

# Seeking Treasure

## II Peter 1:10-12, 2:1-3a, 17-19

### INTRODUCTION:

If you would open your Bibles this morning, we will soon be reading again from II Peter.

We would all be intrigued if someone would walk up to us and say that they have discovered a treasure map to an immense treasure. No doubt, our first reaction would be "Is this for real?" We would look at all of the evidence in order to convince ourselves if this was just a hoax or something really worth investigating. If it seemed to have merit, excitement would fill the air. We would soon start planning how to pursue finding the treasure and claim it for ourselves.

Peter tells us that there **IS** one treasure that is far and above any other treasure that we can ever imagine. That **treasure** is an entrance into the **eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!** And he has a map that tells us how to find it!

### All Stand and Read Scripture

2 Peter 1:10-11, 2:1-3a, 17-19 (NASB)

<sup>10</sup> Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; <sup>11</sup> for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.

<sup>2</sup> But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. <sup>2</sup> Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; <sup>3</sup> and in *their* greed they will exploit you with false words;...

<sup>17</sup> These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. <sup>18</sup> For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, <sup>19</sup> promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

As we prepare to look more closely at Peter's passage this morning, let's bow in a word of prayer.

### Prayer

I would like to thank Jim Williams for giving me the inspiration for this message this morning. Last Wednesday night at our Bible study, we were talking about the "health and wealth" ministers who proclaim that God will give them health and wealth one hundred fold if they will just plant a seed of \$1000 to their ministry. Their focus is on material things and greed. You can have all the money in the world, but someday you will die. When you do, you will not be able to take your material things with you and your material things cannot pay for your entrance into Heaven.

## ILLUSTRATION:

The story is told of two prospectors who were among the very first to travel north, in 1896, to the Yukon Territory of Canada to hunt for gold.

They knew the risks were high as there were no developed settlements around for many miles, and they had only each other and their wisdom to stay alive.

But they took their chances, and with meager supplies, they began to dig for gold. In just a few days the two found more than they had ever hoped for.

But Winter Was Coming! And they were in the Yukon, right by the northern part of Alaska. They knew no one would come up to mine until Winter ended, but when they did, they feared that there would be a lot of competition and they would lose out on a lot of gold just sitting there for the taking.

Being unprepared for the winter, they were faced with a decision that they had to make. Do they seek shelter for the winter, with the millions of dollars worth of gold they had already dug up, or do they risk their lives and stay in the tundra and keep digging?

Well, they turned out to be right about their fear that a great many people would travel to the Yukon in the spring. About 100,000 arrived that Spring. And when the first wave of prospectors came, the two men were found lying dead on top of piles of gold worth millions of dollars.

Jim quoted verses from Matthew chapter 6.

**Matthew 6:19-21 (NASB)**

**<sup>19</sup> “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; <sup>21</sup> for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

We are to store up for ourselves treasures in heaven. But how do we do that?

**Matthew 6:33 (KJV)**

**<sup>33</sup> But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.**

Our treasure map is the Bible. It was inspired by God and contains instructions on how to find the greatest treasure of all...eternity with our Creator in Heaven!

Notice that it is a conditional promise. First we seek His kingdom and His righteousness, and then everything else will fall into place. Rather than being like the worldly who are concerned about their physical needs by seeking and worrying about food, shelter, and clothing, Jesus says, focus your attention and hopes on the things of the Lord and He will take care of all your needs. As Christians, we should be concerned about the things of God, His kingdom, and His righteousness. Then all these **needs** (not wants) will be supplied in God's timing.

## BODY:

### **I. THE TRUE TREASURE.**

2 Peter 1:10-11 (NASB)

10 Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; 11 for **in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.**

One of Jesus' most powerful parables is also one of his shortest:

Matthew 13:44 (NASB)

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Fifteen minutes before this man's discovery in the field, the thought of selling all that he owned to buy it wouldn't have crossed his mind. Even if it had, it would have seemed ludicrous. But fifteen minutes after finding the treasure, he was off to do it with joy. What made the difference?

