



Mary Craig Ministries, Inc.

January 2014: "Treasures"

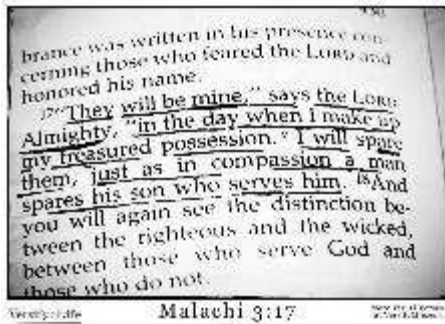
Dear Friend of Mary Craig Ministries,

Our soon-to-be six granddaughter has a treasure box. In it she keeps things like a notebook and fancy jeweled pen for practicing writing and drawing; a purple travel flip hairbrush; McDonald's coupons earned by 30 days of reading per the Tiger Reader program; "Lady," a little grey stuffed dog; a clear "gem" stone with Romans 8:31 glued on it from VBS, a colorful piggybank, and sea shells from Florida beach adventures. To add to her treasures, Grandma (me) gave her a hand-painted flower card from Bethlehem for Christmas, along with a story of visits to Bethlehem, mine and Jesus' at His birth.

Treasures. These are things we keep, and store up. They can consist of property and riches, and even thoughts stored up in the heart and mind. Treasures are things precious to us and we lay them up in store. We place high value on treasures and so we try to keep them safe, protecting them as best we can.

Our granddaughter is not alone. We begin early in life treasuring this or that. What we treasure changes with age and maturity, circumstance and choices. Governments have treasuries; so does God.

Have you ever thought about what God treasures in His heart? Let's look not in our own minds, but in His Word, something to treasure.



1. The people of God are His special [peculiar] treasure.

It was the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of Egypt, the same day that they came into the wilderness of Sinai. Israel camped in the wilderness before the mount. The Covenant Lord called to Moses out of the mountain, giving him words to say to the children of Israel.

You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself.

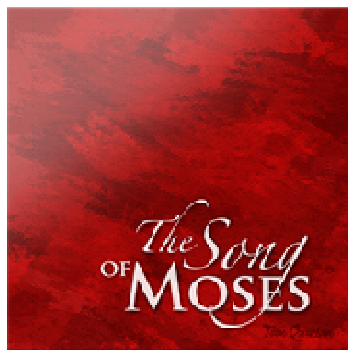
Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine. (Exodus 19:4, 5)

God makes here a conditional promise that if Israel would obey Him and keep His covenant, He would regard and treat them as a special treasure. With this came also the promise from God

that Israel would be unto God a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. (See also Deut. 7:6, 14:2.) As most know, the people chose instead to make a golden calf and forsake the God who had redeemed them from Egyptian slavery (Exodus 32). Peter applies this passage to true believers in Christ in 1 Peter chapter two, showing how a believer's obedience benefits. (See also Isaiah 43:20, 21.)

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that you should show forth the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness into marvelous light.
1 Peter 2:9

In the New Covenant in Christ's blood, believers in Christ have their position guaranteed by the Surety of Christ and the Seal of the Holy Spirit. We are to become what God has declared us to be. If we are in Christ, we are God's special treasure, our worth coming not because we deserve God's love and grace, but because of Christ's worth which now resides in us.



2. God's treasuries include blessings and instruments of judgments, both. In Deuteronomy 32, in the Song of Moses, the idolatry of the people of God provoke Him to jealousy. (32:16) The people are exhorted to think about the outcome of their ways, their latter end. (32:29) For provoking God to anger and jealousy, God will move them to jealousy and anger. (32:21) Their behavior has kindled a fire in God (32:22) for seeking a different rock and for drinking the poisonous wine of dragons.

Is not this laid up in store with Me, and sealed up among My treasuries? (Deut. 32:34)

Not only the deeds of transgressions, but also the judgments duly deserved and God's interposition on behalf of His people were laid up in store with Him and sealed up among His treasures. God's treasures contain more than just blessings, as when He opens His good treasure, the heaven, to give rain and to bless the work of one's hands unto abundance; they contain as well His instruments of punishment and correction, which God in His sovereignty, sends forth as His prerogative. The LORD is judge and vengeance belongs to Him. (cf. Deut. 28:12; Job 38:22, 23; Psalm 135:7)

God remembers the offenses against Him as a Person. As Creator, it is His sovereign right to take vengeance in the court of divine justice. Those who have drunk the wine, the poison of dragons and the cruel venom of asps, will find themselves facing their latter end: drinking of the wine of the wrath of God poured out without mixture into the cup of God's indignation. (cf. Romans 2:5, 6; Revelation 14:10, 19, e.g.)

Someone must pay the penalty for offenses against a holy God/Creator. The only way one's sins, trespasses, and iniquities are not remembered is through faith in Jesus Christ's atoning work, the sacrifice of Himself on behalf of those for whom He died. The sins of believers have been laid on Christ, imputed to His account, as He stood in our place, taking the penalty our sins deserved. On that Cross, peace with God was made through Christ's blood; reconciliation resulted; God's wrath was propitiated; a redemption took place; Satan's legal ground to captivate was destroyed along with his kingdom.



