

KINGDOM DISCIPLESHIP 101:

THE ETERNAL TREASURE OF THE KINGDOM

LUKE 12:13-34

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In today's text from Dr. Luke's Gospel, Jesus teaches his disciples more on what it means to live our lives in light of who God is, his character, and his revealed Kingdom (as we learned in our last sermon on Kingdom Discipleship 101: *Knowing God*). ***As Christians, our treasure is located in heaven with Jesus Christ.***

Now I realize that the title of the sermon today '*The Eternal Treasure of the Kingdom*' may sound like the subtitle to an *Indiana Jones* adventure movie. ***That is not all that accidental!*** As with adventure or fantasy movies such as this one and with other classic stories, there is man's search or attempt at attaining riches here in this present world (that we all identify with)- -only for the treasure and riches to be stolen or lost through foolishness (I think of *Treasure of the Sierra Madre*).

This "search for treasure story" is an archetypal or model kind of story that all can relate to because of an inherent desire all humans have for **permanence and security**. This "search for treasure story" is one we learn throughout Scripture as well: Man seeks and searches all his life to build a kingdom and live with lots of riches, but at the end he either loses the riches, or he dies (and then they do him no good).

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon called this "vanity" or "meaninglessness" or "chasing after the wind".

Now many of us do not perhaps get involved in formal search parties to the end of the world for "lost pirate gold" or diamonds, or seek to move westward in an attempt at a great gusher of black gold.

We are tempted to live in this life as if there were no accountability to God with regard to what he has given to us. We are indeed tempted to live as if our possessions could never rust, perish or be stolen, and we are tempted to live like this because we seek permanence and security as those made in God's image. When we do not have the permanence and security that we think we should have, ***we grow anxious, worried and insecure.***

I think that it is revealing how sinful mankind seeks permanence and security here even though most every person has been to a funeral of a friend or loved one, or at least knows that they are going to die. Yet even though we realize this, we attempt to set up our own little "eternal" "teeny-weenie-mini-me-kingdoms" where we think we will dwell permanently, safely and securely without a care in the world. ***This is not true.***

The desire for permanence and security that all men seek foolishly throughout their lives is an eschatological indicator that God has indeed created them. However, instead of

seeking the True and Eternal Kingdom and treasure in Christ, sinful man settles for a counterfeit.

The good news is that God has granted to all men the opportunity to have the permanence and security, but it is not found in this world that is passing away, but in Jesus Christ and His Kingdom.

While sinful man searches for treasure in a world that is passing away, the Christian, a true disciple of the Kingdom, searches for the Eternal Treasure that only God can grant, that is hidden in the Person of Jesus Christ.

^{ESV} **Ephesians 3:7-9:** Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. ⁸ To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles ***the unsearchable riches of Christ,*** ⁹ and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things,

^{ESV} **Ephesians 3:14-16:** For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, ¹⁶ that ***according to the riches of his glory*** he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being...

The greatest treasure one can have is found in the Kingdom that has been revealed in Jesus Christ's Person and Work, and is still being revealed through the preaching of the Word of God- ***it is the Gospel treasure, the "unsearchable riches of Christ*** (Eph. 2:7; 3:7-9, 124-16)!

I. God and the Parable of the Rich Fool: *God the One to Whom All Men Must Give an Account* (12:13-21)

- a. Warnings against greed or covetousness- ***"Wanting too much!"*** (12:13-15)

¹³ *Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."* ¹⁴ *But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?"* ¹⁵ *And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."* ¹⁶ *And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully,"* ¹⁷ *and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?'* ¹⁸ *And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.'* ¹⁹ *And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'* ²⁰ *But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?'* ²¹ *So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."*

A man in the crowd recognizes Jesus' authority because he asks him to "tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me" (v. 13). Although the man apparently recognizes Jesus' authority, he does not recognize the Kingdom of God that Jesus' authority was given to reveal to all who had eyes to see.

Jesus responds with a rebuke to the man (v. 14) because he realizes that this man's confession is too shallow with regard to love for God and man and actually reveals the man's covetousness or greed.

The eternal heavenly Kingdom of God is being revealed in Jesus Christ and this worldly-earthly-minded man (or "fool" v. 20) is focused on his own kingdom-"barn"-building! Jesus' Messianic-Mission was to make God's Kingdom known NOT to serve as a judge and arbitrator between inheritance disputes.

Jesus tells a short parable about a man who was covetous or persistently greedy throughout his life and desired to *gain the whole world*. For security reasons he stored up for himself all of his possessions, continued to collect them, then he built bigger barns to store them.