### **The treasure!**

This man suddenly found something that transformed his whole outlook on life. The treasure restructured his values and priorities. It altered his goals. The treasure changed the man.

The treasure in this parable is the resurrection to eternal life. It was the same "treasure in heaven" that Jesus promised the rich young man if he would sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Jesus.

Matthew 19:21 (NASB)

21 Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be complete, go *and* sell your possessions and give to *the poor*, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

The rich young man, blinded by short-term worldly wealth, could not see the treasure, but the man in the parable did, and he jumped at it.

Now, there was a cost to obtaining the treasure. Viewed one way, the cost seemed high. It cost him everything he owned. But viewed another way, the cost was very small. Standing in the field, the man did a quick cost-benefit analysis. It didn't take him long to realize that selling all his possessions was going to make him wealthy beyond his wildest dreams. He would have been a fool not to do whatever was necessary to buy that field.

### The Treasure of Treasures

Now, when the man bought the field and obtained the treasure of eternal life, what specifically did he get? This is an important question, because the Bible makes eternal life a central focus for the Christian, yet provides few descriptions about what it will be like. When the Bible does describe eternal life, it often uses similes, metaphors, and symbols. Why?

One reason is that we simply are not yet equipped to comprehend the reality we will experience in when Christ returns...

1 Corinthians 2:9 (NASB)

9 but just as it is written,

“THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD,  
AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN,  
ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.”

Through figurative language, God helps us to get glimpses of the future by describing the wonders we now see and understand.

What will make the kingdom of heaven so wonderful to us will not be the glorious new creation or the rich rewards we will receive, as inexpressibly wonderful as they will be.

The **real** treasure of our new life in heaven, the **Treasure of All Treasures**, will be God himself — knowing and being with pure righteousness for eternity!

It is the only treasure that ultimately matters, and we make it our one great life goal to obtain it.

Jesus did not come to give us our best life now. He came to rescue us from the world and bring us into His Kingdom.

Jesus' great longing is that you will be **with him**.

Revelation 21:3-4 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, <sup>4</sup> and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be *any* death; there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”

That is the treasure you have discovered in the field of this fallen world. Jesus has paid for it all, and it costs you everything you own in this age to have it. You now belong to Christ. He has purchased you with His blood. Yet it is such a small payment for such an everlasting, never-ending treasure that only a fool would pass it up.

But, Peter warns that there will be false prophets and teachers among us who will try to lead us astray from the true treasure.

## II. **THE FALSE TEACHER.**

2 Peter 2:1-3a (NASB)

2 But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. 2 Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words;...

The false teacher will proclaim and seek the wrong treasure. Peter says that they will "secretly introduce destructive heresies...Many will follow their sensuality, and because of them the way of the truth will be maligned; 3 and in their greed they will exploit you with false words;"

Peter says that many will be deceived. They will willfully follow the evil teaching and shameful morality of these false prophets. It seems that more people will believe a lie than will believe the truth. The Bible is filled with hard truths and people don't want to hear the truth! Remember what Paul said

## 2 Timothy 4:3-4 (NASB)

<sup>3</sup> For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but *wanting* to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, <sup>4</sup> and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.

We are seeing this come to pass with our own eyes. Throughout 2,000 years of church history there have been many examples of those who would pervert the Gospel of Christ and they have deceived many.

Jim Jones and "The People's Temple". His entire congregation followed him to South America and over 900 of them (including many children) drank cyanide laced Kool-Aid in a mass suicide.

In 1997 Marshal Applewhite, the leader of the "Heaven's Gate" cult convinced 38 people to commit suicide in order to reach what they believed was an alien space craft following the Hale-Bopp comet.

In the early 90's David Koresh (who claimed to be Jesus) and his cult the "Branch Davidians" moved into a compound in Waco Texas. Koresh became the polygamous husband of all the females and there were many reports of sexual abuse and statutory rape in the compound. In a 1993 raid by the ATF & FBI, 76 Branch Davidians died in a fire that was set by the cult itself.

A group does not have to be as extreme as these to be false teachers. There are several groups today who are just as deceived as those we have already mentioned. The church of Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses, The Latter Day Saints, Islam, Witchcraft, Astrology, ...and many others.

