

Discipleship Fever: Disciple-Making as Treasure Seeking

Luke 12:32–34 | 01.15.2017 | Rhythms of Mercy @OBC

What would compel someone . . .

. . . to pull a five-hundred pound sled over a stretch of ice, strewn with boulders and logs, then cross a river on a couple trees laid side by side . . .

. . . to climb a mountain 1,000 feet in the air w/ 60- mph winds at 65-degree-below 0

. . . then build a boat and travel some five hundred miles down ice-cold river in the middle of nowhere

. . . all the while . . . leaving family thousands of miles behind in order to risk life and limb in frozen spaces of North West Canada.

The answer comes in one word: [GOLD!](#)

In 1897 GOLD FEVER swept the globe.

Reports came out that summer . . . that miners had “brought home sacks -- even crates – of gold” from cold mountains of the Yukon.

The result was a gold rush that led more than 100,000 on this gold stampede.

Fred Dewey was but one such gold-seeker. And his journal records his motivation:

"My feet are sore, my heels are blistered, my legs sore and lame, my hands, neck, shoulders, sore and chafed from rope. But boys, don't think I'm discouraged...there is a golden glimmer in the distance."

Compelled by this “get rich quick” scheme . . . Dewey and his fellow pilgrims risked their lives in search of gold.

Tragically, most who made the journey went home with empty pockets.

More tragically, many who sought earthly riches lost their lives in pursuit of gold.

But most tragic of all . . . is the fact that the vast accumulation of perishable treasure provided a greater incentive to . . .

Than . . . the sure promise of eternal rewards for those who seek first the kingdom of God . . . and who lay up treasure in heaven.

120 years later . . . the golden trail is scattered with ancient tools and run down graves.

The world has left the Yukon behind ... **But make no mistake quest for treasure continues**

The only question is . . . WHAT'S YOUR TREASURE??

What do you chase after?

What do you value so much . . . you are willing to risk / sacrifice to get it.

For whatever your treasure is . . . you WILL chase hard after it!

If it Yukon Gold . . . you'll dig 50 feet through permafrost to find it.

If your treasure is personal success . . . it will drive your studies, work, hobbies.

If your treasure is time with family . . . you'll pay the extra toll fare to get home an hour earlier.

If it is comfort & ease . . . you might work yourself to the bone, so you can retire early

Whatever your treasure . . . this truth remains:

Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Wherever your heart is . . . it will drive everything else.

It is not what you know or have been taught that will drive you.

Ultimately . . . it is your heart.

Whatever your heart loves . . . is who you will become.

Whatever your heart envisions as lovely . . . this is what you will pursue.

And this . . . is where our spiritual disciplines come in . . .

Disciplines do not create a good heart . . . **Only God does.**

But disciplines do give oxygen to the fire that God puts in our heart.

Thus, we need to attend to these disciplines so our hearts are strengthened w/ grace.

And this morning . . . we consider the discipline of making disciples.

This message is a pivot in our January series

For the last two weeks, we've focused on prayer and Bible reading.

Through these two rhythms of mercy . . . we feed on the Lord.

The disciple of Christ is as strong as her devotion to these two disciplines.

But that being said . . . disciples who live on the grace of God . . . must also exercise their faith by serving others and helping others walk with Jesus.

Christ's disciples do not merely take in food, we also feed others.

Disciples are those who follow Christ and help others follow Christ.

To put it succinctly . . . **Disciples DISCIPLE.**

But how? And how much? And where will you find time, energy, desire to make disciples?

Well... **Where do treasure-seekers get their time, energy, and interest?**

Discipleship as a passion and way of life . . . does not come from a class.

The class comes for those who view disciple-making as an infinitely worthy endeavor . . . **and thus they are primed to learn how to disciple.**

In the weeks ahead . . . our SS hour will tackle the HOW-TO of discipleship.

My burden this morning is to . . . BY GOD'S GRACE . . . implant in you the WANT TO!!

Let's call it DISCIPLESHIP FEVER . . . and I pray you will catch it.

To catch it . . . we need to see three things in our passage

1. **Context of Luke 12 is all about discipleship**
2. **Concept of disciple-making should be a kind of treasure seeking**
3. **Captivation to disciple-making comes only as we treasure what God treasures**

TSID . . . Passionate Discipleship depends on catching Discipleship Fever

So let's get into Luke 12

The Context: Luke 12:32–34 is all about Discipleship

In fact, all of Luke's Gospel is about discipleship.