What he failed to notice was that there was a bigger issue of security- *-one involving his eternal security before God*. The man did not think of his being held accountable before God and that he should have stored up his treasure being rich toward God (v. 21b).

Tenth Commandment

In fact, the man described in this passage is a perpetual life-long breaker of the Tenth Commandment which says:

^{ESV} **Exodus 20:17** "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

The heart of this commandment is to reveal man's sinful greed- -of his desire for "more, more, more!"

To covet or to be greedy means that you are not satisfied with what God has provided for you and you constantly and consistently want more- -even at someone else's expense.

b. Building bigger barns (12:16-19)

This parable reveals the folly of being a covetous, self-centered, materialistic person without a care or concern of one's standing before God and of one's well-being in light of God's clear judgment upon sin like greed. Read Jesus' words of warning again in verse 15:

"Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."

The parable is rooted in and has many allusions to *The Book of Ecclesiastes*. As we read in our Scripture lesson this morning the end of all matters in this present and temporal life is to "Fear God and keep his commandments".

Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. ¹⁴For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

All other pursuits are folly apart from the storing up treasure in God's eternal Kingdom by faith in Him.

This man in the parable is a "self-sufficient" man who has worked hard and gained many possessions and whose only goal was to be "fat and happy" so that he has enough goods laid up so that he can "relax, eat, drink, and be merry" (v. 19). But as Ecclesiastes 2 teaches us, this is folly and a vanity, a chasing after the wind:

^{ESV} **Ecclesiastes 2:1-4:** I said in my heart, "Come now, I will test you with pleasure; enjoy yourself." But behold, this also was vanity. ²I said of laughter, "It is mad," and of pleasure, "What use is it?" ³I searched with my heart how to cheer my body with wine- my heart still guiding me with wisdom- and how to lay hold on folly, till I might see what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life. ⁴I made great works. I built houses and planted vineyards for myself....

The attitude of "relax, eat, drink, and be merry" might be a consistently popular attitude with many Americans in this world who shallowly seek only to be happy in this present age. But this attitude is contrary to those who are seeking a kingdom that is not of this world, where Jesus Christ is their hope and desire, where sin and folly shall be removed, and God will restore all things and will dwell with his people in communion and sweet fellowship in an unshakeable Kingdom that will never end (cf. Rev. 21:1-7).

In our culture we are bombarded with advertisements and worldly philosophies that tempt us to be stingy and self-centered and to hoard all that we have so that we can "retire" and "**relax, eat, drink, and be merry**"- -but this is to misplace the goal and the reason for which we serve daily in our lives and to misunderstand the reason we have been given possessions by God.

Our goal of service to God and neighbor no matter how old we are is NOT to win the lottery in order to "take it easy", but to serve God and neighbor in order to build Christ's Kingdom- -this is the best investment a creature of God can make according to Scripture!

Our ultimate goal is not retirement and merely being able to retire to be hedonists loving pleasure, but our ultimate goal in our daily service is Christ's recognition on Judgment Day of "Well Done, my good and faithful servant"- -this should be our eschatological motivation and goal in our service.

This is not to say that retirement is bad or that we shouldn't slow down at some point in our lives (you may have no choice!), or that we should not try to save some of our income for the proverbial "rainy day".

It is to say that retirement is not spoken of in many places in the Bible (see Numbers 8:23-26), and here it is taught as a warning against covetousness, greed and relying on oneself for permanence and security –not knowing when your life will end.

In fact, all of the man’s retirement dreams in the parable of being able to “relax, eat, drink, and be merry” that had been advertised to him at his local bank collapse suddenly and his dreams crumble and fall all around him when he realizes that what he sought so earnestly in his life was not what he was created by God to ultimately seek after. In fact, God holds the man accountable for his sins and transgressions of living covetously and self-centeredly- -In the end, he is a fool! (v. 20).

Even though our Lord Jesus is clear here, sadly, sinful, self-centered man still seeks a kingdom for himself! This is truly folly (v. 20). The sinful, self-centered man who is covetous or greedy seeks to lay up treasure for himself rather than being rich toward God (v. 21). This is his great sin in trespassing upon God’s creation and not giving God the worship, praise, and glory that God deserves for providing all the possessions that anyone has!

It is important to note that Jesus does not condemn worldly wealth in this parable; this too is a blessing of God (The text says that the land produced plentifully in verse 16 which is because of God’s blessing and sovereignty). However, Jesus does indeed condemn any person for placing their trust and hope covetously or greedily mere worldly wealth and treasure. His point is that you cannot serve God and money (“mammon”) as he says elsewhere in Matthew’s Gospel (Matthew 6:19-24).

