

**Reeks:** Hoe Bestuur jy jou Hart...

**Titel:** ... *A Devoted Heart*

**Prediker:** Trevor Hudson

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**mosaïek**

daniellestraat, fairland 2030  
posbus 1658, fairland 2030  
t: 011 268 4700  
f: 011 268 4800  
info@mosaïek.com  
www.mosaïek.com

What I want to do this morning is something very, very simple but very, very important. I want to invite you to reflect with me on something that is absolutely central to our lives. I want to ask you the question what is it that you really treasure in life. What is it in life that really has the devotion of your heart?

The other evening we were sitting around at the supper table. The whole family were together, and because I knew that I was going to preach on this theme I thought I would try and get a sermon illustration or get some material, so I asked my family a question. I said to them, you know, if this house was burning down right now, what one thing would you take from this burning house, and as I asked the family this question our two dogs, they must have picked up our conversation, because they got up off the couch and they walked across to us, Pebbles and Dodger.

Now, I need to say to you, Pebbles and Dodger are very important in our home and in our lives. I'll never forget one morning, it must have been early one morning, about one o'clock in the morning, I felt Debbie stroking my face. I'll never forget that. Now, when Debbie strokes my face at one o'clock in the morning, I can't believe that, you know. How lucky can a man get? And so I'll never forget, I woke up and I said, yes, Debs, and she said, sorry, sorry, I thought you were Pebbles. So Pebbles and Dodger are very important in our house, evident. So anyway, I asked the family: what one thing would you take? So at that moment the two dogs come across and my son, Mark, looks at them and says, Dodger, I'll take you. Pebbles, sorry, you'll have to burn.

What would you take if your house was burning down? What one thing would you take? What is your treasure? What has captured the devotion of your heart, really? Now, friends, it's against this backdrop this morning that I want to explore with you some words that Jesus speaks, and I want us to take these words very seriously. I often say that one of the great tragedies today in the church is that we don't take the words of Jesus seriously.

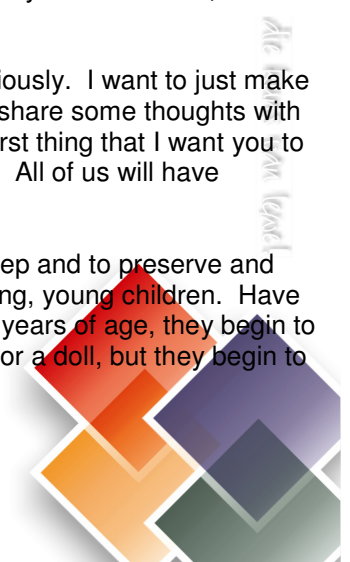
We receive Jesus Christ into our life as saviour, and that is wonderful, and that is important. We receive Jesus into our life as our friend and as our companion. That's wonderful, but often we don't receive Jesus as our teacher, as our teacher, as our living teacher, and all I want to say, friends, today, is that if Jesus is the Lord of life, if we really believe that, if we believe that Jesus is Lord of life and death, then Jesus possesses the best information on what is most important in life.

And one of the wisest things that you and I can do, I really believe this, one of the wisest things that we can do is to take the words of Jesus with the utmost seriousness, and to begin to build our lives around His words. Jesus once said that if we build our life upon His teaching we build our life upon a rock and not upon sand, so that when the storms come, when the winds blow, our house will stand firm, if we build our lives on His teachings and His words.

Now, look with me briefly at His teachings about treasures. Let me just read them to you. He says to us, do not store... do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but store your... but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal, for where your treasure is, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now, what I'm going to do is very simple this morning. I want us to take those words seriously. I want to just make some observations. I have lived with those words now for a few days, and I just want to share some thoughts with you, and as I do that I pray that Jesus will speak a living word into our lives today. The first thing that I want you to notice is that Jesus assumes, He makes an assumption that all of us will have treasures. All of us will have treasures.

