

JJ¹

Digging in an attic, some kids come across a very old map. It's a pirate's map that leads to the lost treasure of One-Eyed-Willy, a notorious pirate from long ago. And what else marks the spot on the map for the lost treasure but an "X". The kids go off on their quest, following the instructions that would lead them to the treasure. Along the way they run into all kinds of problems. Eventually they find the ship and the lost treasure, right where old One-Eyed-Willy said it would be. **"X" marked the spot!**

Most stories of treasure hunting have a main character who has devoted their entire life to finding treasure. Although I'm pretty sure none of us here today are obsessed treasure hunters, there are plenty of things that we often treasure in this world and possibly even obsess over throughout our lives. It might be things we already have and it might be things we hope to have. The idea that we need to have more than what we have to make us happy surrounds us in our culture.

Our culture says the complete opposite of what Jesus says in our text today. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor." The world around us tells us to

never be satisfied with what we have. In fact, there are plenty of messages out there that tell us to be afraid of not having enough stored up for ourselves!

Jesus plainly tells us, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." So where is your heart? Where does your treasure lie? Where does **"X" MARK THE SPOT** in your life?

This treasure hunting way of thinking and living rubs off on our lives. How many of you hope that **"X" marks the spot** whenever you buy PowerBall tickets? A man who once won the PowerBall said, "I've been waiting for this day my entire life," and then talked about how he often daydreamed about how he'd spend his treasure if he won. Who of us hasn't wasted even a little time daydreaming about what we could do with all kinds of money, even if we never buy a lottery ticket? But consider where this man sought his treasure and where his heart is at. Is your heart in the same place?

Do you treasure your bank accounts, investments or business? Do you obsess over expanding them, convinced that is what will give you peace and security in your life? If that's why you work the long hours or the extra job, then that is where your heart is. That is where **"X" marks**

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

the spot on your treasure map. Working is good. Saving is good. But it is not good when it gets in the way of the real treasures of spending time with your Lord in worship and study of his Word and spending time with your family.

Maybe you search the internet, obsessed to find the best deal possible. Yes, it is good for us to be good stewards of what God has given us, but we treasure things so much that we imagine **"X" will mark the spot** when we find the perfect deal yet waste away hours and hours in the process.

Maybe you don't have very much at all in the world's eyes. Maybe you have lost a lot of what you did have. Do you treasure the hope of having more? Do you set your heart on the things of this world and get afraid when you don't have those things?

Do you forget Jesus' beautiful words of comfort, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." When we forget this we show that the **"X"** on our personal treasure map is in the wrong place.

All these things will disappoint in the end if they are our treasure. When we die or Christ returns, whichever comes first, and we go to the **"X"** on our treasure map we will find the chest empty if we looked for our treasure in this world. In eternity there is no changing where our hearts are. There's no going back to God saying,

"Oh, now I see what I was supposed to treasure. Please, can I try again?" God's answer will always be "No. I showed you all along where your treasure was to be, where **"X"** marked the spot. Now you will go where your heart has always been."

Friends, you and I have been shown the map that leads to real treasure. We have been shown that our treasure rests in heaven. Why? Because **"X" MARKS THE SPOT!** On God's treasure map the **"X"** is Christ. And this is really neat if you permit a short Greek lesson. In the Greek language they don't have the letter **"c"**

and so the name **"Christ"** begins with an **"X"** (Χριστός). That's why on God's treasure map, which is the Bible, **"X" MARKS THE SPOT.** All of Scripture points to Christ as the source of our treasure, our eternal treasure.



Let's listen again to Jesus' words. "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom." We are the little flock of God. Jesus is our Shepherd and we are his sheep. God's flock has always been small in comparison to the numbers of people in this world. And sometimes that can even make us afraid. We might think we're the only ones left and even in danger of dying out. Sometimes we're afraid because there are so many more unbelievers than us who threaten us with mean words and behavior. But friends, we do not have to

be afraid. "...[our] Father has been pleased to give [us] the kingdom!"

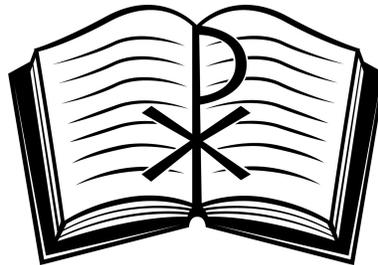
Although we are insignificant to the world, we are not insignificant to our heavenly Father. We are the sheep that he bought with the blood of his only Son! And what's more he entrusts us to the care of his Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. Through faith in Christ as our Savior the Father has given us the only treasure map that leads to the eternal treasure of eternal life! On that map **"X" MARKS THE SPOT!** It's all about Christ.

If Christ is our treasure in this life, then we know where we are going in the next life. If Christ is our treasure, then we know our hearts are in the right place. We don't have to be afraid that when we die and go to our treasure chest that we will find it empty. We will find it filled with the riches only God can give and has given to us by faith. It is a treasure that cannot wear out, be used up or be stolen from us. That is the certainty you and I have as sheep in Christ's flock. That's why the writer to the Hebrews could say, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see." (Heb. 11:1)

And now instead of chasing after the treasures of this world that will only lead to disappointment, the Lord calls on us hold on to the treasure that is ours by faith. That's why Jesus writes, "Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide

purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys."

Jesus isn't saying that we earn this treasure. He is simply telling us what our response is in knowing that our treasure is in heaven and that **"X", CHRIST, MARKS THE SPOT.** We don't have to worry about lacking any earthly needs because God has promised to give them to us. We also don't have to work about our eternal needs. Like Abraham who looked forward with joy to going home to heaven, so do we! (Heb. 11:10)



Knowing that our treasure is in heaven we are going to seek ways to use our time and other earthly treasures to grow in our faith and to bring the Word to others. It means

that we will take the time away from this world to worship and study with our fellow believers. It means that we'll find ways to take the time to have devotions and tell others about Jesus. It means that we'll put the work of God's Kingdom first in our financial priorities and then find the room for the other things of life, whatever they might be, knowing that we don't need to fear because God will take care of us.

Friends, let us thank God that he has shown us the greatest treasure map anyone could find! It is a treasure map that leads to real lasting treasure. Yes, the

treasure map of One-Eyed-Willy led those kids to an immense treasure that ended up saving their neighborhood. But that was just a story. We have a treasure map that shows us that **"X", CHRIST, MARKS THE SPOT**, and it is a treasure that has saved our eternal lives! Therefore, don't be afraid! The kingdom is ours forever! Amen.

SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for "To God Alone Be The Glory". This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn't about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.