### **III. THE INFLUENCE OF FALSE TEACHERS.**

## 2 Peter 2:17-19 (NASB)

<sup>17</sup> These are springs without water and mists driven by a storm, for whom the black darkness has been reserved. <sup>18</sup> For speaking out arrogant *words* of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, <sup>19</sup> promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption; for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved.

A well without water and clouds without rain would be a major disappointment in a hot and dry land. False teachers **appear** to have spiritual water to quench the thirsty soul. But in all actuality they have nothing to give.

There are many churches and ministries that claim to be "Christian" that are just as flawed and deceptive as the cults. Just turn on so called "religious" programming and you will see what I mean.

The "Name it and Claim it"... "Blab it and Grab it" prosperity crowd are nothing more than false teachers. Those who water down the Word and ignore biblical doctrine are deceptive liars.

I listened to one such preacher this week. He claimed that God had told him that 120 people were going to plant a \$1000 seed for his ministry. That would be \$120,000! He promised that that seed would yield one hundred fold. The key was to be at the "right place at the right time". He would use Bible verses to support his claims. A lot of what he said was true, then he would twist the scripture to make his point. He said that you could count the number of seeds in an apple, but you couldn't count the number of

apples in a seed. Then he promised that a dollar bill was also a seed that God would multiply if it were planted into his ministry. By the way, he never said what his ministry would do with the "seed".

They make promises they cannot keep. In fact during the end of the message, a disclaimer was flashed on the screen that this ministry does not guarantee financial returns.

It appeared that he was not concerned about telling people how to find and serve the Lord, he played on their greed just as Peter said. "For speaking out arrogant words of vanity they entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality, those who barely escape from the ones who live in error, <sup>19</sup> promising them freedom while they themselves are slaves of corruption;"

Motivational speakers who refuse to preach the whole counsel of the Bible are not called of God. They are wolves in sheep's clothing! And they are having an impact! Millions of people are following these "wolves".

And These people do not want the truth! How great it would be to receive material rewards from God without any restraints in their worldly life and still have a good relationship with God just by giving Him money that He will multiply back to you. By following these false teachers, they get what they want instead of what they need. These people will suffer greatly for their decision. And these lying teachers will pay as well.

These "wolves" may bring in multiple millions of dollars each year. They may live it up in their mansions. They may drive the most expensive cars. They may have hundreds of millions invested in their jet that takes them across the country. They may have multiple books on the best seller list. They may have many songs that they have written and won many awards. They may have a successful TV/internet/radio ministry. They may have all that this world can offer. They may justify it all by claiming that it is because of their good relationship with God. But, none of these things will change the fact that God will judge the false prophet!

Word of Faith preachers say riches and material goods are signs of a right relationship with God. Wealth is not a sign of favor from God. Many drug dealers, corrupt businessmen, and pornographers are wealthy. Conversely, millions of hardworking, honest Christians are poor. Certainly, health is not a sign of favor from God. Many immoral people are perfectly healthy. Though these preachers claim that health just a "seed" away, many of them still wear eyeglasses and go to doctors.

## **CONCLUSION:**

So, what is a sign that a person is in favor with God? What are we to seek for?

Matthew 6:33 (NASB)

<sup>33</sup> But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Like the lost world we can go after worldly things. We can make our primary concern the physical necessities of life: such as housing, food, and clothing.

Or we can go after God's kingdom and righteousness. Acknowledging Christ is our King and seek to live under His rule and serve Him.

**Seek God first instead of material things; the spiritual as opposed to the material; the eternal instead of the temporal.**

Now that we know a little more about these "wolves in sheep's clothing"... what do we do with this information? I would encourage you to use this information! Be careful who you listen to! Just because someone is wearing a suit, holding a Bible, standing behind a pulpit and using the name of Jesus, does not mean that they were called by Him.

Remember what John said

1 John 4:1 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

4 Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.

Seek the TRUE TREASURE of God. Eternal Salvation!

**He is Lord!**