. . . So before landing the plane on our text (12:32–34)
. . . we need to circle Luke's Gospel from the air.

. . . We'll make a couple passes that will help us see how much discipleship
. . . is the focus of Jesus' ministry . . . and how our text adds to that picture.

Long before Luke uses the word disciple . . . we see an emphasis on teaching = heart of Disc

Luke begins in ch. 1 by saying that he wrote his Gospel . . .

**To give Theophilus an orderly account of Jesus words and deeds. . . so
that he might have certainty in all the things he had been TAUGHT.**

The key word there is TAUGHT

Luke writes to establish Jesus' disciples in all he did and taught.

Not surprisingly, then, the book speaks of disciples 37x and concludes with Jesus
teaching his disciples in Jerusalem as they await the Holy Spirit.

Throughout the book there are all sorts of instruction for discipleship, but esp. in ch 9–19

Luke 9:51 is key verse . . . it is the place Jesus sets his face like flint towards J.
. . . From here on, the book leads towards the cross.

But significantly, these 10 chapters also teach disciples how to carry their cross.

For instance, as soon as Jesus sets a course for Jerusalem (9:51), verses 57–62
introduce three kinds of people who are not worthy to be Jesus' disciples.

READ

The radical nature of discipleship is illustrated in these three examples.

To follow Christ is no casual pursuit.

Half-heartedness and reluctance are inconsistent with Christ's calling . . .

This is part of the sanctification process in every disciple . . .

God is in the business of rooting out our hypocrisy . . . AND . . . Luke 12 plays a key
part in explaining this discipleship process.

Describing of Luke 12, Darrell Bock says

“Disciples are the major concern of Luke’s next section.”

The overarching instruction to disciples is to “trust God.” (BECNT, 1128).

In the face of opposition, in a world intoxicated with self-promotion, and in light of God’s future judgment, **disciples trust God and treasure him above all.**

In fact, this is what we see in the two places in Luke 12 where **disciples** are addressed.

First, in **12:1** . . . Jesus speaks to his disciples amidst a crowd of thousands.

In these 12 verses, Jesus tells his disciples to live wholly for God.

You might summarize Jesus words:

The world teaches you to be a hypocrite, but Jesus says walk in God’s light.
The world fears those who can kill the body, but Jesus says to fear God alone.
The world tells you hide your allegiance to God, but Jesus says make it public

In all these ways . . . Jesus calls his followers to do everything with God in mind.

Verse 13 turns attention away from Jesus disciples to “someone in the crowd,”

Misunderstanding what Jesus has come to do, this “non-disciple” asks Jesus to be his personal legal expert. The problem is that this man is coming to J on his own terms.

Jesus confronts the man’s covetousness and gives a parable that relates to the way true disciples store up treasure in heaven.

Disciples invest their lives in God’s kingdom . . . non-disciples lay up treasures for self.

Finally, we come to v 22 . . . where Jesus again addresses his disciples.

Pointing to God’s care for creation . . . J tells his disciples to trust their heavenly Father

With confidence in God’s provision. . . **disciples seek first God’s kingdom.**

Thus . . . the final word before our three verses is from Jesus to his disciples about the kingdom . . . **the kingdom Jesus is preparing for his disciples.**

So . . . the two take aways from the context of Luke, specifically Luke 12 . . .

1. Jesus is passionate about making disciples . . . and so are Jesus disciples
2. What Jesus says about treasure seeking (32–34) . . . has everything to do w D-M

CONCEPT: Disciple-Making Means Storing Up Treasure in Heaven

In 12:32–34 we find 3 verses that work to comfort, challenge, and counsel Christ's disciples.

First, in v. 32 Jesus says, **“Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”**

The verse continues the address to D's and commands: “Do not fear”

But the feel of verse 32 is not that of a stern imperative but a loving promise.

First, notice the three ways he speaks to his disciples.

First, he calls them his “little flock” . . . a precious gathering of God's lambs, who are loved and cared for by their Good Shepherd.

Then, he promises to give this little flock the kingdom . . . hence indicating the royal nature of this flock.

But that's not all, he also says, “it is your **Father's** good pleasure” to give the kingdom.

