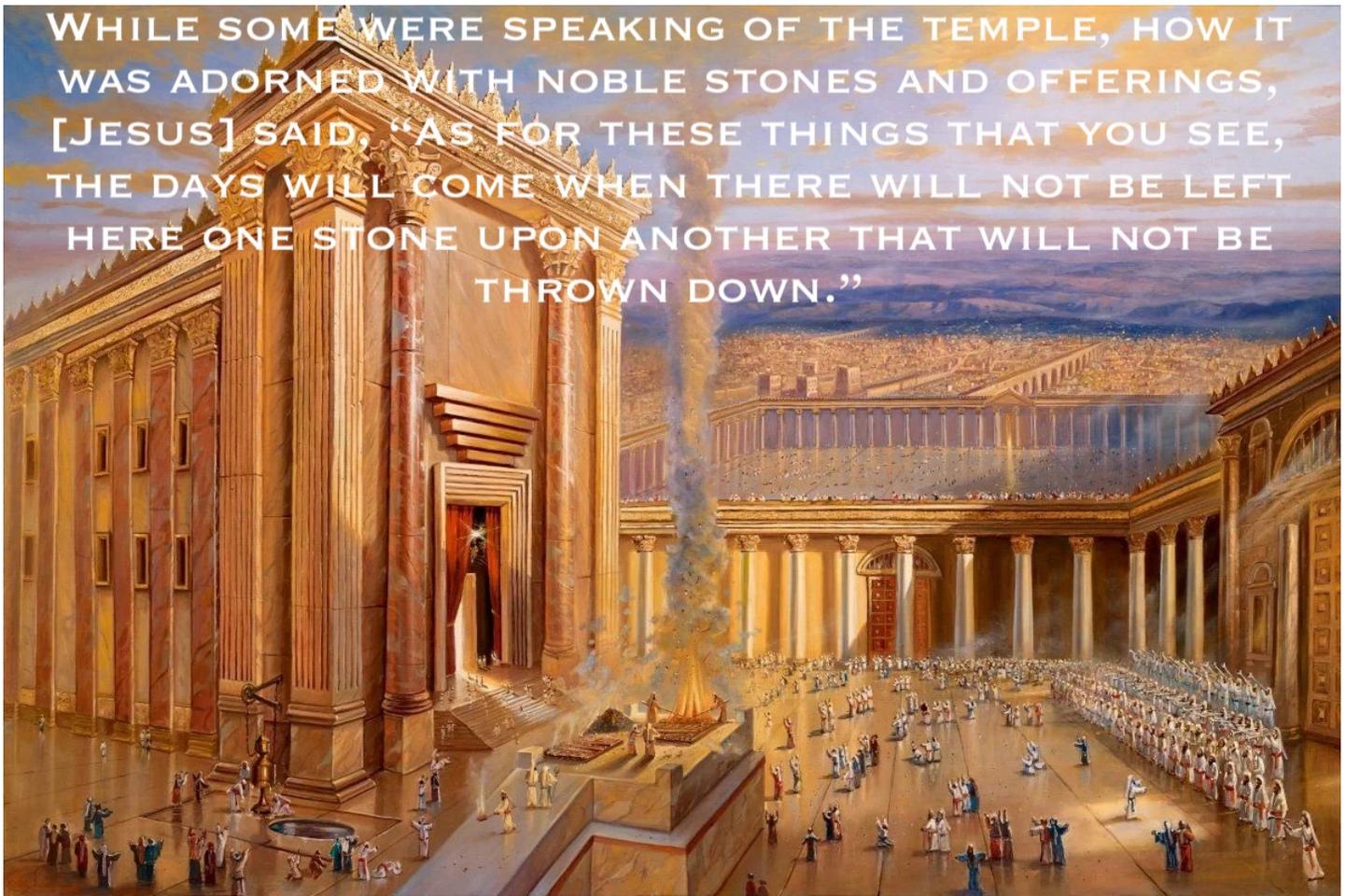
I experienced something like that a couple of years ago when my family and I spent a couple of days near Manitowoc, Wisconsin. We stayed at a beautiful home right on the shore of Lake Michigan. It was the first day of Autumn. I was the only one up, sitting on the balcony overlooking the lake and watching the sunrise.



This World is Filled with Great Treasure – but the Greatest Treasure is Eternal and Imperishable!

Scenes like this remind me that this world is filled with great treasure. But everything in this world is still temporary and perishable. It isn't going to last. No treasure in this world ever will. It is all fleeting.

Which is one of the reasons why Jesus warns His followers of laying up treasure for ourselves in this world – in the things of this world.



The Text – Luke 21:5-6

1. The Treasure of Israel (in the First Century) was the Temple

Let's take a look at Luke 21. Jesus is in Jerusalem, in the Temple Courts. The people around him were pointing out the treasures that were there – the precious stones and other furnishings.

While some were speaking of the temple, how it was adorned with noble stones and offerings, [Jesus] said, "As for these things that you see, the days will come when there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down."

To the early First Century Jews, the Temple was the treasure of Israel. Nothing was worth more. Nothing could top it. It was the embodiment of their cultural and national identity.

2. Jesus Bursts Their Bubble – It Will Be Destroyed in 70 AD

But then Jesus bursts their bubble. He basically tells them that not only is it temporary – and thus not worthy of the status they were giving it – but within most of their

lifetimes it would be so utterly destroyed that it would never exist again except as a fading memory.

3. The Warning? Don't Put Your Identity – Personal or National – in Things That Won't Last

Jesus' warning to them is to not put their personal or national identity in things that won't last.

