

Sermon Text: Gospel Reading – Luke 12: 22 – 35

Sermon Title: Where is your heart?

My brothers and sisters in Christ, last week Jesus **taught us** about temporal rest and eternal rest – a physical retirement and a spiritual retirement.

 This morning He **gathers us to Himself** and **teaches us** to

 guard our hearts against the treasures of this world

 while opening them wide for the eternal treasure

† that God **has prepared** and

† **is pleased to freely give us** for Christ's sake.

 He speaks **clearly, concisely, and forcefully** to you and me this morning for **He knows** that

 the sin we have inherited from Adam

 and the sin we commit

 seek to rest within and flow from a dark, deceitful, rebellious and unrepentant heart

 that strives first and foremost to gratify itself.

 He **speaks clearly, concisely and forcefully** to you and me this morning for **He knows** that

 He **gives us anew** His words of life,

 He **reminds us** of our baptism,

 and He **even now prepares to sustain, strengthen and safeguard** us with

† His true body and blood

† that with a clean heart and a right spirit

† we would strive first and foremost receive

† the true, the priceless, the eternal treasure

† **prepared for us** by our heavenly Father from before the foundation of the world.

The Good Shepherd **gathered His disciples close to Himself** on that day to **continue**

 their **catechesis** –

 their **spiritual instruction** –

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 their **spiritual growth**

 in preparation for continuing the advancement of the kingdom of God

 after His **death, resurrection and ascension** to the right hand of God.

 Jesus had encountered temptation after His baptism:

 temptation to mistrust God's provision and turn stones into bread;

 temptation to doubt God's protection and throw Himself off the pinnacle of the temple,

 and then the temptation for worldly fame, power and position in exchange for idolatry.

 Jesus' ministry was plagued with those that sought to seize Him:

 some to proclaim Him king and reap the wealth as a civic or religious leader,

 some to test His knowledge of the Law,

 some to seek Him as an arbitrator or judge,

 and some to

† stone Him as a blasphemer,

† disburse His disciples,

† and extinguish His ministry.

 Our Lord **navigated** the snares and the lure of earthly treasures by

 **faithfully doing** the will of Him who sent Him,

 **unhesitatingly speaking** the mind of Him who sent Him,

 and **steadfastly doing** the work of Him who sent Him

 for Jesus **perfectly loves**

† the Father

† and those that the Father **has given Him**.

 He **continued** His ministry of **preaching, teaching and healing**

 while continuing to **teach, exhort and correct** His disciples,

 to include Judas Iscariot who would betray Him

† to the Jewish religious leaders

† for the palsy treasure of thirty pieces of silver.

 He **held His disciples in close, intimate and loving fellowship**

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 until the hour appointed for Him to **travel alone** the last distance of the Path of Life that brought Him

-  before religious and civil rulers,
-  the brutal scourging by Roman soldiers,
-  the sin-filled shame of the cross
-  the divine cup of wrath
-  and rest in the grave meant for another.

 He **continued the last hours** by Himself **after ensuring** none of His disciples were arrested with Him.

 He who **knew no sin**

-  was condemned and forced into the **fellowship** of two wanton criminals
-  **hung** upon the cursed tree
-  **announced** forgiveness to the repentant criminal
-  and **promised** him eternal treasure with Him in paradise.

 He did all this

-  For Adam,
-  for His disciples,
-  for Judas Iscariot,
-  for the religious and civil rulers,
-  for the Roman soldiers,
-  for the two wanton criminals crucified with Him that day,
-  for you,
-  and for me.

 His heart and His treasure are **perfectly and eternally** safeguarded and secured:

-  His kingdom is not of this world,
-  His brothers and sisters are not of the flesh or the will of a man,
-  His royal clothing is not made by human hands of woven cloth or adorned with precious stones and jewels,
-  His table is not set with food and drink by slaves or for temporal royalty,
-  and His treasure is not exposed to corruption or theft.

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 Jesus' heart is **always set**

 on our heavenly Father who **sent Him** to save mankind
 and on you and me

† for we are the holy people that **He secured** for God the
Father

† by His **innocent suffering and death on the cross** –

 on the **eternal fellowship** of God and man at His table.

 Jesus' heart **trusted** God's justice and love

 would not allow an

† **innocent** man,

† a **righteous** man,

† a **faithful** man

 to remain under the power of death

 but **raised Him up** as the first born of the death

 and **rewarded Him** for His labors by

† **seating Him** at His right hand

† where now He **rules** over heaven and earth,

† at the appointed time He will **return in glory** with His
angels to **judge the living and the dead**,

† and He **will bring all** God's holy ones, you and me,
into eternal fellowship with God at His table.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus **calls us** to

 keep our hearts set on God

 as He **leads us** on the Path of Life

 through this world of corruptible and defenseless treasures

 to our heavenly treasure.

 Our Lord **exhorts us** to open wide our hearts

 for God **desires to abide and fellowship** with you and me

 from this day forth

 until the end of time

 and then in eternity.

 He **comes bearing the heavenly treasure**

 of His Word and His sacraments

 that we would be **sustained, strengthened, safeguarded and comforted** with them in this life

 by the power of the Holy Spirit.

 He **exhorts** us to seek, to ponder, to consider that:

 in Baptism God

† **placed** His name upon us,

† **joined** us to Jesus

‡ in a death like His

‡ and raised us up in a resurrection like His

† **freed us** from

‡ sin,

‡ death,

‡ and the power of the devil

† **clothed** us with His righteousness

† and **gives** us the power to be called the children of God;

 At His table He **graciously and generously feeds** us –

† children of the one **true**, the **almighty** and the **merciful**
God

† and His brothers and sisters

† His body and His blood

† For the forgiveness of our sins,

† True and eternal life

† salvation

† here in time

† and with all the saints in glory;

 He continues to

† **catechize** us –

† **instruct** us –

† **prepare us** –

† for the work the heavenly Father gives you and me

† in His kingdom

† during this time of grace.

 He **assures** you and me that in all this

 our heavenly treasure is both

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† a **present reality**

† as well as a **future promise**

† for God is **pleased to dwell**

† with us and in us

† here in time

† and in heaven for eternity.

Amen and Amen