So . . . in addition to being Jesus friends (v. 4), these disciples are also children of God, heirs of the kingdom, sheep who Jesus has come to rescue.

Don't miss this . . . Jesus is tripping over himself to comfort his disciples.

In a world that threatens you, Jesus reminds you whose you are – if you are in Christ . . . you are God's sheep, God's children, God's royal heirs.

And thus . . . they have nothing to fear.

What God has promised . . . he will provide.

Friends . . . Are you a DISCIPLE of Jesus?

. . . The word means to be a learner WHO does all his Master requires.

IF YOU ARE...	Then you are a part of God's precious flock.
	You are special treasure to your heavenly father.
	You are beloved heir of the kingdom. . .

This is what it means to be a disciple. Thus . . . every radical call to carry a cross and die. . . is not a way to earn blessings from God.

He has already lavished his love on you . . .

So . . . what Jesus says next is not an invitation to get stuff in heaven . . . you already have everything IN CHRIST . . . It must be something else . . .

What does it mean to store up treasure . . . ???

Following the comfort of v. 32, he gives the challenge: **“Sell . . . READ”**

The verse is made of two parts.

The 1st double command – **sell . . . & . . . give** should be taken literally

It doesn't mean that you should sell ALL you have

. . . but like Barnabas who sold his field in Acts 4

. . . disciples strategically use their wealth to care for the needs of others

The third command (Make for yourself moneybag . . .) is a mixed metaphor.

. . . that is to say . . . WHAT IS A MONEYBAG THAT DOESN'T GROW OLD??
Is that a moneybag made out of gold?

. . . the next verse adds some clarity

We make for ourselves ageless moneybags, by storing treasure in heaven

. . . **Why heaven?** Well b/c that is where no thief steals and no moth destroys.

So this literal challenge to sell and give . . . is magnified by this figurative storing of treasure.

AND . . . As long as we keep them abstract, it's fairly easy to understand.

But if we want to press further . . . and ask:

“How . . . exactly . . . do I store up treasure”?

These questions are a bit more challenging . . .

Yet . . . b/c of the CONTEXT of Luke 12 . . . it must have something to do with discipleship

So my answer is that the CONCEPT of treasure-seeking is best understood as D-M.

Let me show you why I think this is the best way to understand this verse:

We can get at it by asking two questions . . .

Two Questions:

1. What is heaven?

DEF: Heaven is the place where God dwells . . . and our access to heaven comes through the place where God dwells on earth . . .

In the OT . . . this was the tabernacle or later the temple

In the NT . . . it is Jesus Christ . . . he is the meeting place between God and man . . . he is the living tabernacle where God dwells on earth.

And here's why that's important to consider:

In the OT God's people twice gave treasure to build God's dwelling place.

In the Exodus, the Israelites plundered the Egyptians.

And in turn, **Exod 25/ 35** say that gold, silver, precious materials were collected from the people to build Tabernacle

The same was true in **1 Chron 29** . . . God opened the hearts of the people to give to the temple . . . their treasures were stored up in God's dwelling place

In both instances . . .

God provided for the people so that they could contribute to the dwelling place of God

By analogy . . . it makes some sense that Jesus disciples would contribute not to a earthly temple made with gold, silver, precious metals . . .

. . . but with the gifts of the Spirit God has given them . . . they would contribute to the temple which Christ himself is building.

2. And how do we do that?? How do we store up treasures where God dwells?

By making disciples.

In heaven . . . God is already present. . . . so we cannot add to him.

Heaven is perfect in every way . . . and so we can't improve it with our works.

The only thing we can add . . . are the people whose lives we touch . . .

And because not everyone will be in heaven . . . the treasure must be those who trust in Christ . . . namely disciples, those purchased by the infinite blood of Christ.

So here is the payoff . . .

Jesus speaking to disciples . . . tells his followers to invest their possessions in such a way that we will be able to give to those in need – v. 32

In this, Jesus is not just instructing his followers to ease the temporary needs of others . . . He is telling them to use everything in their lives to help others know Christ.

What is the greatest need in the world?

Salvation . . . and then hearing the gospel which leads to salvation . . . which comes from disciples of Christ who know the God of salvation.

For all these reasons . . . I believe the way we lay up treasure in heaven is to give our lives for the making and maturing of disciples!

Are you convinced yet . . . that Luke 12:32–34 is a call to store up disciples in heaven?

