

# Treasure Hunting

St. Luke Lutheran Church  
Winter, 2010  
Home Group Discussion #1

**...where your treasures are there your heart will be also...**

Participants in our winter home group sessions will hunt through the Bible to search out themes associated with treasures. The goal of our sessions is to see that, in addition to all the other treasures that God showers on us, our relationship with Christ is the greatest of all treasures.

A second feature of our winter home group sessions is the reinforcement of our purposes as a congregation:

**Worship:** live to please God  
**Fellowship:** be connected into God's family  
**Discipleship:** become like Jesus  
**Ministry:** serve others  
**Evangelism:** share Jesus

## **A TIME OF FELLOWSHIP:**

Make sure everyone knows each other. Welcome new comers. Spend some time catching up from the last time you were together.

Share with each other the most valuable (from a monetary standpoint) treasure you ever saw. Have you seen the Hope Diamond? Have you seen a gold bar? Have you seen the Mona Lisa?

## **A TIME OF WORSHIP:**

Have someone lead the group in a prayer of thanks for the treasures God showers on us daily.

## **A TIME OF DISCIPLESHIP: *Hunting the Treasure of the Bible: Pearls***

Pearls form when mollusks react to an irritant, more likely an invading parasite than a grain of sand, by covering that irritant with succeeding layers of calcium carbonate (CaCO<sub>3</sub>) and a substance called conchiolin. Natural pearls are quite rare. This rarity accounts for their great value. Cultured pearls grow in oyster farms. Generally a cultured pearl is formed by inserting a small bead into an oyster onto which it secretes a few layers calcium carbonate and conchiolin. Cultured pears take at least six months to grow. (Wikipedia, of course)

The Greek word for pearl comes into English as Margaret. (For What It's Worth Department.)

## **Read (in this order) the following passages about pearls:**

**Revelation 21:15-27; Matthew 13:44-46; Matthew 7:1-6**

See there really are "pearly gates!" *Who is it that enters the gates of pearls?* Discuss this. (The obvious answer is the right one.) The understanding of this is crucial for proper understanding of the other two passages.

Look again now at the Matthew 13:44-46 passage. Generally people have considered the Gospel or the Kingdom of God to be both the treasure and the pearl and that we should give up everything we have to go and get them. Discuss how that approach sounds "unChristian."

Another understanding of both the treasure and the pearl is that they are symbols for the people of God or the Church. The one who sells all and acquires the treasure and the pearl is God at work in Jesus. Discuss whether or not that sounds more correct.

Now look again at Matthew 7:1-6. Generally the part about the pearl is understood as not wasting your time on people who are not “worth it.” Discuss how that approach sounds “unChristian.”

Another understanding of this is that the pearls that are not to be cast before swine are Christian brothers and sisters. That idea is that we should not harshly judge fellow Christians and “throw them under the bus” or cast them before swine (pitch them to the unbelieving world.) Discuss whether or not that sounds more correct given the context of verses 1-6.

Spend some time reflecting on what “pearls of wisdom” you’ll take home with you tonight.

### **A TIME OF MINISTRY**

Are we sometimes too critical of and harsh with fellow Christians? Are there fellow Christians with whom we are embarrassed or reluctant to be associated? Should we see one another as God in Christ sees us: pearls of great price?

During the course of this week make it a point to let three other Christians know what a great treasure they are.

### **A TIME OF EVANGELISM**

The Gospel of Jesus is a great and free treasure! We want all people to experience it. During our winter home group sessions we want groups to figure out a way that they can engage with the community outside the Church to bear witness to this great treasure. Begin to discuss what sort of activity, event or project you could do that would do that.

*Develop an informal “road rally treasure hunt” that includes neighbors and friends.*

*Help someone spruce up a room or a house so it shines.*

*Have an event that affirms for police or fire fighters or health care workers that they are community treasures.*

*Send “unChristmas letters” to family and friends to let them know you treasure them and to share the treasure of Christ.*

*Volunteer in a homeless shelter or soup kitchen or second hand thrift shop to let people know that all are treasured by Christ.*

*Volunteer at the International Student Friendship House as we treasure people from around the world.*

### **CLOSING**

Make sure you have your next date set. Make sure that you share the responsibility of bringing treats.

Share any needs or concerns for which you need prayer in the coming week.

Have someone close with prayer.