

## Signs and Symptoms for Heaven's Treasure Seekers

(2)

*Heaven's Treasure Seekers*

By Chris Hand

**Bible Text:** Colossians 3:1-17; Psalm 73

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Well, a few weeks back we considered treasure, where we're laying it up. Is it in heaven, set on eternal things or on the earth, are we earthbound, that everything that we're about actually looks to have its payback, its reward here in the here and the now, or at least in the tomorrow, if you like?

We read in Colossians 3 and, well, that was from the teaching of our Lord in the Sermon on the Mount that we were drawing those lessons but the same lesson here is to us in Colossians 3 right at the beginning, "If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth." And that then is followed by promise, what it means and what our hopes are which, of course, is what we rest upon, that as those who have had their attention caught by eternity. If we're not Christians yet, then that moment is still to come, we're still building here on the earth and it's a doomed enterprise, it's futile actually because you won't actually find what you're looking for here on the earth, things will fall apart, the rust and the moths will consume and the thieves will break in and steal, it won't turn out as you hoped, something will go wrong and then it will go very seriously wrong at the judgment throne where the enterprise well and truly is judged and condemned as a failure, and that is the end of that.

So we want to build for heaven, but last time we were thinking about how as Christians actually we can be running two accounts. That we are, yes, in one sense, building for heaven but then we're undoing all of that by actually having a secret account that's based here on earth, that we're looking for things to work out just fine, just right for us here on earth. And we described it as being like having a kind of resource pool. We've got these various resources. It doesn't just mean money. It doesn't just mean property or wealth. But like more intangible things that people should respect us, that people should honor us, that we should succeed and be seen to succeed, that we should be seen to be right and other people visibly and tangibly be seen to be wrong and we can be hogging those resources and thinking it's going to work out for us in this life.

We're thinking about that and we're thinking about it a little bit more again this morning as we proceed because it's the same title again. It's Part 2 and the title is "Signs and

Symptoms of Heaven's Treasure Seekers." Signs and symptoms of heaven's treasure seekers, part 2, and Colossians 3:12-15 are where we're going to be again. Last time we were thinking about, well, I'm just taking there what we have in verse 12 of Colossians 3, tender mercies and kindness. Tender mercies and kindness. We know that these and all the other words that come in this passage are eloquent about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. That's what he was like. Tender mercies, not grudging mercies, "I'll be merciful then." No, this is something that comes from the heart, freely given, and therefore more properly mercy for being that. It's not really mercy, is it, if it's just about given, grudgingly given. This is really given. The Lord forgave us, as it goes on to say, we freely forgive others so we are ourselves enjoying the forgiveness of God. And we saw kindness which, doesn't it, explains itself there. There's a warmth there. There's something there towards other people and, as we'll see, these words which follow on are all belong together. They all, in a way, help explain each other, that you take one word and, in a sense, you use different words to help explain just what it means. But these things are actually rather different things from the hanging onto your resources type things, and the things that we might have to forego in order to properly be fulfilling what we have here which is what the elect of God. Right? That's just saying Christians, isn't it?

The elect of God, chosen in eternity, holy and beloved. We like the word beloved, beloved of God, don't we? Beloved in eternity again before the foundation of the world, we love that. And holy, well, we note that too. And of course, all that we're talking about fits into that. This is distinctive. This is different. This is part of us being renewed in knowledge according to the image of him who created him, created man, and because it is into Christ, the image of Christ that we are being worked, we're being worked into it. And the more that we get worked into that, well, then we do a health check and we happen to look at ourselves, we'll find signs and symptoms. I'm borrowing from the doctors here. We've got a good doctor in our midst. I'm borrowing from that. Signs and symptoms that actually we are building for heaven, not for earth. And some of these things as perhaps we were seeing last time are not things we'd automatically think of.

So let's move on. First heading. Well, the first heading is humility, meekness and longsuffering. Humility, meekness, longsuffering. And because that's the rest of what we have in verse 12 of Colossians 3, there are these three words, beautiful words. These are beautiful words and, of course, it proceeds on and every word itself is worth dwelling upon, worth a sermon, isn't it there? But we're just sort of quickly taking in what these are telling us and, of course, he goes on in verse 14, "above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection." You see, love comes into all of these. It's got to be love for there to be kindness, well, there's love somewhere. To be full of tender mercies, there's going to be love somewhere. So that kind of brings it all together in a way and actually to be that is to be holy. You're not acting as the world now. You're not acting in a way contrary to what God would be like.