If not . . . look at **Luke 16** – in the same corridor of discipleship passages – Jesus tells a parable to encourage his disciples to have wisdom with their money.

He tells the story of a wicked servant who is fired by his master . . . But before leaving his duties . . . this servant reduces the debts of his master's customers.

Jesus commends this man . . . NOT for his questionable finances.

But for this reason: **With his money . . . he made lasting friendships.**

Here's what Jesus says in Luke 16:9: **I tell you, make friends for yourselves by means of unrighteous wealth, so that when it fails they may receive you into the eternal dwellings.**

What's he saying . . . use all that you possess to increase the # of friends you will see in heaven.

Or to bring it back to Luke 12

Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

The challenge to all disciples is to see disciple-making as the best investment you could ever make.

And the COUNSEL, therefore, in verse 34 . . . is to set your heart on this treasure.

. . . on the glorious vision of seeing heaven filled w/ the D's you made on earth.

IF . . . this is the vision of your heart . . . a heaven filled with Christ and the people Jesus has enabled you help know Jesus more . . .

THEN . . . just like the gold-diggers in the Yukon . . . you will be able and willing and desirous to endure all things so that your treasures are full.

Only . . . in this case . . . as you abide in God, his word abides in you, as you pray and give your life to serve him . . . you can be assured – ABSOLUTELY GUARANTEED –

. . . that your labors will not be in vain.

. . . Christ will be glorified . . . through the making of disciples

. . . and you will be satisfied as you invest the possessions of your life

. . . to help others find salvation and sanctification in Christ.

This is the vision that Jesus gives us for discipleship . . .

. . . and this is the fever that must grip our hearts.

You won't make D's BECAUSE you're supposed to . . . or b/c you've read book.

You'll only make disciples IF you can see the glimmer of gold at the end of life.

It's this vision . . . that Scripture gives to us . . . and Jesus calls us to pursue.

And so it is this vision of treasure hunting that I finish with today . . .

The key to being a disciple and making disciples is the same . . .

It is being CAPTIVATED by Christ & CAPTIVATED by a vision of his coming kingdom.

Such a vision is what impels our heart and drives lives.

When we treasure the kingdom of Christ, brimming over with his multi-national bride

. . . our hearts will be magnetized to make disciples. . . . OH THAT GOD WOULD
GIVE US SUCH HEARTS!!

I want you to see this vision of disciple-making is not odd . . . this is how Disc. Fever works.

This is how it worked for Jesus . . . that before the world began, he was promised a people for his own possession. He came to earth to claim his promised treasure!

Hebrews 12 says for the joy set before he endured the cross . . . what was that joy . . . the promise of a billion sons of God saved by his death and resurrection.

This is D-M worked for Paul . . . the great apostle was so afraid the Thessalonians had departed from the faith, he sent Timothy to check on them

Sure Paul believed in predestination . . . but that didn't cause him to be callous. He loved the Thessalonians, they were his joy and crown . . . and so he did all he could to ensure their ongoing faith.

The same was true w/ Corinthians . . . he wrote his letters to secure his disciples faith.

Why? SO THAT . . . when he stood around the throne of God, he would see with a heart overflowing . . . all the M & W he had led to faith standing in glory.

The same is true for us . . . What joy it will be when we see Christ . . . and then we see the souls of men and women who led us to faith, who helped us walk with Jesus.

What thanksgiving we will have for our Lord and the gifts of his saints.

BUT EVEN MORE . . . how great will be our joy . . . when we scan the vast throne room of heaven and see the faces of people who we have prayed for, led to faith, encouraged, brought back from ruin, and supported in ministry.

In glory . . . we will taste the fruit of the seeds we have sown in this life . . . that's why it is wise to sow as many seeds as you can . . . to give your life to make disciples.

To use your talents to increase the store of treasure in Christ's kingdom

Is this not what Jesus said to his treasure-investing servants

Well done . . . my good and faithful servant

Enter into the joy of your master!

Friends . . . what is that joy?

It is the joy of seeing the children of God dwelling forever in the presence of God.

And even more seeing your children in the faith . . . the disciples you have made and encouraged in this life.

Oh, brothers and sisters . . .

Think often about the kingdom of God and the people who will be there . . .

And let that vision of treasure impel you to walk with Jesus infected w/ Discipleship Fever.