Treasures are those things that we value. Treasures are those things that we seek to keep and to preserve and look after. We all have treasures. I don't know how many parents there are here, of young, young children. Have you noticed, it isn't long before our children, and they can be very young, a year old, two years of age, they begin to have treasures? Have you noticed that? Sometimes it's a blanket or a pillow or a teddy or a doll, but they begin to



treasure something, and one of the deepest things we do as parents is to respect the treasure space of our children.

We do incredible damage to the souls of children when we play around with their treasures. Children have their treasures, and sometimes those treasures... some of you, I'm sure, have got teddies that you had as children, and there may be no monetary value, but you will not let that teddy go because it's a treasure.

The other day I was running through the streets of Benoni and it was pouring with rain, pouring, and as I ran through the park trying to get home quickly there was a homeless man, and I watched him. It was raining. He had taken off his clothes. He was in his boxer shorts and he was soaping himself. He was having a shower in the rain, poignant, and nearby I could see his trolley, and in that trolley I knew were his treasures, and I have a hunch that that man would die for what was in that trolley.

Treasures are important. We all have treasures. It's part of being human. I'm not a psychologist, and I wonder if there are some psychologists here, but I sometimes wonder whether we begin to get depressed, whether we begin to despair, when we feel we've got nothing to treasure anymore. What are your treasures? What do you treasure? What has captured the devotion of your heart, of your heart?

Now notice secondly that Jesus says it's unwise, it's unwise to store up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. Notice, He doesn't say it's wrong, He doesn't say it's bad, He doesn't say it's sinful. He simply says it's not wise. It's not wise to make a treasure of something that you can lose. It's not wise. It's almost setting yourself up for disappointment, for loss, for tragedy, for pain. And then He makes that very bold statement. Store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust cannot destroy, and where the taxman cannot go, where thieves cannot break in and spoil.

What does Jesus mean when He says that? What does it mean to store up treasures in heaven? What does it mean? Can I suggest it means this? It means that I begin to give my energy, my time, my resources, my money, to that which lasts forever. I begin to invest myself in that which is eternal. I begin to give energy, effort, time, money, to that which can never be stolen, that can never disappear, that will be kept safe with God forever. That's what it means to store up treasure in heaven.

Let me unpack that a bit. Let me be practical. It means I begin to invest time and money and effort in my relationship with Jesus Christ, and through Jesus Christ with God. I begin to give time to it. I begin to invest money in it. I give energy to it. It's the... I'll never forget being invited to go into a home in Bedfordview, never forget. This was a few years ago. I didn't know the family. They made a phone call. The man in the house was dying, a young man in his fifties. For me that's young. The family had called me.

I had never, ever been in such a wonderful home, wonderful home. Opulent, beautiful, but I'll never forget sitting with this man, at his bedside, and his one sentence which has stayed with me forever, he said simply to me these words: I do not know God. I do not know God. He had spent his whole life growing rich in things, but not in God. There was a poverty of soul. Unwise, it's unwise. I store up treasures in heaven, does this make sense, when I invest in people, when I invest in people.

People are going to be in heaven, and when I invest in a human being I'm investing in that which will be eternal. When I invest in the lives of my children, when I invest in my own life, when I invest in the lives of people roundabout me I am making an eternal investment, eternal. I'm not wasting my money. I'm not wasting my time. I'm not wasting my energy. I store up treasures in heaven when I take what I do every day.

What do you do every day? What do you do every day? Maybe you are a pathologist. Maybe you're a chartered accountant. Maybe you are an engineer. Maybe you are a consultant. Maybe you are a psychologist. I don't know what you are, but when I use what I do to create more value, when I take what I do every day to contribute to the common good, that is eternal. God will keep that safe forever, forever.

I store up treasures in heaven when I care for this physical earth. That sounds strange, but it's true. God loves this earth and God will treasure it. God's hand will always be upon this earth, and one day there's going to be a new heaven and a new earth. Can I invite you today to begin to store up treasures in heaven, in that which lasts forever?