There's saintliness, morally speaking, a morality, purity we strive for. Well, that's different to the world, but our love, there's a holiness in that and we see some, again, beautiful language, humility, meekness, longsuffering all belong together. And all of these words taken here in a kind of aggregate way, well, they're all symptoms. Yeah, we

are building, laying up our treasure for heaven, we are investing there. How do we know that we're investing there? Well, I don't get a monthly statement, as it were, that says right where you paid in so much to your heavenly account. Oh, that's good, I'm getting credit here. No, we have to look, well, what's my heart telling me? What's going on there? Do I find these things because if I find these things, it suggests I've sold up on this world. It suggests that this world is losing its attractiveness, that I'm not hanging onto it, I'm not hanging onto my resources in case I give them away, because you [unintelligible] giving something away, you're showing kindness when you're giving something away. "No, I'd rather keep it." No, it's saying that we're giving it away and we're giving it away and learning to be a cheerful giver in that way, giving it away, and that's a good sign. It means we're building for heaven. That's attracted us. That's more serious for us. That's the place there is taking us up.

So as we say, these words help to explain each other. Somebody is humble, we'll be meek, and somebody that's humble and meek will be longsuffering. You won't take one away and the other two will just stand. They all fall together, if you like, and just similarly as with tender mercies and kindness. But in this giving away of resources, we thought and we'll think a little bit further again about them, they're things like I want vengeance. I want vengeance. I want something in the here, the now. I want to pay back that comes back into my account, as it were, because I feel I've lost something, some reputation, people have insulted me, my honor, my reputation, whatever it may be. Vengeance. Or some entitlement that I was denied and I feel I was owed it and that stays and it becomes a grievance, it becomes a grudge, it comes to be quite nasty. That resource, I want that back and we hold offenses, don't we? Certainly we do. We shouldn't do but we hold offenses because there was some slighting of our honor, some way in which we felt insulted, and we think that's got to be put right and it takes us up. And so we're spending resources on that which are not then being spent on humility and on lovingkindness, tender mercies and things like that.

Humility then, coming more particularly. Humility. Well, that means we don't think much about ourselves. You see, these things all help to explain themselves, don't they? It means that we don't put ourselves as the number 1; that the first person always to think about is me, what am I getting out of this, what's it going to do for me, how is it going to enhance me, my reputation, my self-image, whatever we might like to call it. No, it says, "No." It says in there, "Not my. Am I that important? Is it something I'm owed? Should I get this coming into my sort of this account that I'm running? What's my entitlement?" Not saying that we just put up with everything but anything because there's a time to speak but the spirit in which we speak is all the key part of it.

But meekness would say, "You know, I am not the number 1 here. I have to step down, step down, step down." That's what the Lord Jesus did, didn't he? All of this illustrated perfectly by him. That's what he did. This coming in the first place in the flesh was coming in humility. He could have come in glory. What would be made of that? Well, he would have been consumed. But he didn't because he came to do a particular work on our behalf. And we will know, won't we, that the Bible again and again underscores that place of humility.

So were we to turn to Matthew 18, just reading verses 1 to 5 and our Lord illustrating to his disciples who are looking to guess the number 1 post, they want to be first. They wanted to be the recognized. They thought that they were worth this. That's not what humble people do and they get a lesson. "At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'" You get the feeling they're hoping that it's one of them. "Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me.'" So there's the lesson on humility. There's a child, hasn't got some great thoughts in being a strong person, a great world leader or entitled to various things. We know children are sinful and they can be as horrible to each other as adults can sometimes be to each other, but here taking the child at his or her best and just being asked, told, if you will, "Come and stand here," and just does what they're told and being used here and I'm sure the Lord was smiling as he looked at the child, we can well imagine. That's the child illustrated, that you've got to humble yourself like this little child. This little child is not expecting you to run around him or her, not expecting you to put them up on a pedestal and give him authority over the running of a village or something. It hasn't got those expectations that you've got to have in thinking who's the greatest, "That's the resource I want. I want recognition. If I don't get recognition, I'm not happy." No, it's not like that at all and you can just see, can't you, somewhere in the narrative the disciples, the cogs in their mind are whirring and drinking in the implications of this and realizing the answer was not the one that they were looking for.

