

“The Heart That Grew Three Sizes: Finding Our True Treasure”
Matthew 6:19-21

The last couple of weeks, we have focused on the Grinch in Dr. Seuss’s “**How the Grinch Stole Christmas.**” We have looked at his isolation, his hatred for Christmas, and his frantic attempts to control the circumstances of his life and the lives of others by stealing their joy.

Today, I would like to invite us to shift our focus and consider the **Whos of Whoville** and how they rediscovered and reaffirmed the true meaning of Christmas, and indeed, the true meaning of life.

Sometimes we get so lost in the preparations and expectations of the season—the spending, the shipping, the scheduling—that we lose sight of the most important part of it all: the longing of our hearts and souls to connect and to experience **love**. The gift-giving, the music, the social obligations, and the decorations—these are all meant to be **means to an end**, gestures that express our love.

But when we lose sight of the deeper longing behind the actions, we become rigid. We become attached to the *way* things must be fulfilled: the cookies *must* be perfect, the lights *must* all work, the schedule *must* be followed. When our attachment becomes rigid, we lose the flexibility required to express the desires of our hearts in new and creative ways to adapt to the emerging needs and opportunities of life.

The Whos faced this challenge with amazing grace. The Grinch took everything: the food, the decorations, the presents—the very physical evidence of Christmas. Yet, when these things were taken away from them, they did not lose focus of the deeper longing of their hearts. They gathered hand-in-hand. They focused on community, connections, and love.

Let’s listen to the moment the Grinch finally understood:

(video clip or reading)

"He hadn't stopped Christmas from coming, it came! Somehow or other, it came just the same! And the Grinch, with his grinch feet ice-cold in the snow, Stood puzzling and puzzling. 'How could it be so? It came without ribbons! It came without tags! It came without packages, boxes, or bags!' He puzzled and puzzled till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before. Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas, perhaps, means a little bit more!"

When we live aligned with the true longings of our hearts and souls, no hardship or thief can take away our deep sense of connection to love and to life, at least not for long. This is what Jesus was inviting his followers to focus on in his core teachings:

Matthew 6:19-21: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

When Jesus speaks of "**treasures on earth**," he is using vivid, practical imagery that his first-century audience immediately understood.

- **"Moth and rust:** The word moth here refers to a destructive insect that attacks clothing made of valuable wool or linen—a major form of stored wealth in the ancient world. **Moth** destroys clothing; **rust** destroys stored metals like iron and bronze, and also refers to corrosion that destroys grain. Jesus is talking about the **ephemeral nature of material goods**. Anything you can store in a closet or a vault is subject to decay, destruction, and time.
- **"Thieves break in and steal" (v. 19-20):** Jesus is not merely giving financial advice; he is addressing the **vulnerability** of placing your identity, security, and happiness in things that can be physically taken away. The Grinch is the perfect analogy for the thief that breaks in and steals your earthly treasure—the presents, the food, the lights.
- **"Treasures in Heaven":** This phrase is often misunderstood as referring only to an otherworldly, afterlife reward. In reality, this is about living our lives **on earth while also connected to the spiritual realities of life**. The "treasure in heaven" is the **investment we make in the Kingdom of God here and now**. It is investing in eternal values: justice, compassion, reconciliation, and—above all—**agape love**.

As Matt Rawle writes, we are hardwired to collect things. But Jesus wants to change our focus from *what* to collect and turn our hearts toward **what we truly treasure**. Our treasure in life is not the external stuff of possessions, but the longing for love—the kind of love that *cannot* be taken away from us. It is the love that is expressed when the Whos sing, "It came just the same."

What do you truly treasure in life? The Grinch's heart, which was two sizes too small, only grew when he saw that his act of theft failed to destroy the Whos' spirit. His heart grew three sizes because he witnessed and experienced **unconditional love** and **unshakeable joy**—treasures he could neither steal nor buy.

Our gifts of love may manifest themselves in different ways each year. We cannot put it in a box or control it. Matt Rawle notes, “Love doesn’t mean that everything will work out the way we plan... but love never tires of making sure that we are valued and that we are precious and that we are God’s own.”

Today, we have a treasure chest here before us. It doesn't contain ribbons, tags, or packages. Instead, it contains the **true treasures of heaven**—the things that no moth, no rust, and no Grinch can ever take away. These are the **Gift Words** that reflect the investment we make in God’s love.

I invite you now to come forward and take one of these words. Place it in your pocket, or pin it to your Advent wreath, and let it be your focus this week. Let it remind you that where this treasure is, there your heart will be also.

(The boxes containing the word-gifts are presented.)

Go forth and invest in the true treasures of life, that your heart, like the Grinch’s, may grow three sizes this Christmas season.

Amen.

Suggested Gift Words for the Box:

- **Joy**
- **Presence** (focusing on being present)
- **Shalom** (Peace/Wholeness)
- **Kindness**
- **Reconciliation**
- **Connection**
- **Forgiveness**
- **Grace**
- **Agape** (Unconditional Love)
- **Delight**
- **Awe**
- **Wonder**
- **Gratitude**
- **Singing**
- **Simplicity** (Focusing on simplicity over excess)
- **Empathy**
- **Listening**
- **Kindness**

- **Forgiveness**
- **Service**
- **Unity**
- **Trust** (Countering anxiety)
- **Eternal**
- **Faith**
- **Soul**
- **Dignity**
- **Release** (Letting go of control)
- **Abide**