4. Things That Don't Last – World Trade Center, the Original St. Matthew Church building.

This is a good teaching for us today. How many – as recent as 20 years ago – thought that this nation was strong and we were safe from outside enemies? That the things we do for ourselves, build for ourselves, and put our own national identity in would last forever? For an answer, think the World Trade Center in New York City.

Or closer to home. How many members of St. Matthew thought that our church building would last and last after it was built? Generation after generation were baptized, confirmed, married and buried from the building that was erected in 1864.

But 78 years later, a cross, some communion vessels, a melted bell and distant memories are all that remain of that original church.

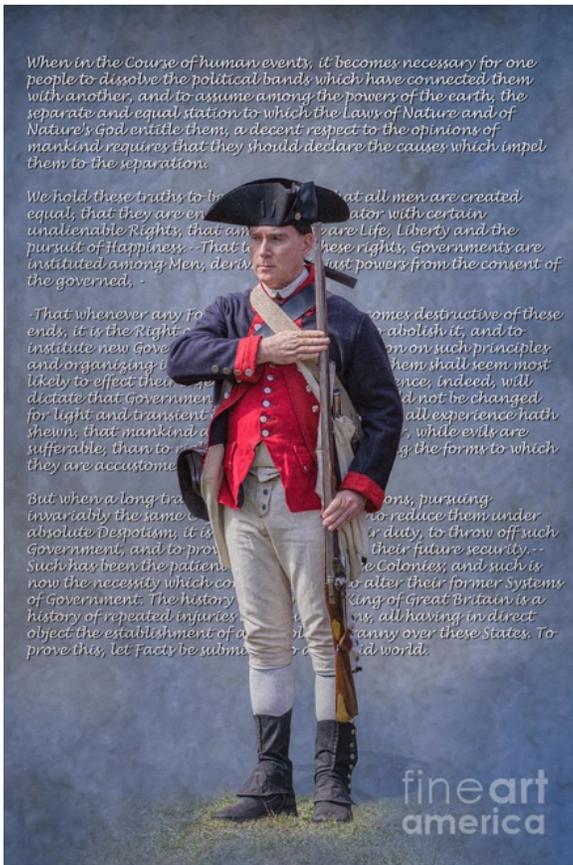
5. Jesus' Admonishment

The things of this world – no matter how powerful or noble – will just not last. So, Jesus warns us to not consider them our treasures!

Instead, consider as treasure only those things that will last.

Like what?

Our Treasure (That Will Last)



1. The Principle's our Nation was Founded On

Like the principle's our nation was founded on. You know them – the principle that all men (and women) are created equal and that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

These principles will last as long as there are people who are willing to live by them and, if need be, fight to defend them.

2. Our Nation's Military

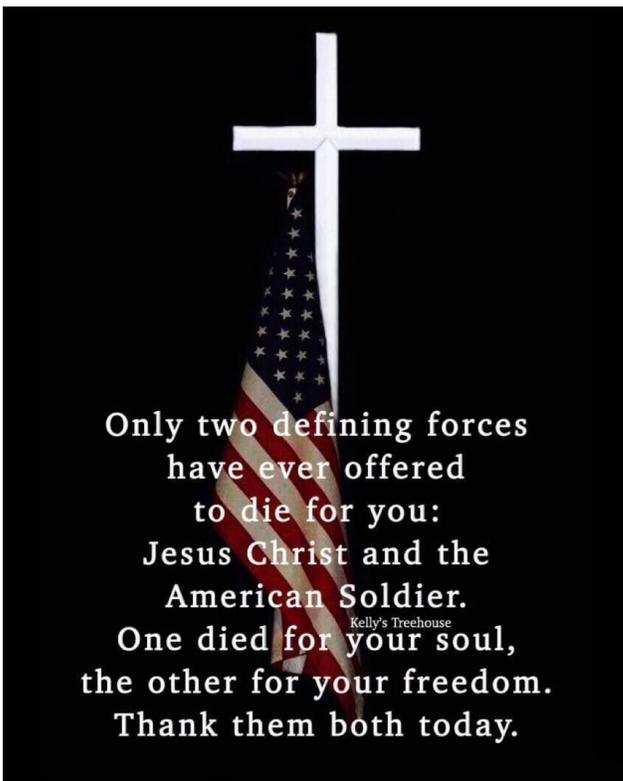
Today is a good day to remember that the men and women of our nation's military are a national treasure that will last. Because we can remember them, honor their service and - in some cases – their sacrifice for us.

3. "Only Two Defining Forces...."

I've seen it several places on social media – the meme that says: "Only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you; Jesus Christ and the American G. I. One died for your soul; the other for your freedom."

That is our national treasure. Not a building. Not a government. Not a national park or a roaring economy.

The men and women who defend our national principles.





4. Our Great Treasure – Jesus Christ and His Shed Blood on the Cross for the Forgiveness of Sins

But as great as they are, our greatest treasure is Jesus Christ! Because Jesus alone is the one who shed His blood so that we could be forgiven of all our sins. Jesus alone is the one who died so that we could live. Jesus alone is the one who rose from the dead so that we could live forever!

We have a national treasure that we remember and honor today – our veterans.

But we have the greatest treasure to commit to – Jesus Christ and His salvation for us.

Our Commitment

1. Always a Response to What We Get from Christ

Our commitment is to be a response to what we get from Christ. We get salvation – free and forever!

2. Give as Good As You Get – With Your Treasure!

So, give as good as you get! Take the “treasure” of your life – your money, your resources, as well as your time and your talent – and commit them to Christ and His Church.

3. For This Reason: So Others Can Know Jesus as Their Savior!

And here’s the reason – so that others can know Jesus as their Savior and the greatest treasure that will outlast all others.

4. Commit Your Treasure Where It Will Last

As you re-focus on Christ today, know this – as you commit your treasure to Him and His Church, it will be committed to something that will last!