Elsewhere in Scripture, turning here to Romans 12:3, "For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." That's the opinion. Not some, "I'm the big person and should be recognized as such and people should respect me." No, not that, in fact, you should not think more highly than you ought to think about yourself. Be modest and sober in your thinking. That is to be humble or, again, and in the same chapter Romans 12:16, "Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion." And think that you ought to be thought as brilliant, but think that you think it, therefore it's right. That's not necessarily the case so we're humble. We don't think that we must've got it right so that we must always be the person that's on top of this. No, the Lord says, "Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble." With children. With people who are not the big winners in society, putting it like that.

And we can then turn, a very obvious place to turn, isn't it, Philippians 2 and just to read in verse 3, that's our Lord Jesus that's going to lead onto him, the illustration is going to be him coming from heaven to earth, the God of glory but coming as a man. So Philippians 2:3, "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." That you're entitled to honor, that you're entitled to esteem, that you're entitled to come out of this on top, if

you'd like, and that I'm not going to stress over that, worry over that. That's quite a calling, isn't it, and the calling is the Lord Jesus Christ, that there is that willingness or ways in which he was denied any kind of recognition, denied any sort of honor, in which finally, of course, on the cross and stripped of any honor, stripped of any kind of dignity and that he endured. So meek people are, say, "Well, who am I?" Not loud, not demanding, nor self-effacing, dare we say, happier and warmer for it.

So there's humility and there indeed is meekness, there's that willingness to put up with things, if you like, provocation, and meekness will put up with that. Longsuffering similarly in that, not having a short fuse but bearing with people. It goes on to say, doesn't it, it's explaining meekness, it's explaining longsuffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. These are heaven's treasure seekers. That's what heaven's treasure seekers are about because longsuffering, that kind of meekness of enduring. Well, if we want it all here and now and if we're expecting recognition here and now, don't do any of that. You want to win. You want to get it seen that you're winning and coming out on top in this, that you're getting your vengeance, you're getting it paid back to you as it should be paid back as you might feel. And love and peace, you know, is going to take hits in that.

So that's where we end up, that if we're resourcing still for this world, that it's gotta get right here, then we'll always want to answer back and we'll always want to win the argument. We'll always want to be seen to be defeating all opposition. We'll want to keep or gain our imagined reputation is being [unintelligible]. Some people want to be seen as dangerous or strong or smart and any affront to it, any challenge to it, we will almost take is a mortal wound and we want to preserve those resources because it's all about this earth, people on this earth, what they think of us, people on this earth, what they see us to be and that's not investing in heaven. Such people often have a lot to say, not so keen to listen. They're very opinionated. They have very strong opinions, very opinionated but they're not so quick to consider opinions of others and to admit perhaps to being wrong and being willing to back down on that.

Heaven, building for heaven, laying up treasure for heaven says, "I'll let that go. I'll let that pass. I will allow those things to come and to go, and will allow those things in the light of something more momentous and something far more hugely significant to say that this far better." And responding as would befit the Lord Jesus Christ, "I set my mind that I'm raised with Him and I'm setting my thoughts on things above where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God." Something infinitely better. Something infinitely higher and is actually hugely attractive because you can see as you reflect that, the person that you'll be will move towards Christ-likeness in mercies and kindness and humility and meekness and longsuffering and other words that could equally be put on there and which would fit comfortably within the fruit of the Spirit and the things that Paul lists in Galatians 5.

So we allow grievances, hurts to go. Where there is injustice, we look to have it put right, especially if it's an injustice against somebody else. Yeah, we're very jealous for their honor, we esteem them higher than ourselves, we're more zealous to see that other people

are helped, suffering church in various places that we've already provoked about the way that people are spoken of there, ill-treated, and we act. We pray. We write letters. We do what various things we can within the resources that we have. But for ourselves, does that matter so much in the light of eternity? Do we have to have our vengeance, our moment in court, our whatever it is that we might think that we are entitled to? We're not saying there isn't a place for any of these things and to the righting of wrongs, we're not careless about that and we'll come to that in a moment, but if we are pursuing that in such a way that that is the everything, that if this mission does not succeed, that is a wretchedness and a sadness and we would just lie awake at night, regretting that that didn't turn out as we hoped, there's a bigger cause and there are bigger things to be taken up with.

