

*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up.
Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field...*
(Matthew 13:44)

February 22 marked Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Lent is a somber season of repentance and all that might entail – prayer, worship, fasting, denial of self, giving of alms, and other Christian practices. It’s also a time when we remember our sin and mortality and turn to God in faith and hope. It’s this hope that carries us through, because we know that, although the journey is long, the light of Easter life awaits.

Traditionally, we meet for worship, prayer, and song on Wednesday evenings during Lent. Our focus this year will be on this very hope that God has given to us in Jesus Christ. A series called *Promised Treasures* will help to structure our thoughts, prayers, messages, and songs. Here is what the originator of the series has to say by way of introduction:

This Lenten season, we have a fresh opportunity to embrace God’s amazing love for us, His baptized children, in new ways. St. Paul clearly says that “faith comes from hearing” (Romans 10:17), but the Gospel is also communicated through the physical senses of sight, smell, touch, and taste. Jesus mentions that a good teacher not only brings out new treasures but reminds people of old and rich treasures as well (see Matthew 13:52). So, each Wednesday in Lent, we will take a weekly journey to concretely see, smell, touch, and taste a number of biblical elements. Our Lenten series is called *Promised Treasures*. Just as Israel wandered through the wilderness under Moses for forty years, awaiting the Promised Land, we await heaven in the wilderness of this life. Life as exiles in the wilderness of this world is not easy and pain-free. In this vale of tears, we await our real home, the new promised land of heaven. Until we enter our eternal promised land, however, the Lord calls us to be His light in this dark world (see Colossians 3; Ephesians 4). This series will begin with ashes, then proceed to salt, water, light, bread, and finally, palms. Then, during Holy Week, the focus shifts toward water and blood, wood, fragrant oil, and finally, on Easter, milk and honey. All these beautiful Old and New Testament elements will remind you of God’s eternal love in Christ, fill you with renewed hope, and increase your joy, knowing that because we are His baptized children, God is near to us now more than ever.

Indeed, it’s the hope of Jesus, who himself is our treasure, that brings us through the wilderness of this world.

Over the next several weeks, I and other pastors from the circuit will be rotating through our pulpits and pointing us to the treasures we have promised for us in Jesus – forgiveness, life, and salvation. As we do, may the ordinary created items around us help us to remember and confess God’s grace and mercy in Christ. Don’t miss out!

-Pastor Squire

“Jesus, priceless treasure, fount of purest pleasure, truest friend to me, ah, how long in anguish shall my spirit languish, yearning, Lord, for Thee? Thou art mine, O Lamb divine! I will suffer naught to hide Thee; naught I ask beside thee.”

(“Jesus, Priceless Treasure,” *LSB 743*, v. 1)