The Treasure of Christmas

In 1830, a farmer named Prosper Taurin made a remarkable discovery while plowing a field near the village of Berthouville, France. Buried beneath the ground was a collection of 90 ancient silver treasures, including beautifully decorated bowls, cups, pitchers, and even a statue made of silver and gold. The treasures dated back to the Roman Empire and are considered among the finest surviving examples of ancient Roman silverwork. One collection included nine pieces of ornate silver dinnerware, apparently brought to the region by a wealthy Roman traveler. Imagine carrying all that silver across Europe! I'm certainly glad I wasn't the donkey responsible for hauling it all that way.

Now, why would someone bury such a magnificent treasure? We don't know for certain. Maybe they were living through uncertain times and wanted to protect their valuables from thieves or invading armies. Whatever the reason, the treasures remained hidden for centuries. Until one day, a farmer uncovered them.

Now, think about that for a moment. Mr. Taurin wasn't searching for buried treasure that morning. He was simply going about his life, attending to his responsibilities, and doing all the things that needed to be done. Then, right in the middle of it all, something wonderful happened. A treasure he hadn't even known existed suddenly presented itself. I imagine that whatever else he had on his plate that day, his responsibilities must have seemed a little lighter!

That got me thinking about Christmas. Because there's something remarkably similar about the story of the shepherds on that first Christmas night. They weren't expecting anything unusual, either. They were simply watching over their flocks when an angel suddenly appeared with wonderful news: “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.” (Luke 2:10–11)

What an amazing gift! In Jesus Christ, God had come among us, revealing the wonderful depth of his love and grace. God's greatest gift isn't something we have to search for or earn. It's a gift freely given and received through faith, right in the middle of our everyday lives. And after seeing the Christ child, the shepherds returned to their lives, glorifying and praising God for everything they had experienced. Their responsibilities hadn't necessarily changed, but something within them certainly had.

Just as I imagine that farmer's discovery changed the way he experienced the rest of his day, receiving God's love can change the way we experience our lives. Our responsibilities may remain the same, and the challenges we face may not disappear. But knowing that God loves us, walks beside us, and sustains us through his grace can make even the heaviest burdens easier to bear.

How? As that love becomes more deeply rooted in our lives, it shapes who we are. It changes the way we see the world and relate to one another. Our relationships become richer. Our compassion grows deeper. And our presence in the lives of others becomes a blessing in ways we may not even recognize. In the friendships we share, the opportunities to serve alongside one another, and those wonderful moments when we can simply enjoy being together, we discover that God's love enriches our lives in countless ways.

So, as we celebrate Christmas this year, it's my prayer that each of us would take a little time to meditate upon the extraordinary treasure God has given us in Jesus Christ. And may that gift continue to enrich our lives, deepen our relationships, and bless the lives of everyone we encounter.

I'm looking forward so much to my first Christmas season with all of you!

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Jonathan