And our pursuit of holiness, to be Christ-like and to show forth these sorts of characteristics here, well, the more that that's happening and happening, shall I say, instinctively, that it's more the ready response rather than the second, third, fourth response that we get, we go through a sort of tier system, if you like. Not the thing to talk about these days, is it, with pandemics in this country? But anyway, a sort of tiered system with this and that finally, yeah, you finally, you find the right thing, right attitude. No, you want to higher up that it comes more quickly and more readily there because that shows where treasure seekers in heaven, we're laying up treasure there.

Well, my second heading: searching out a cure. Searching out a cure. It's a high calling, isn't it? There's a high calling. Scripture doesn't just say things to us are just easy, achievable. When you have an exam, don't you, in the first couple of questions, warming you up, they're always nice and easy, whatever, and then you get to question 2 and that's not so easy. Well, Scripture hasn't got any kind of easy easy starters. They're all of them, all of them demand a lot because that's a high calling we have, not a low calling. It's a high calling that we have.

So is there an instant cure? We like instant cures, they want the quick fix. Is that vaccine, we want that, we want to have this quick fix. Well, we'll wait a while yet perhaps for that to come. But is there such a quick fix, an inoculation against pride? Can I get an appointment somewhere and there's this very good sort of vaccine and sort of roll up your sleeve and there's a little hurt just a little bit, and you brace yourself, you're pin-pricked and then done, sorted, dab it down, get a little plaster to stick over it and you're cured. Of course not. It's not so easy to inoculate against ourselves, pride and all the things that are there.

No, no total cure but we can offer a progressive cure and it's sanctification, isn't it? And it is as laid out here in Scripture, it's hard work. It means mortifying the flesh. It means repenting. It means when that good response is number 4 on the list and we've gone through various other responses and we say no to all of them and we turn against them and we refuse them. It's repentance when you turn away from that and we look for the right response because, well, we can offer ourselves incentive schemes and this and there always are, these things are not just hard work, no reward. You just sit there regretting that you didn't get your pound of flesh, whatever. No, not at all. These other attitudes are roadblocks to experiencing the love of God and the peace of God might rule in us. But it's

not just going to happen if none of these other things are happening. Peace of God, that sounds good. It is, isn't it? We'd all love to have more of that.

Well, there's more to be found but it's to be found in that pathway of holiness and the cure is not sudden, is not immediate but it can happen over time. It won't happen perfectly. We won't reach that moment when we pass from this life to the next and it's a finished finished production, nothing further to have added, nothing further to have done. No. I think, in fact, as you get older in the faith you see it has more to do and there you're more undone than you realized you were, and that sin is actually occupying a bigger place, not a smaller place in your estimate than it originally did when you first believed perhaps. We realize how subtle sin is and how degraded it is and how it masquerades at times as a virtue, and you have to unmask it. We're using it for the moment here, so we get masks and we're not doing that quite yet, sorry, but you unmask it and reveal it is as sin, and you're hunting it down and you've found it and you're now, you recognize it's a foe, it's an enemy and I want God's help to come through beyond this. [unintelligible] but it will be worth the journey.

But we say this because the Bible has got nothing to say about just letting injustice happen, just letting injustice happen. So you've been wronged, who of us has not be wronged in that way there? We could stretch back to childhood, couldn't we, and [unintelligible] the wrongs that we could probably between us all there rehearse and review. No, God has a very long memory. Very very long memory and the Bible is full, is it not, of cases and situations where God says, "There will be justice. I will bring justice. I'm not sleeping as some people say. I'm not slack concerning My promises as some would regard being slack. I will surely come and I will bring recompense." And God is able to exact vengeance in a way that's proportionate and fair and right and has properly weighed the whole situation which is beyond our capability and will give to each what they deserve. I never knew sides of that. It says it, he'll give to each what they deserve.

So for the unbeliever, well, what for the unbeliever? We read Psalm 73, didn't we, which is often a Psalm, I think, that we look at and, well, we say, "Well, that's what I feel. That's what I feel. It seems like the wicked are prospering as though there's no trouble and they're just getting on so well with it." And it begins there, doesn't it, just reading verses 1 to 3 of Psalm 73, "Truly God is good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart." That's the statement, you might actually now certainly agree with. He's come through a process and that's now the front piece. "I say that," he says right up from there. "But now let me tell you what had happened, But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. For I was envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked." Now he's actually, his objectivity here had dipped in various ways. Not all the boastful are in any way getting any of the good things. Well, very unhappy poor people out in the world there. But he can just see those for whom this has just worked out fine and so the language, his expression there is in many ways quite exaggerated. They have no trouble. They just seem to sail through life.

