

# Handout - Heavenly Treasure Hunt

Bastian Fähnrich, 5 July 2020

Have you ever taken part in a treasure hunt? You know the game? A treasure hunt! You alone or your team gets clues or written directions, based on which you enter the chase and hunt for a treasure? It's fun, isn't it? Today we'll go for a heavenly treasure hunt – or at least we'll learn about hunting for treasures in heaven.

The first clue we'll find in the Bible, in Matthew 6:19-21:

*Jesus says, "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Jesus points out that we should not go after and rely on earthly treasures, as these won't last forever. Rather, we should hunt for and lay up heavenly, everlasting treasures. Of course, earthly treasures – such as money and possessions – are not bad as such, but if we turn these into idols and place too much value on these, we miss out on the life and joy that only Jesus can give – in this world and beyond.

In the parable of the rich fool (Luke 12:29-31), Jesus states that *"life does not consist in an abundance of possessions"* (ibid. v. 15). He shows that storing earthly treasures and enjoying these only for ourselves, does *"not make us rich towards God"* (ibid. v. 21). Moreover, accumulating, saving and keeping resources only for ourselves does not even guarantee a joyful and fulfilled life here on earth.

But how can we then become rich towards God? How can we store up treasures in heaven? What would a heavenly treasure hunt be in our life here on earth? We will explore now altogether seven ways of how to become rich towards God. We shall explore the first way here together in the church.

Then we'll form six small groups. Each group will search for and explore one way based on a clue on a scroll hidden somewhere outdoors in the church area. At the location, the group will find a scroll with Bible verses illustrating a certain way of storing up heavenly treasures. Read and discuss the content (10 min). Eventually, all groups shall come back to the church. Each group will share briefly, and then we shall draw up a conclusion by joint efforts:

- 1) Submit to God and receive Christ, the greatest treasure in heaven and earth
- 2) Search your heart and mind, and set these on Jesus and things above
- 3) Study and apply God's word
- 4) Seek the kingdom of God and all the good associated with it
- 5) Serve others as you have been served
- 6) Share your resources
- 7) Share the gospel and love of God

## **1) Submit to God and receive Christ, the greatest treasure in heaven and earth**

**Christ himself is the greatest treasure we should go after in our lives. He is the starting point and end point of our heavenly treasure hunt. He is the only way to heaven and the heavenly Father. Jesus is God's son, given to us freely for the forgiveness of our sins.**

**The only thing we need to do is to submit to God and receive Jesus into our lives. There is nothing more rewarding in life, and for the life to come after we died. There is nothing better in life than pursuing and treasuring Jesus – above all and everyone else.**

**Jesus is God's gift from above so that we can be restored to God, and live an abundant life here on earth, whether we be rich or poor by human standards:**

**James 1:17:** *Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change.*

**John 3:27:** *A person can receive only what is given to them from heaven.*

**John 3:16:** *For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

**John 15:9-11:** *Jesus says, 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.'*

**John 15:16:** *Jesus says, 'I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last.'*

**Romans 6:23b:** *The gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus.*

**Ephesians 2:8:** *It is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

**Ephesians 3:12:** *In him [Christ] and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.*

**Colossians 2:2-4:** *My goal is that they [Christ's followers] may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

## 2) Search your heart and mind, and set these on Jesus and things above

In **Matthew 6:19-21**, Jesus speaks about the fact that *“our hearts will be there where our treasure is”* (ibid. v. 21). In the same words, **Luke 12:34** says, *“where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

**Before we set out to hunt for whatever treasures in heaven, God wants us to search our hearts and minds. God knows us and wants to show us the right attitudes and motives for the heavenly treasure hunt, and to become rich towards him:**

Our life is with Christ:

**Colossians 3:1-3:** *Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things (...) Your life is now hidden with Christ in God.*

With humility and Christ’s mindset:

**Philippians 2:3-5:** *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.*

By faith and grace, not by our own works:

**Ephesians 2:8–9:** *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.*

For the fear of God:

**Isaiah 33:6:** *He [Christ] will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure.*

For God’s glory, not our own:

**1 Corinthians 10:31b:** *Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*

For God’s power, not ours:

**2 Corinthians 4:6-8:** *God made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God’s glory displayed in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.*

With God’s strength, not ours:

**Philippians 4:13:** *I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

**Ephesians 3:16:** *Out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit.*

With an attitude of gratitude:

**Colossians 3:17:** *Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

For the praise of God:

**1 Peter 4:11:** *If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

### 3) Study and apply God's word

Why should we consider the Bible, God's word, as part of our hunt for treasures in heaven?

Once I had a Bible with a golden rim. Each time I read in it, a little bit of the gold from the pages stayed on my hands – it was a great reminder of the Bible as a treasure and reward in itself, and for my path through life as a Christian believer. What about you? Do you store the Bible on the bookshelf – what about taking it into your hands, and studying and applying God's word in your life?