Two important principles from this parable here that we learn further from Matthew’s Gospel:

- 1) **Where Your Heart is Fixed Reveals What Kind of Treasure and Riches You Truly Possess (Eternal or Temporal):** "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.²¹ *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* – Matthew 6:19-21.
- 2) **We Serve Either God or What God Grants to Us; We Are by Nature Idolaters Who Must Consider Who or What We Serve:** "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. *You cannot serve God and money.* - Matthew 6:24

Because all mankind will be held accountable before God for what they have done with their knowledge of the Savior as well as with their possessions, we must give God all the glory for his provision in salvation as well as with all that he supplies us daily as our “daily bread”.

God is to be glorified and served, he is to be “enjoyed” as the first question of our catechism teaches us by seeking God and His Kingdom first (v. 31)! Rather than building bigger barns with what we have, let us strive to build bigger churches that are faithful to the True Gospel of Jesus Christ!

II. No Need for Anxiety or Worry

If we truly realized how much God loves us in Jesus Christ, and how much that we are to inherit in the Eternal Kingdom, there would never be any reason for our anxiety and worry.

Our anxiety and worry are indicators that we have (1) forgotten this truth of the Kingdom, and (2) we are attempting to seek and search for permanence and security in this present world. If our sinful tendency is not greed like the rich fool in the parable, then our tendency can be anxiety or worry. Someone has written: “Greed can never get enough, worry is afraid it may not have enough. Worry is the emotional reward of material preoccupation” (Hughes, Vol. II, pg. 50).

We must learn by God’s grace as his Kingdom disciples that life is more than food and clothing in this world (v. 23).

^{ESV} Luke 12:22-34: And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them.

³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you. ³² "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

A. “Don’t be anxious about your life...” (v. 22) [Imperative-Command of Jesus]

Three primary commands: “Don’t be anxious”, “Don’t be worried”, and “Fear Not”

i. Why an imperative or command?

1. Because all that we could possibly want or need is found in Jesus Christ, both *spiritually and physically*.
 2. He never leaves us nor forsakes us, yet he knows our sinful tendency to be anxious because we do not trust God (“O you of little faith”- v. 28b).
 3. He commands us not to be anxious because in Christ as believers who have received his Spirit *we do not have to be anxious or worried!* This is a tremendous relief from our sinful burdens. What a great relief! We can be reminded of the fact that anything Jesus commanded his disciples to do (such as not being anxious, worried or fearful), we are enabled by His Spirit to do!
- ii. Jesus teaches us to look around in the creation and see the ravens and the lilies and tells us how much more important we are than them.

The Psalms are in Jesus’ mind when he mentions ravens:

ESV Psalm 147:9 He gives to the beasts their food, and to the young ravens that cry.

Jesus alludes to ravens and lilies who do not work for food and clothing, yet God provides for them in his great kindness and grace.

Ravens in fact are like their brothers the crows- -they’re nasty and they’re everywhere! They are scavengers and in the Mosaic Ceremonial Law, they were considered unclean (Lev. 11:15). If God takes care of unclean scavenger birds such as ravens (or crows), how much more will he take care of those people he loves in Jesus Christ?!

Of how much more value are you than the birds! - v. 24b

An anonymous poet wrote:

*Said the Robin to the Sparrow,
 “I should really like to know
 Why these anxious human beings
 Rush about and worry so.”
 Said the Sparrow to the Robin,
 “Friend, I think that it must be
 They have no Heavenly Father,
 Such as cares for you and me.”*

– Quoted in Hughes, Vol. II, pg. 52

B. “Don’t be...worried...” (v. 29) [Imperative-Command of Jesus]

- i. Obsessive anxiety and worry are typical of pagan nations far from the special revelation of the Lord (v. 30- “The nations of pagan Gentiles runs after these things...”
- ii. We are to live each day as Kingdom disciples. Anxiety and worry occur many times because we load this present day where we have prayed “Give us this day our daily bread” with the daily bread we will may need tomorrow. We unnecessarily burden our present day and circumstances with a future that may never come in God’s sovereignty. ***This too is folly and quite pointless.***
- iii. Each day we are to seek God’s Kingdom (v. 31), knowing that if the Father is pleased (“Good pleasure”- Gk. εὐδοκέω be pleased; take delight or pleasure in; choose, will, resolve) to give us as heirs his eternal Kingdom, how much will he freely give to us all things we need in order to safely arrive there!
- iv. God is pleased and takes delight in and chooses and wills and has resolved according to the purpose of His will to give us His Kingdom as heirs of ***Eternal treasure- -why do we fret about so many things!?***

C. “Fear Not little flock...” (v. 32) [Imperative-Command of Jesus]

Jesus is fulfilling and acting out as the Great Shepherd the prophecy of Micah:

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days. ³ Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴ ***And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth.***

So what do we do when we are anxious, worried and fearful? We should realize that at that moment we are acting as pagans and those Jesus describes as those of little faith (v. 28b, 30).