Well, he said, "If I had said this to my own people," in verse 15, "If I had said, 'I will speak thus,'" I will noise this abroad that, "I look and I just see the wicked prosper. I don't think there's any place for justice in this world. There's no justice." Then he said, "I would have been untrue to the generation of Your children. Because eventually I got perspective," and it's there, isn't it, right in this Psalm that he then looks and understands. "Then I understood their end," verse 17, and it changes and the whole tone then changes, it's all been multiplied injustice and the righteous, well, they're plagued everyday and chastened every morning. That is just hard work, he says, but now he's got perspective. He looks at the sanctuary of God. He's got to heaven and he's seeing the end game and it doesn't look so good for these boastful people.

Our God's interested in justice and in slippery places, it's destruction, it's desolation, verses 18 and 19, "As a dream when one awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image." It looks for a while as if they're just prospering but then it is as though the Lord awakens from sleep and he describes it as such elsewhere in prophecy. He awakens from sleep though he's been allowing, and he's longsuffering, you see, allowing injustice but then he'll put it right and he'll put it right very certainly at the judgment throne. And we believe that. We believe it, Romans 12:19, is a caution if we're going out on a sort of vengeance spree and kind of the movies are all full of this, aren't they there and people kind of going out with some weapon right at the end, they'll be a struggle but they'll bring down the bad guy, you know? Well, no, we leave it there to God to do this. Romans 12:19, "Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath." To wrath. God isn't saying, "I'm careless about this." No, he says, "I have wrath. I have seen it, I've seen more than you've seen actually and all of it, all of it, more than you'll ever know evokes in Me anger. It offends My sense of justice for I am justice. I am not so, one who found it somewhere else. I am justice." And so for these things to happen. So, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." There it is. "I will repay." And we're meant to hear that. We say, "Yes, there is, God will, God will set all things to right. We need not stress for ourselves. I'm not going to get payback I'm expecting here but God will make sure in eternity everybody gets their payback. Be sure of it."

But then don't think that God actually has given up on justice here on the earth. Again, we're so used to seeing the wicked prosper, aren't we? And we see the various campaign groups and lobby groups and so often they seem, not always but they seem often to have the ear of government and their tactics and what they say and what their aims are so ungodly, and we sigh and we groan. But then God actually is also very happy to be known to put right wrongs on earth, things that have happened to you, things that have happened to me, things that have happened to the church in a wider sense. But he's well able to make the wicked just overreach, just overstep the mark, just say too much. They leave evidence at the crime scene and that evidence comes back in a day and haunts them, brings them in. It may take years, it may take decades but one day it catches up and suddenly it's all out. All those people we, the horror stories from the 1960s and '70s and entertainment, television, the Jimmy Savile kind of scenario but eventually justice caught up and they suddenly died, now their memory is well and truly destroyed, reputation gone, but others face prison sentences in their 70s and their 80s. They found, it caught up with them in the end and their reputation and everything they thought gave them

immunity failed them at the last. God is able to bring it to pass. They always leave, always leave evidence at the crime scene. There's no perfect crime, no perfect bit of wrongdoing. There's always evidence, fingerprints, something overstated, some deceitfulness that then gets exposed.

And do believe, as well, God does intervene to preserve his people. That's where the Psalmist was and that truly God is good to Israel. He's saying, "No, He is. I've seen it. I've experienced it. I've seen a lot of injustice and I've seen the wicked prosper but then I've seen eternity and I realized God's actually on my side. "Whom have I in heaven but You?" he says in verse 25, "And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You. My flesh and my heart fail; But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." He says, doesn't he, "I will always continue," in verse 23, "with You. You hold me by my right hand. You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory." You're working with me. You guide me with your counsel. I'm able to discern better and see and feel more comfortable with what the wicked are doing. Ah, but wait. Your time, you'll be brought low one day and I'll just get on with my work and I'll get on with my business in the meantime, and I'll keep my eyes open and watch as God intervenes for his people. He'll fight for us often. We need to fight for ourselves. He'll fight our corner for us if we're alert and expectant.

