

St. Bartholomew's Anglican Church  
2368 Eggert Road, Tonawanda, NY 716.831.1777

## “Where Your Treasure is, There Your Heart Will Be Also”

The Rev. Fr. Richard Molison, Preacher

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How many of you have ever played Monopoly? (ask for a show of hands). Me, too. Not lately though. My grandson, Jon, says he will not play “Monopoly” with me because says I always win. That is not 100% true. Ask Jon about his rummy game with grandma. “Monopoly” is one of the most popular games in the world. There are at least 900 different game variations centered around things like:

TV shows (I love Lucy)

- Movies (James Bond 007/ Pirates of the Caribbean)
- Sports teams (NFL/NHL/NBA, and numerous college teams)
- Every branch of the Military.
- Various cities and nations throughout the world.
- Cartoons (Garfield)
- Singing groups (Beatles)
- And animals of all kinds: horses, dogs, cats...

More than 275 million games have been sold worldwide and it's available in 111 countries, in 43 languages.

The longest MONOPOLY game in history lasted for 70 straight days. In 1978, a chocolate version of the game was priced at \$600. And the most expensive version of the game is valued at \$2 million. This set features a 23-carat gold board and diamond-studded dice.

However, there's something worth noting here. Monopoly totally runs against the teachings of Jesus. The basic premise of Monopoly is to acquire sufficient wealth so as to place all opponents into bankruptcy. Not the most Christian principled game.

A verse of scriptures I memorized when in Junior High School is the King James Version of Matthew, chapter 6, verses 19-21: **Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: <sup>20</sup> But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.** This verse has been a

foundational piece of scripture that shaped my values throughout my life. And considering where we, this body of Christ known as St. Bartholomew's currently is in our walk with the Lord, adjusting to a new vision and a new attitude of mission, it is appropriate take brief look at these words of Jesus. If you wish to follow along with me, I do invite you to turn to page 962 in a pew Bible.

Earlier, I quoted the above passage from the King James Version. We now are reading from the New American Standard Version of the Bible, also known as the "Rock of Scripture." Verse 19 begins with these words: "**Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...**" "**Do not store up....**" What does it mean when we store up things? For the ancients, it meant to erect a place where what is most valuable can be kept, which for them was gold, silver, precious stones, corn, oil, grain, wine, fancy garments, just to name a few. One stores, lays up, sets aside, that which is in abundance and of value. In the last twenty years or so, an entire business empire has been established in the storage shed business. Run out of room in your house and garage? No problem, just rent more space in a storage yard. To gain, to accumulate, to hoard material possessions requires an intense focus, a persistence in pursuit, which results in a mindset of greed, and even may be considered as idol worship.

What is the folly, what is the foolishness of such a mindset of excessive accumulation of material wealth? It is purely temporal; produces a false sense of security. The ancient Egyptians believed that when they died, burial with their valuable possessions will provide enjoyment in death. We know that when we leave this planet, all hoarding is for naught, for we cannot take accumulated wealth with us. We brought nothing into this world, and most certainly, we will take nothing out of it. A Spanish proverb states: "There are no pockets in a shroud."

Now Jesus shares with us what not to hoard. He states: "**Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.**" Much of what we value is subject to the destructive elements of life in this sinful world. Jesus stated we are not to store, collect, acquire treasures on earth where moths destroy. In the time of Jesus, wealth was expressed through fine clothes. But when stored away, those fine woolen clothes are extremely susceptible to moths. Metaphorically, moths are commonly viewed as destroyers of the most basic things in life. Thus, no permanence.

Rust is another consuming destructive force. The Greek term for rust means *eaten away* and is only used in this context of scripture. Rust appears not only on metals, but also on crops and vines. Ever see rust on lettuce leaves? One measure of a man's wealth was by the amount of grain and corn stored in huge barns. But into that grain and corn would come worms, mice, and rats, polluting and destroying what was stored. Another form of rust. Jesus is pointing out the fact that such wealth has no permanence.

Jesus stated that we are not to store up treasures where thieves break through and steal. Again, it needs to be remembered that most dwellings of ancient mid-eastern people were constructed of baked clay. Burglars had an easy time of it to break through these fragile walls. Not a good place to store precious stones, gems, gold, silver, coins. Again, evidence of no permanency.

Jesus warns us about placing high value on earthly treasures that can be eaten, eroded, stolen, or destroyed. No earthly thing lasts forever. A wise man would build his treasures on things that cannot be eaten away or stolen; treasures that he cannot lose. And what are those treasures that we cannot lose?

Jesus stated, that we are to lay up for ourselves, treasures in heaven... The ancient Jews were quite familiar with the phrase "treasures in heaven." Storing up good works before God was prominent in Israel's history. They believed that deeds and kindnesses which a man did upon earth became his treasure in heaven. The contrast of treasures on earth with treasures in heaven implies a contrast of values. Jewish rabbis taught that what was selfishly hoarded (stored up) is lost, but that which is generously given away brings treasure in heaven. Rabbi Yose ben Kisma stated, "In the hour of a man's departure, neither silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, accompany him, but only his knowledge of the law and his good works."