Believers in Christ are those who must be reminded of our great and eternal treasure found in Jesus Christ and continue to turn to him and seek him for all that we need both physical and spiritual.

When we are anxious, worried and fearful we are living like we are NOT part of this great Kingdom in Jesus, and that we are NOT heirs of all the glorious riches found in God. We must realize that we are seeking and searching for permanence and security HERE, rather than knowing that our permanence and security is found in HIM.

The Kingdom is already ours in Jesus Christ- -we just must remember this daily as we continue to serve God faithfully in this Kingdom!

Cinderella: “Once Upon a Time...Happily Ever After”

For all believers, we have a story that is much greater than the **“Cinderella Story”**. We all like “Cinderella-type-stories” do we not?! Someone who has nothing, perhaps is abused and unloved, who eventually ends up in great security and riches married to the richest and most powerful man in the Kingdom.

We even like to go back and read the “Cinderella-type-stories” experiencing again the plight of the “Cinderella” at the beginning of the tale, but knowing the ending- -knowing that this one will inherit it all- -and the last laugh and last word will be from the “Cinderella” who is vindicated.

What does “Cinderella” have to do with this context of Luke’s Gospel? Well, remember last week, Jesus did indeed tell the Kingdom disciples that they would suffer, be persecuted and perhaps even experience death (12:4ff). Despite this treatment, they were to view their lives with an understanding of who God is and how much he loved them. Additionally, they were to view their lives with a vision of the end of the story where God will make all things right.

We too must remember God is a loving Father (12:6-7, 30) learning to live our lives in light of who God is, ***but also in light of the ending of the story when all of us shall be vindicated as inheritors of a great and eternal Kingdom that can never be shaken, invaded, destroyed or overthrown!***

The great news of the ending of the story is that the Great Prince of Peace will indeed come for his Bride the Church, and we will indeed live happily ever after which is the hope of every single person who has ever read so much as a fairy tale (cf. Dan. 9:25-27). The Bible tells us about the end of the story in which we are to live our lives in Revelation 21:5-9:

And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."⁶ And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."⁷ The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son.⁸ But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns

with fire and sulfur, which is the second death." ⁹ Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb."

Many Kingdoms of this world have risen and fallen (see Book of Daniel), but this Kingdom of Jesus' is an everlasting Kingdom:

^{ESV} Daniel 7:13-14: I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. ¹⁴ And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

We have read of 'The Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire' and many other empires like Rome, but we will never hear or read of the 'Fall of the Christ Empire'.

So what is the practical "Kingdom antidote" for our sinful searching for permanence and security in this present age? Jesus says:

D. ***"Sell your possessions and give to the needy..."*** (v. 33) [Imperative-Command of Jesus] ***"Be rich toward God"*** (v. 21)

Note: Jesus is not telling everyone to be paupers who are Christians. He is saying that our focus should be on the needy not ourselves, and that we must be radically faithful in our response to the reality of the riches of Christ's Kingdom (this is a similar teaching method of Jesus as when in the Sermon on the Mount he says if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off- Matt. 5:22ff).

The truth of this passage is that everyone who gives to those who are needy are becoming the very hands of God in providing for them and God will reward them greatly (see Matthew 6:1-8).

- i. Rather than being anxious, worried or fearful, we must be faithful in our giving to God and His Church!
- ii. God calls us in Christ to trust him and to serve him knowing that our ultimate search for permanence and security is found *not here* but in the eschatological Kingdom of God of which we are already a part.
- iii. Our greatest investment is not in ourselves or in anything in this present age, but it is in Christ's Church and in God's people.
- iv. The foolish man who wanted Jesus to divide up his inheritance with his brother was seeking permanence and security that was

merely temporal. He was investing merely in himself (and how many people have lived lives of misery because of greed and seeking to “get what is coming to me”). Isn’t this what the man is actually saying to Jesus: “I want my fair share”; “I want what is coming to me!”

- v. Where we invest, or what we invest in will reveal our true hearts (v. 34). (It also reveals whether we are truly all that rich!)
- vi. In contrast to this kind of teeny-weenie, mini-kingdom of me building, our lives as Kingdom disciples should be invested in other people, especially investing in the lives of others who are part of the Household of God:

^{ESV} **Galatians 6:10** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

III. Inheriting a Kingdom that Cannot Be Shaken (12:33-34)

^{ESV} **Luke 12:33-34:** *Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys.* ³⁴ *For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*

- A. What is this Eternal Kingdom of which we are heirs as believers?