A treasure and reward in itself:

**Psalm 19:7-11:** *The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever. The decrees of the Lord are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*

Lasts forever, has eternal value:

**Isaiah 40:8b & 1 Peter 1:25:** *The word of our God endures for ever.*

**Psalm 119:89:** *Your word, Lord, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*

**Mark 13:31b:** *Jesus says, 'My words will never pass away.'*

Keeps us on the right track:

**Luke 11:28:** *Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who hear the word of God and obey it.'*

**Psalm 119:1-5, 32, 35-37, 101-102, 104-105, 130, 111-112:** *Blessed are those whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are those who keep his statutes and seek him with all their heart – they do no wrong but follow his ways. You have laid down precepts that are to be fully obeyed. Oh, that my ways were steadfast in obeying your decrees! (...) I run in the path of your commands. (...) Direct me in the path of your commands, for there I find delight. Turn my heart towards your statutes and not towards selfish gain. Turn my eyes away from worthless things; preserve my life according to your word. (...) I have kept my feet from every evil path so that I might obey your word. I have not departed from your laws, for you yourself have taught me. (...) I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path. Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. (...) The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple (...) Your statutes are my heritage for ever; they are the joy of my heart. My heart is set on keeping your decrees to the very end.*

Equips us:

**2 Timothy 3:16-17:** *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Judges our thoughts and attitudes:

**Hebrews 4:12:** *The word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*

**Psalm 119:11:** *I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*

#### **4) Seek the kingdom of God and all the good associated with it**

**We are supposed not to worry about earthly riches and daily supplies and provisions. Instead, we are called to seek the kingdom of God; all else will be given to us as well:**

**Matthew 6:31-33 (Luke 12:27-31):** *So do not worry, saying, "What shall we eat?" or "What shall we drink?" or "What shall we wear?" For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

**Matthew 13:44:** *Jesus says, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.'*

**Colossians 1:13-14:** *He [God] has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

**Romans 14:17:** *The kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**Colossians 2:2-4:** *My goal is that they [Christ's followers] may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

**Ephesians 5:3-5:** *Among you there must not be (...) any kind of greed. For of this you can be sure: (...) no greedy person – such a person is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

**Romans 15:13:** *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

**Even though we go after the peace and joy in Christ, and rest on the hope laid up for us in heaven, we shall face troubles and suffering in this world. We do not specifically aim for trouble and suffering, of course, but enduring all kinds of evil will eventually work out for our good:**

**Romans 8:18:** *Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.*

**2 Corinthians 4:17:** *Our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.*

**1 Peter 4:13:** *Rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed.*

**Romans 8:28a:** *We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.*

## 5) Serve others as you have been served

**Christ is the prime example of a servant (Mark 10:45, Matthew 20:28, Philippians 2:5-7). We should become more like him and treasure Jesus' spirit of servitude – in word and deed:**

**Ephesians 5:2:** *Live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*

**1 Peter 2:21:** *Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.*

**Galatians 5:13b:** *Serve one another humbly in love.*

**John 13:15:** *Jesus says, 'I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.'*

**James 1:22:** *Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

**Colossians 3:23-24:** *Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*

**Matthew 10:41-42:** *Jesus says, 'Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.'*

**In our walk of faith, we do not only pursue heavenly treasures by serving Christ's church but also the wider community:**

**Matthew 5:43-48:** *Jesus says, 'You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy." But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

**Luke 14:13-14:** *Jesus says, 'But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'*

**Acts 20:35b:** *We [Followers of Christ] must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

**Hebrews 6:10:** *God will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.*

**1 Corinthians 15:58b:** *Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.*

## 6) Share your resources

**We are called to freely give and share the resources we have received from God – in this way we will store up treasures in heaven, and become rich towards God. Let's share from the abundance of what God has given us: from our gifts or talents, money and possessions, as much as we have decided in our hearts bearing in mind that we serve God, not Money (Matthew 6:24):**

**Luke 6:38:** *Jesus says, 'Give to others, and you will receive. You will be given much. It will be poured into your hands—more than you can hold. You will be given so much that it will spill into your lap. The way you give to others is the way God will give to you.'* (ETR)

**Hebrews 13:16:** *Do good and share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*

**2 Corinthians 9:7:** *Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*

**1 John 3:17:** *If we are rich and see others in need, yet close our hearts against them, how can we claim that we love God? (GNT)*

**1 Corinthians 12 & Romans 12:** *Use different kinds of spiritual gifts for the church. All believers are Christ's body, and each one is a part of it, and has a different function.*

**1 Peter 4:10:** *Each of you [Christ's followers] should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.*

**Luke 12:33-34:** *Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

**Mark 10:21:** *Jesus looked at him [a rich man] and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'*

**1 Timothy 6:17-19:** *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life. **See also the warning of Jesus (Matthew 6:1-6) that we should not boast when giving to the needy or praying for others – this will not store up treasures in heaven – we will have the reward only in this life.***

**Acts 4:32-35:** *All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there was no needy person among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.*

## 7) Share the gospel and love of God

**What better thing there is on earth than sharing the Good News, Jesus, the Word (John 1:1) with those that do not yet know Jesus as their Saviour? There is hardly a better way to store up treasures in heaven than letting others know about the salvation in Christ!**

**Acts 20:24:** *But I reckon my own life to be worth nothing to me; I only want to complete my mission and finish the work that the Lord Jesus gave me to do, which is to declare the Good News about the grace of God.*

**Matthew 28:19a:** *Jesus says, 'Go and make disciples of all nations.'*

**John 6:40a:** *Jesus says, 'My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life.'*

**Isaiah 49:6:** *The Lord said to me, 'I have a greater task for you, my servant. Not only will you restore to greatness the people of Israel who have survived, but I will also make you a light to the nations – so that all the world may be saved.'* (GNT)

**1 John 4:9-10:** *This is how God showed his love among us: he sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

**Romans 5:8:** *God demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Ephesians 1: 13-14:** *And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.*

**Even though we may face hostility towards the gospel and ignorance and persecution from people, we are called to love them and show mercy:**

**Luke 6:27-31, 35-36:** *Jesus says, 'Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. (...) But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.'*

**Matthew 5:10-12:** *Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.'*