Jesus concluded this teaching by stating that where a man's treasure is, there his heart will be also. The heart – it represents the core of a person's being. It is the causative source of a person's spiritual, emotional, and psychological life. Wherever the focus lies, whatever occupies our thoughts, whatever occupies our time, becomes our treasure. There, where our treasure is, our heart truly lies. What a person values is driven by the nature of that person's heart. The heart will be with what is treasured, and what is treasured control us.

Our first loyalty ought to be laying up for ourselves eternal treasures and the greatest treasure in heaven is the Father. If we as followers of Christ keep our hearts fully focused on the Father in heaven, then all other treasures of this world will pale in comparison. Laying up treasures in heaven does not just mean tithing one's wealth. Laying up treasures in heaven is accomplished in bringing others to Christ. The words of Jesus also are meant for the corporate body of Christ as well. The measure of a church's success is not measured only by Sunday attendance, but more importantly, it is measured by the success it has in bringing others to Christ.

The heavenly treasure is the eternal value of what is accomplished for God in our allotted time on earth. From James, we learn that faith without works is dead. All acts of obedience to God are not susceptible to moths, to rust or to thieves. Nothing can affect heavenly treasures or change them; they are permanent! Eternal! Acceptable to God!

What it all boils down to is a matter of attitude: does one's attitude toward earthly wealth and possessions have a much greater priority in one's values systems than those for eternal values. Where is your priority?

Most of us are quite familiar with the "Great Commission" as stated in Matthew 28:19. Luke narrows the focus of that command with these words from his gospel, chapter 24, verses 46-47: **and Jesus said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day, <sup>47</sup> and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.**

My brothers and sisters in the Lord, Luke just gave us the "Good News" of the gospels, gave us our mission, gave us our purpose for identifying ourselves as Christians. The debt of sin has been paid! We are to proclaim repentance and forgiveness in the Name of Jesus who died for us on Calvary. That is our mission – to share the forgiving love of Jesus! To open eyes, to turn others from darkness, from the power of Satan to the light of Christ.

During the summer, I brought in a measuring tape to illustrate a point of the homily given at that time. I brought it with me today to illustrate another point. Once again, I need four volunteers.

One inch to represent one hour of a week. Spread tape to 168 inches.

Place a marker at the (Saturday – 161 mark) 8:00; 9:00; and the 11-inch line.

Now, if we subtract 56 hours of sleeping time for the week, we move a marker to 112 hours being left in the week.

So, for the retired, there are basically 112 hours a week, nearly 5 days, that are available to be scheduled as one desires.

For the working stiffs, we allow for the average 40-hour work week, which moves the marker down to the 112-inch mark.

So, how many unstructured hours of the week are left? 72.

72 hours is the equivalent of 3 days!

3 days of time basically available to be controlled by you.

For the retired and for the still working folks, of these five or three days, of these 112 or 72 hours, how many hours are given to laying up treasures in heaven? What does your use of these 112 or 72 hours mean about where your heart is? I sincerely ask you to ponder in your hearts the answers these two questions.

A means to achieve storing up treasures in heaven is stated in our mission statement: Read together: "Our Mission: To share Christ's love and His Word with our community and the world through Christ-Centered outreach, worship, prayer and biblical study."

Do you desire to lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven? Your desire to be a participant in the fulfillment our mission will go a long way to achieving the goal of bringing others to Christ, to the laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

**(Saturday and 8:00 AM Sunday** – Hymn #541 call us this body of Christ, you and me, to labor on for the Lord, to lay treasure up in heaven. I invite you to retrieve from a pew rack the maroon covered hymn book and turn to #541. I invite you to stand, and together, read the text of this fine hymn.)

**(Sunday 9:15 and 11:00)** We sang hymn #541 just before the sermon. The text of this hymn calls us, this body of Christ, calls you and me, to labor on for the Lord, to lay treasures up in heaven. May we have the text to hymn 541 once again projected on the screen? I invite you to stand, and together, read the text of this fine hymn.

**1 Come, labor on.**

**Who dares stand idle on the harvest plain  
while all around us waves the golden grain?  
And to each servant does the Master say,  
"Go work today."**

**2 Come, labor on.**

**The enemy is watching night and day,  
to sow the tares, to snatch the seed away;  
while we in sleep our duty have forgot,  
he slumbers not.**

**3 Come, labor on.**

**Away with gloomy doubts and faithless fear!  
No arm so weak but may do service here:  
by feeblest agents may our God fulfill  
his righteous will.**

**4 Come, labor on.**

**Claim the high calling angels cannot share:  
to young and old the gospel gladness bear.  
Redeem the time its hours so swiftly fly  
the night draws nigh.**

**5 Come, labor on.**

**No time for rest, till glows the western sky,  
till the long shadows o'er our pathway lie  
and a glad sound comes with the setting sun:  
"Servants, well done."**

And the people of God said, "Amen!"