As those who live in a democracy, it is hard for us to sometimes envision a monarchy. The Kingdom of God is about a monarchy; the monarchy or Sovereign Reign of God in Jesus Christ. The Kingdom that God has revealed throughout redemptive-history is His Sovereign Lordship as Creator and Redeemer.

Jesus Christ is the King who is seated on God’s Kingdom Throne at His right hand, and all those who know him by faith, ***will be heirs of his kingdom***. It is important to remember that Jesus’ main message was the proclamation-preaching of the Kingdom of God, which was the Gospel message of hope found in him (Luke 1:33, 4:43, 6:20, 7:28, 8:1, 10, 9:2, 11, 27, 60, 62. 10:9, 11, 11:2, 17, 18, 20, 12:31-32).

The Apostles Peter and John speak of Christ the King providing an entrance for believers into His eternal kingdom and that he has made us a kingdom by His grace as he prepares us for it.

^{ESV} **2 Peter 1:11** For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

^{ESV} **Revelation 1:5-6:** ...And from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood ⁶ and made us a kingdom, priests to his God and Father, to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

B. What Attitude Should Believers Have Toward this Kingdom?

a. *A Realization that God is Pleased as Our Great Shepherd to Give Us the Kingdom (v. 32):*

^{ESV} **Luke 12:32** "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.

^{ESV} **James 2:5** Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him?

^{ESV} **2 Timothy 4:18** The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

b. *A Realization that This Present World is Passing Away (along with all the benefits and treasures of living here):*

1 Corinthians 7:29-32a: This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, ³⁰ and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, ³¹ and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. *For the present form of this world is passing away.* ³² *I want you to be free from anxieties...*

^{ESV} **1 John 2:15-17:** Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride in possessions- is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ *And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

C. Treasure in this Kingdom

Theologian Herman Bavinck wrote: "The Kingdom of God is a gift granted by God according to his good pleasure [i.e. it is all of grace] (cf. v. 32; also Matthew 11:26; 16:17; 22:14; 24:22; Luke 10:20; 22:29), yet it is also a reward, a treasure in heaven, which has to be aggressively sought and gained by labor in the service of God (Matt. 5:12, 20; 6:20; 19:21; 20:1ff)" (*Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. IV: *Holy Spirit, Church and New Creation*, pg. 254).

D. An Eternal Kingdom

^{ESV} **Revelation 11:15** Then the seventh angel blew his trumpet, and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

^{ESV} **Revelation 12:10** And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

If you identify yourself with one who is searching and seeking to fulfill your dreams here on this earth, seeking permanence and security in a world passing away; if you are busy building up your own teeny-tiny, mini-kingdom of me, then repent and turn from this temporal kingdom that will never satisfy and only end up making you the fool in the end - when you and your memory perish with it!

As Jesus has taught earlier in Dr. Luke's Gospel:

^{ESV} Luke 9:25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

For all of us who seek for permanence and security in a fallen world, we must realize that we will not find here what our souls desperately long for. Rather, we will find the permanence and security in Christ Jesus- -and in Jesus Christ, we will find the greatest Eternal Treasure in living for and enjoying him!

For those who believe, it is our Father's good pleasure to give His people His eternal Kingdom yet our hearts are often set on this present temporal earth that is passing away. It is worldly folly to try and hold onto what is passing away; it is like trying to prevent the grass from withering and the flowers from fading.

Our greatest treasure is Christ himself! In him are all of the riches and wisdom of God to be found. Jesus says: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."
This is the wisdom of a disciple of Christ in a world that is fading.

Christians are those who are citizens of heaven - -literally another eternal world. Even now we are seated with Christ in the heavenly places (Eph. 2:4-8), and we are new creations (2 Cor. 5:17) that await the descent of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the Kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us be seeking this Kingdom as Jesus teaches, knowing that all other needs will be provided to us!

As the Author to the Hebrews teaches all of the believers in Jesus Christ who are citizens of heaven:

^{ESV} Hebrews 12:22-29: But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering,²³ and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the

righteous made perfect,²⁴ and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.²⁵ See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.²⁶ At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens."²⁷ This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain.²⁸ Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,²⁹ for our God is a consuming fire.

People of God: For all those who believe, the eschatological slipper will fit.

So live your lives NOT anxiously, or worried, or fearful, but in light of the end of the story; the true story that ends with all those who have trusted in Christ receiving the Eternal Treasure of the Unshakeable Kingdom.

Thanks be to God for His Word!

CRB

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