

Sermon: Hidden Mysteries

Text: 1 Peter 1:10-12

Discussion Questions:

We're talking today about things of great value.

Let's begin by discussing the age-old question:

- If your house was filling up with smoke because of a fire—and you only had a minute or two to grab the things that are of greatest value to you—what would you grab and why?

How interesting that what is of highest value to one person, can be of little or no value to another person. This usually has to do with the MEMORIES that are attached to things. Or the SACRIFICE that was part of the story. Say, for instance, you have a pocket watch that belonged to your great-great grandfather, who immigrated to the United States from Europe in his early twenties with his young wife. Tragically, the boat they were on sank (I wasn't intending this to sound like the Titanic—but it's kind of going that way)—and just before his death he handed the time piece to his wife, your great-great grandmother. This timepiece has made its way into your possession, complete with the story of his death and legacy.

- Does it matter that if this pocket watch were being sold in a pawn-shop, it would only be worth \$10?
- If someone were to offer you \$1000 for the watch, would you sell it?
- Why is it that knowing the STORY of something gives it such greater value—especially if the story is a part of YOUR life?
- Why are pictures “worth” so much—even if they're fuzzy and out of focus and yellowing?

Think about the values of our modern world—and the things that it says are of great worth.

- What are some of the most “valuable things”—as defined by worldly standards?
- Do you find yourself coveting these things?
- Does the fact that everything in this world will someday be destroyed by fire change the “value” of worldly things (2 Peter 3:10)?

Examination:

- Go back and Re-Read **1 Peter 1:3-9**
 - In verse 4, Peter talks about an inheritance that is kept in heaven for us—that can never perish, spoil or fade. He's obviously comparing this to an earthly inheritance that IS SUBJECT to decay. What are some examples of earthly inheritances that on the surface might SEEM to be of great value, but in reality can turn out to be the stuff of great heartache and disappointment?
 - What kinds of problems can be caused in a family when it comes to DIVIDING an inheritance? Have you ever experienced this personally?
 - How does this teaching by Peter reinforce what Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-21: *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 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, there your heart will be also.”

- How does faith “activate” God’s power in shielding us until God’s salvation finally revealed (v. 5)?
- Speaking of things of great value—how valuable is your faith (v. 6)? How is it that faith is of greater worth than gold?
- Verse 9 tells us that the “salvation of our souls” is the end result of our faith. What do you think this means? What does this salvation entail? What are we saved from? Why do you think it specifies that our souls are saved—and not our body or our spirit?
- Do you VALUE your salvation as much as you probably should? Why or why not?

- **Read 1 Peter 1:10-12**

- Let’s be reminded of the three basic questions that Peter is addressing in this letter: Who am I? (the question of identity); How do I live in a world that is increasingly hostile to Christians? (the question of response); Where am I ultimately headed? (the question of my future). These three verses deal with the nature of our salvation. That being the case—which of the three basic questions is Peter dealing with?
- Peter talks (v. 10) of “the grace that was to come to you.” What is he talking about?
- He also talks about “the prophets” who “spoke” of this grace. What do you think he’s describing? Can you think of any specific examples of how these prophets predicted this “coming” of grace? Any specific verses?
- When Peter describes how the prophets searched intently with the greatest of care—I can’t help but think of the Magi (Wise Men) in the Christmas story. They were looking intently for the time and circumstances of the coming of the Messiah. Talk about how easy it can be to miss what God is doing in our lives when we’re not looking for Him—and the joy when we recognize that He is!
- Verse 11 connects the grace of God with the suffering and glorification of Jesus. This is clearly a reference to the cross and resurrection. HOW do we experience the grace of God through what Jesus did by dying on the cross?
- What (or who) enabled the prophets to predict the cross? Did they fully understand what they were writing about?
- How were the prophets serving US by writing about the cross many years before it ever came to pass?
- What do you make of the fact that the same Holy Spirit that inspired the prophets to write about Jesus (hundreds of years before the fact) is the same Holy Spirit that inspired the apostles or preachers to proclaim the good news of Jesus?
- Wow—what do you make of the fact that “even angels long to look into these things”? Talk about this. Does this mean that the cross and resurrection came as a surprise to the angels?

Application:

Twice in the passage, Peter mentions the work of the Holy Spirit. First—when the Spirit prompted the prophets to write. Second—when the Spirit prompted the preachers to preach. I would add a third time—right now! Today! Ask the Holy Spirit to quicken your heart to believe and act!