

“Unearth Your Buried Treasure”

Matthew 25:14-30

Series: MORE – Finding Your Personal Calling and Living Life to the Fullest Measure

Week 3: My Core Position

The Rev. Dr. Douglas C. Hoglund

The Woodside Church

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They called him the Wolf, which is a funny name for someone who herds sheep. While chasing his sheep, Muhammad the Wolf and his cousin stumbled upon one of the greatest discoveries of the twentieth century: the Dead Sea Scrolls. For two thousand years, these Biblical and religious manuscripts lay hidden in the caves of the Judean desert. They include the oldest versions of the Old Testament, easily a thousand years earlier than anything they had in 1947. Over the next years Bedouins and archeologists found scrolls and fragments from 900 documents stashed away in eleven caves.

One scroll is unlike all the others. It's the only one written on metal not animal skin. It's called the Copper Scroll. After two thousand years it was impossible to unroll. So the scholars did the unthinkable: they cut it into pieces. When they opened it up what they read was astounding: a list of buried treasure hidden in 64 different spots.

Location 2: In the funerary shrine, in the third course of stones: 100 gold ingots.

Location 3: In the large pit that is within the court of the peristyle, in the gutter of its bottom, sealed in the entrenchment opposite the upper door: 900 talents.

Location 50: Under Absalom's Monument, on the west side, dig 12 cubits: 80 talents.

In all, scholars total up 4,630 talents of gold and silver. Originally a talent was a weight like a pound. The Copper Scroll, they estimate, reveals the whereabouts of up to 174 tons of gold, silver and precious metals. Where did it all come from? These may be the lost treasures from Herod's Temple, the Temple Jesus visited. Before the Romans burned it to the ground in 70 A.D., the priests may have buried the gold, silver and precious items all over the Holy Land and the Copper Scroll is the map they left. Treasure hunters have combed caves and graves looking for these buried riches. How much treasure have they found so far? Not a single shekel. It's still waiting out there for you. Isn't the thought of so much gold and silver buried in the ground teasing, tantalizing, tempting?

Well since you can't book a flight to Israel right now, let me say you already have a buried treasure in your possession. In fact, it's buried in you. Today, I invite you to come along on the greatest treasure hunt of your life. If you unearth this treasure it will change the way you live. You'll be far richer than if you found all the treasure of the Copper Scroll. You can only hold those treasures for a lifetime. This treasure is eternal.

In our series MORE: Find Your Personal Calling and Live Life to the Fullest Measure we discover Jesus' primary calling for us is to BE a child of God and a disciple of Jesus who makes disciples of Jesus. This is what we are called to DO. Today we

examine the third part of our sweetspot – Where God created us to GO. Where are we called to GO and make disciples? Right where we are. Putting these three together: our primary calling is a Child of God and a Disciple of Jesus (BE) who makes disciples of Jesus (DO) right where we are (GO).

Now that doesn't sound like much of a treasure. Yet consider this: Jesus offers us a full, abundant eternal life. No amount of gold can make you live forever. All the gold in the world is not enough to afford an eternal retirement. And no gold will follow you into eternity. You can't take it with you. What's more, we all know the really valuable things in life are not things but people. When a person dies, their obituary may mention one's accomplishments, it rarely lists one's assets, but it always includes one's relationships. Howard Hughes was one of the wealthiest persons in history. In today's dollars his estate would be worth 6 billion. Yet he died a recluse, isolated and alone.

The treasure God freely offers is a loving relationship with Him, an abundant life here and eternal life hereafter. And what do we do with that treasure? Too often, believers bury it. Well it's time to dig it up. The treasure map for this hunt is tucked away in the 25th chapter of Matthew's Gospel. Jesus says,

Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents of money, to another two talents, and to another one talent, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. The man who had received the five talents went at once and put his money to work and gained five more. So also, the one with the two talents gained two more. But the man who had received the one talent went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. (Matthew 25:14-18).

As I mentioned, a talent did not originally mean an ability like singing, painting or text messaging. A talent was a measurement like a pound. It usually referred to a weight of precious metals like gold or silver. One talent of gold could be as much as a million dollars. So this Master turns over a large amount of money to each of his servants. Instead of depositing it in the bank to earn interest, he wants the servants to do something with it. The first two servants multiply the money. The third buries it in the ground.

So what happens when the Master returns? When the first two servants bring in double what they were given they both receive the exact same words of praise.

'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'
Matthew 25:21, 23

The treasure Jesus, your Master, places in your hands is a full, abundant eternal life. He wants you to **Take a Risk and Share It**. The only way the first two servants can double their money is by taking a risk and investing it in their village. Imagine the difference millions of dollars will make in those struggling communities. Through the CARES Act and the Payroll Protection Plan our government is investing billions of dollars to get shuttered businesses back up and running. If you received the full life of Jesus, God

wants you to take a risk and share it with others. He gives you a relationship with Him – a relationship of love, joy and peace, a relationship of forgiveness, grace and salvation. He wants you to share it. Please notice the Master in the parable is not concerned about the results. The first servant returns ten talents while the second returns four, yet both receive the same praise: “Well done good and faithful servant! Come share your master’s happiness.”

The one thing that does not make the Master happy is when you keep the full life of Jesus to yourself. **Don’t Be Afraid and Bury It.** When the third servant settles accounts he can truthfully say he has not lost a single shekel.

