“Treasure: Where Is Your Heart?”
Matthew 6:19-24

A few years ago, I went to an overnight women’s retreat and decided to pack a simple backpack with my basic necessities and a single change of clothes. When I arrived at the retreat center, I was surprised to see several attendees rolling in massive, oversized suitcases for a thirty-six-hour stay.

I could have bragged about my ability to minimize and pack lightly, but the truth is, the difference between us came down to experience. Having traveled extensively, I learned early on how to get by with only what I needed so I could actually enjoy the journey. I realized that my belongings were simply a means to an end. Packing was meant to provide basic covering and tools so I could fulfill the true purpose of the trip—not to weigh me down at every step.

What if we approached the journey of life in the exact same way?

We are here for a remarkably short period. Most estimates put an average human life at around 4,000 weeks. That is it. Even if we are blessed to live to 90, we still only receive around 4,700 weeks.

Yet, we spend much of those precious weeks encumbered by material accumulation rather than using our resources to support our spiritual journey. We trade our limited life energy for money, and then we measure our worth by the volume of what we have amassed. The script gets flipped. Instead of using earthly goods to serve our calling, we allow our goods to possess us.

Jesus understood how easily our life’s purpose becomes misaligned when he taught his followers in Matthew 6:19-24:

“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.

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If, then, the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

“No one can serve two masters, for a slave will either hate the one and love the other or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.”

Notice that Jesus does not say, *"Where your heart is, there your treasure will follow."* We often assume our money and time will automatically track with our highest values. But Jesus knew human nature better than that. He knew our hearts follow our investments.

In his book, *Treasure,* Pastor Jacob Armstrong writes: *"*Many of us feel a sense of disappointment about our lives and finances. We want to give our lives to our church, our family, our God. Instead, our heart follows our debts, our job, and our bills, and we haven't even realized it. As a result, we're left feeling conflicted and empty.*"*

Jesus' instruction is not merely a suggestion for frugality; it is a spiritual strategy for liberation. By telling us to invest in heavenly treasure, he challenges us to devote our resources to things that are incorruptible—things that cannot be stolen by a thief, eroded by time, or corrupted by greed. The Greek word used here for "store up" (*thēsaurizō*) literally means to accumulate or build a treasury. Jesus is asking us to audit our soul's investment plan.

What we pack for this life is supposed to serve our spiritual journey, not hinder it. When we overpack, the weight prevents us from fulfilling our mission. Look at the world around us: we see nations fighting wars over finite resources. The flipped script—which claims material abundance yields happiness and security—continually disrupts human connection, sharing, and love.

Even within our basic needs for food, shelter, and healthcare, popular culture constantly entices us to consume far beyond what sustains us. Americans make up roughly 5% of the global population, yet consume nearly a quarter of the world's energy resources. Yet higher consumption has not produced higher joy. True and lasting peace comes only from living in alignment with God's vision for our lives.

This imbalance shows up in how we spend our time as well. The average American works roughly 1,750 hours per year—about 400 hours more annually than workers in nations like Germany, and significantly more than in the UK, France, or Sweden. Work can be deeply fulfilling and a vital part of our sacred calling. I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve as pastor of this congregation. Yet when work becomes solely an engine for endless acquisition, it starves our ability to rest, nourish our bodies, cultivate deep relationships, and care for those we love.

Also, when some people in our society feel the need to accumulate so much wealth, while under paying their workers, it becomes a systemic problem for all of us to deal with.

Jesus offers us a way out of this trap. His teaching calls us to take an honest inventory of where our time, money, and energy actually go. When we become truthful about our

current investments, we can begin shifting our resources toward eternal purpose: loving God, serving others, and walking lightly upon this earth.

Guided Imagery Meditation
Let us transition now from hearing the Word to resting in its truth.
I invite you to adjust your seating... uncross your legs... and let your hands rest gently in your lap. Close your eyes, or soften your gaze toward the floor.

Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose... holding it for a moment... and exhale fully through your mouth. And repeat.

With every breath, allow the weight of your week—the to-do lists, the bills, the schedules—to fall away. Breathe in God's quiet peace... and breathe out tension.

In your mind's eye, imagine you are walking along a quiet, sunlit path. The air is fresh and mild. You are surrounded by the serene beauty of creation. Feel the ground beneath your feet with every step you take. You feel unhurried, safe, and entirely at rest.

As you walk down this path, you notice a figure coming toward you. As they draw closer, you recognize the warm, compassionate eyes of Jesus. He walks up to you, offers a gentle smile, and greets you with total acceptance. There is no judgment in his presence—only deep love and peace.

Jesus reaches out his hands toward you. In them, he holds a beautiful, finely crafted wooden treasure box. He gently places this box into your hands. Feel its weight, its texture, and the care with which it was made.

Jesus looks at you and says softly: "This represents the life energy, time, and resources I have entrusted to you on your journey."

He gently opens the lid of the box. Look inside.
Take a quiet, honest moment to examine what currently fills your treasure box. Notice where your hours, your finances, your mental energy, and your anxieties have been going.

Where are you actually investing your life's energy right now?

As you look at those things inside the box, hand them to Jesus one by one. If there are debts, heavy work obligations, material worries, or excess clutter weighing down your heart, place them into his open hands. Feel the physical lightness that comes as you surrender each burden to him.

Now, the treasure box is empty, clean, and ready.
Jesus looks into your eyes and asks: "Where do you truly want to invest your treasure? Where do you feel called to place your heart?"
Imagine placing new treasures into the box—treasures of heaven. See yourself placing acts of love, moments of stillness, restored relationships, generosity, acts of service, rest, and faith into this box.

Feel the joy and freedom of choosing treasures that moth and rust cannot destroy.

Jesus smiles, closes the lid gently, and rests his hand over yours on the box. He reminds you: *"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Hold onto that feeling of peace and alignment. Take one final deep breath in... filling your lungs... and release it completely.

When you are ready, bring your awareness back to this space, and open your eyes. Amen.