The Lord has a way of helping his people and make unexpected resources, money, whatever it might be appear, can bring unexpected help, vindication, support, encouragement, boldness, strength, and these are things that he's well able to do because he is a God of justice. [unintelligible] a hard work foregoing now vengeance and foregoing hardening our attitude and wanting this now and wanting that now, but the Bible says, "No." It's not interested in justice but it says, "No, no that route. Don't obsess on that. That's for this earth. That's treasure here but be setting your mind on those things above and things on earth have a way actually of working out quite remarkably and you'll see some interesting things and you'll see the way in which God can confirm to us in this that after all, after all is said and done, you are heaven's treasure seekers and there are just a few signs and symptoms of the fact."

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF HEAVEN'S TREASURE SEEKERS (2):

### (Sermon Summary)

#### Reading: Colossians 3:1-17.

We continue the theme of making sure that we are laying up treasure in heaven. It is important that non-Christians realize the folly of hoping to make everything come right on earth. It is a futile aim and one that will be totally discredited and undone at the Judgment Seat.

But last time, we saw that Christians can also be paying into a secret account, trying to build up investments in this world rather than in the next. Our perspective can be earthbound, believing that we are entitled to self-respect, success, good health, long-life and being not willing to lose any of these resources but wanting to hang on to them. This attitude stops us showing mercy and kindness to others because we fear that, in doing these things, we will be 'squandering' some of our personal resources. Being merciful and kind shows that we are more taken up with laying up treasure in heaven. They are signs and symptoms of heaven's treasure seekers. We continue that theme from Colossians 3: 12-15 again this morning.

#### 1. Humility, meekness and long-suffering

These terms all belong together and help to explain each other. They all connect up with the theme of love and illustrate what love looks like in action. These terms are all descriptive of what people who are laying up treasure in heaven will be like. Again, they are all terms which suggest that we are giving away the resources we might feel entitled to in this life, such as respect by others and appreciation, and are foregoing the 'right' to personal vengeance and vindication.

With humility, we are showing that we are not thinking much of ourselves and are not insistent that we should have everything we feel we should have a right to. We are not asserting that we think we are deserving of anything or feel that we are worth something great. Rather we aim to illustrate texts like Matthew 18:1-5; Romans 12:3 and 16; and Philippians 2:3. We ask ourselves 'Who am I?'. Meekness comes up with a modest answer. We are not being loud and demanding but responding rather with warmth and happiness, even if provoked or slighted. With long-suffering, we show that we do not have a short fuse but bear with things and situations.

These qualities of life and principles for living run counter to trying to laying up treasure on earth. If we do not want to part with 'personal resources' we will always want to fight back, to win the argument, to have the satisfaction of crushing opponents, to want to hang on to a reputation perhaps for being strong or smart. We feel that we cannot afford to be seen to lose or fail to rise to a challenge to our reputation. This can make us opinionated so that we are not willing to listen to others and cannot suffer the thought that we might be wrong.

Laying up treasure in heaven will lead to different results. We will feel more comfortable letting go of things, releasing people from obligations that we feel they are under towards us. We have much better things to come and can afford to let go of some of the 'resources' we are holding to if we are solely laying up treasure on earth. Heaven's perspective tells us that there are bigger causes and more important things to attend to.

So we have to ask ourselves whether we believe this is true. Are we too bound up with this world or have we released ourselves from the bondage of needing to make everything come right in this life on earth?

## **2. Searching out a cure?**

So do we find the final cure to pride in this life? Do we find an end to pursuing outcomes where we feel the need to win every battle and to have everyone pay us the respect we feel we are owed? The battle never finishes. The victory is never total. We are always in the position of having to repent and mortify the flesh. If we are too content in building up a stock of treasure on earth, then we will not enjoy the assurance that we might otherwise enjoy or know the love of Christ to the extent that we could or should. Instead our minds will be too preoccupied with things where we feel that we have been wronged or that we are owed something.

We need therefore to believe that the Lord will put all wrongs to right in heaven. We have seen in the last sermon that we can sometimes be guilty of thinking that the Lord will not put right the things that are wrong as in Psalm 73:1-3. Instead we should be assured that the Lord will put all things to right and that He will punish all wrong-doers and wrong-doing (Psalm 73:17-20; Romans 12:19; 2 Thessalonians 1:6; and Revelation 18: 21-24.)

We should believe too that, if the Lord so chooses, He can right things on earth in a very visible and very public way. People often 'leave evidence at the crime scene' that will come back to haunt them and bring their arrogance low.

We also believe that the Lord does intervene to preserve His people and that He is more than able to compensate perceived losses that we might feel we have incurred as His disciples. The Lord can bring us unexpected help and deliverance, vindication and demonstration of His love (Matthew 19:29)