

Church Family Newsletter 28th April 2020

Dear Church Family,

As part of our evolving lockdown ministry we have been thinking how we can encourage each other mid week. As part of that we are starting some short reflections by email so we can encourage our faith during the week. I hope this might create an opportunity for us all to regularly fix our eyes on our Lord through this.

-Rev Brendan

Reader Roy Goodship reflects...

When I was a boy I was fascinated by the idea of hidden treasure. Some of my young friends thought they knew where to find it. We never did find it but I thought that one day I would discover where it was and I would be made for life. It was the most valuable thing I could think of.

Later on, when I was a teenager and when I was old enough to go to the pub my father took me there on a Thursday evening. He would meet with his old friends there and invariably the conversation came round to discussing what was most important or most valuable in life. One of them would say – 'well, as long as you have your health that's all that matters'. Another would say that a happy family is the main thing. My father would usually say it was money that he really needed to be satisfied. I remember I wanted to say 'hang on. What really matters is becoming a Christian!' I realised all these other things miss the point entirely.

Later I discovered the famous statement of the apostle Paul who said 'I count all things as loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ my Lord' Philippians 3 v 8. I can see now I did not have the courage to tell this to the men in the pub. Of course we know that Jesus taught us this 'Do not to lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal but lay 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 will be your heart also' Matthew 6.19. But the contrast between what the world can offer and what God offers has always been stated in scripture.

When we look at the wisdom literature in the Old Testament, we see what makes sense and what is fundamentally true. Proverbs 15.16 says 'Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it'. In ancient times there were no banks or safes and so people would bury their treasure or valuables in the ground for safekeeping. Of course, the trick was to remember where you buried them. This helps to explain what Jesus said about hidden treasure in Matthew 13.44 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field'.

Now in these days when we have to self-isolate we are spending more time quietly on our own or with our family members. Perhaps it is good to reflect while we are away from the usual rush of life and ask ourselves if we really have grasped the importance of the treasure from heaven. I will use a phrase which Boris Johnson seems to like. He says 'I want to level with you'. Well in that vein, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ as your saviour and Lord? Here is where you will find the treasure. May our sentiments echo those of the psalmist Psalm 73.25 says 'Whom have I in heaven but thee and there is nothing upon the earth that I desire besides thee'.