3. God has hidden treasures. Sometimes God's hidden treasures bless, as in the revealing of treasures hid in the sand (Deut. 33:19) and when God promised that to Cyrus He would give him "the

treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places in order that you may know that I, the LORD, who call you by your name, am the God of Israel.” (Isaiah 45:3) Historically, Cyrus did find treasure troves that funded war as God’s purposes were served.

Sometimes these perplex, as in Psalm 17:14. In this psalm, David cries out to the LORD, makes a case of innocence, and asks God to deliver him from strong and powerful enemies, men who have gone on too long in their wickedness, but also in honors and riches as if this world had been made just for them.

Arise, O LORD, disappoint him, cast him down: deliver my soul from the wicked, which is Your sword: from men which are Your hand, O LORD, from men of the world, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly You fill with Your hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes.” Psalm 17:13, 14

David implies that it is not reasonable that the ungodly should be allowed to go through their lives without having any fear of death, and enjoying such amazing prosperity. David makes this complaint to console himself, not in the way of murmuring against God and resisting God’s will. These men seem to get away with their actions, continuing in a joyful, peaceful, prosperous life. David wants God to hasten His vengeance since their abusing God’s generosity by living as His enemies has gone on so long.

Nevertheless, David concludes, “As for me, I will behold Your face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Your likeness.” (Psalm 17:15) (cf Ps. 16:11, 1 John 3:2, Rev. 21:3, 22:3, 4) Those in Christ have a secure hope, which should challenge them to press forward and endure hardships for Christ’s sake, knowing the latter end. (1 Cor. 4:16-18; Phil. 3:14; 2 Timothy 2:1-5; Revelation 2:10)



4. The hidden treasure of wisdom, knowledge, and the fear of the LORD.

My son, if you will receive my words, and hide my commandments with you; so that you incline your ear unto wisdom, and apply your heart to understanding; yes, if you cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; if you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasure; then you shall understand the fear of the

LORD, and find the knowledge of God. Proverbs 2:1-5

And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of your times, and strength of salvation; the fear of the LORD is his treasure. Isaiah 33:6

We need wisdom, the wisdom of God. If we lack it, we are to ask for it and search it out. Wisdom and knowledge will give us stability and strengthen us. We will come to understand the fear of the LORD. Isaiah gives out five woes before coming to the sixth. Ray Steadman, in a sermon “The Black Holes of Life,” identifies them as “self-pleasing, religious externalism, self-deceit, wrongly placed confidence, rebellious attitude, and cruel attacks upon others.”

<http://www.raystedman.org/old-testament/isaiah/the-black-holes-of-life>

Isaiah’s sixth “woe” is directed to the spoiler, a spoiler that was not spoiled, one who deals treacherously but is not dealt with treacherously in return. When the spoiler has his day, then he will be dealt with. (cf 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Revelation 13:10) To Hezekiah was given a promise, that wisdom and knowledge would provide stability in his times. Knowledge and the fear of the LORD would be settled on a firm foundation, one of constancy and saving strength.

The fear of the LORD here is either Hezekiah's treasure as he set himself to establish the true worship of God rather than amass tangible treasures for himself; or the Lord's treasure, the true riches.

Nahum 2:9 tells us that there is no end of worldly treasure, wealth of every desirable prize, silver and gold. When the wise men came and fell down before the infant Jesus, they opened their treasures, presenting Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

5. Treasures in heaven. Jesus exhorts us not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and where thieves break in and steal, but to lay up treasures in heaven. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Matthew 6:21)



Jesus focused on the heart as being a treasure of either good bringing forth good things or evil bringing forth evil things. (Matthew 12:35) He likened the kingdom of heaven to treasure hidden in a field, something to prize and secure (Matthew 13:44); and to a pearl of great price. (Matthew 13:45, 46) Knowledge of the kingdom of heaven is a treasure, and scribes instructed concerning the same are like householders who bring out of their treasure things new and old. (Matthew 13:52)

Paul says that the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is to him a treasure. *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in our hearts. We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* (2 Corinthians 4:6, 7)

So what will we treasure this year, and in the future? This is more about attitude than "stuff" per se. What I believe I received from the Holy Spirit the beginning of this year, 2014, is:

It will be different this year. I will give you what I will do on your behalf for those present before Me.

Deut. 28:2-14; Deut. 30:1-14; Acts 5:25-32; Luke 11:28

I will keep covenant with you who are in Christ Jesus. I will bless you for His sake and surround you with My love and grace. I will do you good all the days of your life.

To those who heed the call to "come and dine," I will fellowship with you. Ask of Me, and I will show you great and mighty things which you know not of. Ask. Seek. Knock. Luke 11:9-13.

I will open of My treasures and share with you of Mine. All that the Father has is Mine. John 16:15.

Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

Our granddaughter is learning about treasures. Her treasures will change over time; let's all pray for one another that we will treasure all that God has for us in Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh. Rejoice at His Word, as one that finds great spoil (treasure). (Psalm 119:162)

Thank you for your generous gifts to MCM. God has truly blessed this ministry and its outreaches. We hope you will join us in our continued search for God's treasures.

For His glory,

Mary Craig

Mary Craig, D P. M.

Paul desires for believers

*that their hearts might be comforted, being knit together
in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance
of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God,
and of the Father, and of Christ; in whom are hid
all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.
Colossians 2:2, 3*

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