Then the man who had received one talent came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’ Matthew 25:24-25

Does he receive a modest compliment for his caution? Nope!

His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest. Matthew 25:26-27

Why did the third servant play it safe? He claims to be afraid of the Master and even accuses him of being a thief. Yet that’s just an excuse. This Master who freely hands out huge funds and cares little for the return on his investment is no cut throat swindler.

And neither is God. He pours out all the treasures of heaven, even the life of His Son, to bring us home. And when we come home at the end of our days He will not ask us how much we achieved, acquired or amassed. He will simply ask, “Did you invite anyone to come with you?” He doesn’t care about the results. He wants to know if you took a risk and shared the full life with those around you. Why don’t we share this abundant treasure? We’re afraid – not of God but of people. We’re afraid they will reject us, criticize us, laugh at us, or judge us.

It can happen. Let me try to take away some of the fear. When you share God’s gift, you’re not judging others, proving you’re right, or selling them anything. You are simply sharing a gift. You don’t need to convince them to be members of your church. You are not trying to make them your disciple. You’re leading them to Jesus. Picture it like this: a great doctor in a lab just developed a vaccine for the coronavirus and gives you an unlimited supply to share with everyone. Will you bury it in the ground or give it out to everyone around you?

To whom does God want you to give His cure? Where does God want you to GO and make disciples? Right where you are. Do you realize the Master not only gives you the priceless treasure of abundant eternal life, He also places in your care people with whom to share it? There are at least 50 people whom you can bless with God’s treasure.

1. Make a list of all the titles and roles you currently play in life. Mine would be husband, father, grandfather, son, brother, guitar player, pastor, Beatles fan, coffee addict, creation lover, biking, etc...
2. For each title and role list the names of specific people connected to it.
3. Could you join new groups to meet people? Gym, sports team, arts group, etc...
4. Now pray over the names and groups. This is your mission field, the place God calls you to GO and make disciples.

So how do you make disciples?

1. Be Filled with Jesus: let the full life of Jesus be in you and overflow to others
2. Spend time with 2 or 3 friends who are not yet followers of Jesus
3. Share your story: when it's right, briefly tell the difference Jesus makes in your life
4. Ask them to come along and follow Jesus with you and a group of believers
5. Read and Practice God's Word together
6. Pass it on by encouraging them to share with friends who are not yet followers of Jesus

Who are 2 or 3 people you could help receive Jesus' full life and follow Him? Begin praying for them.

One simple way to share the treasure where you are, even with social distancing, is to host a Worship Party on Zoom. If you have a Zoom account, invite family and friends to watch the Woodside worship service with you online. Go to our website, click on the worship service and share your screen with them. Then pause the video to pray together. Have some fellowship afterwards. We may not be able to get back to the building into the summer. So let's form micro churches all over the community and even around the world. The coronavirus can't stop us from making disciples.

Every Wednesday morning at 6:30, I gather with four guys: Andrew, Mike, Gordon and Vince. Before CoVid19 we met at RJ Bagels near my house. Now we meet on Zoom. They all are pretty new to Woodside. In fact all four are pretty new to church. Either they didn't grow up in church, left church years ago, or were hurt by the church in the past. Now we are following Jesus together. We check in with each other and read the Bible together. The discussion is real, raw and amazing. These guys who once were not interested in church at all are now walking with the Lord. Here is what Vince DiPalma shared about the difference Jesus is making in his life.

I grew up in a typical Italian American household in North Jersey, but I was never really into religion and Sunday school was my worst enemy. From the beginning I was offended by how my religion consistently made me feel sinful and ashamed. That feeling alone was enough to turn me away from any type of religious belief. I guess you can say I was angry and confused on what to believe, so I didn't

believe in anything and I carried that feeling all through high school, college and my young adult years. It wasn't until about 2.5 years ago that I had a sudden change of heart to allow God into my life and into my children's lives and decided to become a member of the Woodside church. Now I'm part of a wonderful and caring community at Woodside and have recently found myself missing the Sunday AM live service! Never thought I would be saying that, but the power of God is amazing.

Don't bury God's treasure. Take a risk and share it.

“Unearth Your Buried Treasure” Worksheet

Series: MORE – Find Your Personal Calling and Live Life to the Fullest Measure
Week 3. My Core Position (GO)

With Whom Does God Want Me to Share His Full Life?

1. Make a list of all the titles and roles you currently play in life
2. For each title and role list next to it the names of specific people connected to it.
3. Could you join new groups to meet people? Gym, sports team, arts group, etc...
4. Now pray over the names and groups. This is your mission field the place God calls you to GO and make disciples.

How to Make Disciples of Jesus

Be Filled with Jesus: let the full life of Jesus be in you and overflow to others

Spend time with 2 or 3 friends who are not yet followers of Jesus

Share your story: when it's right, briefly tell the difference Jesus makes in your life

Ask them to come along and follow Jesus with you and a group of believers

Read and Practice God's Word together

Pass it on by encouraging them to share with friends who are not yet followers of Jesus

Choose 2 or 3 people you could help receive Jesus' full life and follow Him. Begin praying for them.

Host a Worship Party on Zoom – invite friends and family to join you whenever you watch the Woodside worship services.