One of the reasons I give money... I take a certain percentage of my income every month. I don't know about you, but every month I take a certain percentage of my income and I invest it in the life of the local church, and I do that because it's so often within the local church that people are discovering God, that people's lives are changing, and I know that my currency is becoming eternal as it gets used for those purposes. Now, the church is not the only place where that happens, but it is one important place. That's why I do that. I want to store up treasure in heaven. I want to invest my money, my energy, my time, my resource, my skill, in that which will never disappear and never be stolen, and never be taken away.

Notice one last thing. I was astounded what I saw this. I've often got this wrong. Notice that Jesus says that where our treasure is, there is our heart, that where our treasure is, that is where the devotion of our hearts lies. I thought it whereas the other way around, didn't you, that where my heart is, that's where my treasure is going to be, but Jesus doesn't say that. Jesus says, where my treasure is, that's where my heart is. Jesus knows how we tick. He knows that whatever we give money to, whatever we give money to, whatever we give energy to; that is where our heart is. That is where our heart is. Whatever our treasure is, that is where our heart is.

When I was 52 years of age I bought my first home. It was a massive moment in my life, massive. My mom and dad had never owned property, and to know the dignity of ownership at the age of 52 was a remarkable experience. It was a wonderful experience for Debbie and I. But I noticed something change in myself when I bought our first home. It began to become a treasure. I began to take an interest in property prices in the area. I just began to... I began to grow a deep attachment to this house, and somehow Jesus' words have always echoed in the back of my mind. Trevor, where your treasure is, that is where your heart is as well.

If you want to know where my heart is, don't ask me. Just watch me during the week. If I want to know where your heart is I won't ask you, I'll just watch you. It's where you give your money. It's where you invest your energy. It's where you invest your time. That is where your heart is. Your heart always follows your treasure, not the other way round. So let me begin to pull this together again. Let me just pull it together. Where do your treasures lie? Where do your treasures lie? What has captured the devotion of your heart?

I want to invite you, friends, today, to take seriously again the words of Jesus. He is the Lord of life. He is the Lord of life. He knows more about money than Suze Orman, He really does, and she knows a lot. Jesus knows more. Jesus is the wisest person who has ever lived, ever lived. He has got the best information on the most important issues that you and I face every day, and when I begin to take His words seriously, and when I begin to build my life on His words, I build on a rock, not on sand.

Can I ask you a question, and here's my challenge. What one thing can you do this week that will begin to build up treasure in heaven? And I don't know what your step will be, but what one thing can you start doing this week to build up treasure in heaven? Maybe it would... maybe it involves just taking your relationship with God seriously this week, beginning to think about it, put time and energy into it.

Maybe it begins... it will mean an investment of your time in the life of another human being. Maybe it will mean seeing your career in a new way. How does my career contribute to the common good? How does it create value? Maybe it will be a decision to invest some of your resource in the work of the local congregation here at Mosaic. I don't know. Think about it. How are you going to build up treasures in heaven this week?

But what I promise you is this: that when I begin to build up treasures in heaven I step into a new world. I step into a new world of genuine security. I've got things now in my life that no one can ever take away, ever. I step into a world of radical freedom. I'm no longer attached to things. I step into a world of profound joy. I step into a world of incredible miracles as soon as I begin to build up treasures in heaven. What does that mean for you today?

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus Christ, we thank You that You speak words of life into our hearts and into our minds, and in a world where there are just so many confusing and conflicting voices You speak a word of wisdom, of clarity. You help us to make sense of this little life that we have here on planet earth, and so, Lord, today we want to embrace You. We want to embrace You as our Saviour, our friend, and also as our teacher.

Lord, will You teach us how to live? Will You shine the light of your wisdom into our lives? Will You show each one of us practically how we can begin to build up treasures in heaven, where they can never disappear, where no one can steal them, and where You, oh God, will keep them safe forever? So, Lord, we open our lives to You. May



your spirit come and may your word find its place in our hearts today. This is our prayer and we offer it to You with all the love and all the longing of our hearts, in the name of Jesus, amen. Amen.

Friends, I hope that when you sit around the dinner table at lunchtime today you'll ask a question of your family. If this house was burning down, what would I take with me? May the joy of Christ be with you. Take care, God bless.



*die leuens van leuel*

