

'Gold: Blessing or Curse, the True Value'

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Matthew 2:11; Philippians 3:8; Matthew 6:19-21 and scripture litany

Sixth Sunday of Summer July 7, 2019

Hayward United Methodist Church

Call to Worship Matthew 6:19-20

Jesus said "Stop collecting treasures for your own benefit on earth, where moth and rust eat them and where thieves break in and steal them. **Instead, collect treasures for yourselves in heaven, where moth and rust don't eat them and where thieves don't break in and steal them.**

Gold can be a precious thing to us. It can be a blessing or a curse.

We come today to discern what is the gold of value in our lives.

Prayer of Invocation

All-knowing, all-wise God, we gather as a people who need your direction to live wisely, and your strength to live faithfully. We celebrate today with gratitude for the gift of your Spirit, and pray to be an example of Christ in character and purpose. Lord, Open us to all that you would have us be, for you and for others. 'Breakthrough' into our lives and our church with new possibilities. Amen.

The Scavenger Hunt: Where in your world do you see God in the color Gold?

Fireworks in the Sky, Sparklers in someone's hand; Color of my canoe; Gold fabric in the quilts I make, which makes people happy; Golden Arches of McDonalds; Olympic God Medals, Gold Coins, Jewelry

3 My Wedding Ring (and marriage); 4 -Wedding bands – "which signify individuals love & commitment to each other – love – God and others."

Email – "While considering the question of seeing God in the color gold I realized I see it every day. Every time I look at my wedding band I am reminded of my grandmother who left it to me and the love she had for my grandfather and their family. And I see the blessing that my husband is in my life as well as the recognition of our marriage."

Brass Candlesticks on the Altar and the American Eagle on the top of the Flag Pole; Honey; Golden Sunset; Aspen Leaves in the Fall; Golden Rod; An Eagle's Beak; The Wheat Field before it is ripe; The Song "Fields of Gold"

The Word A litany of scriptures: gold – blessing, curse - the true value

Voice 1: The inner sanctuary was thirty feet in length, width, and height. Solomon overlaid it with pure gold and covered the altar with cedar. ²¹ Solomon covered the temple's interior with pure gold. He placed gold chains in front of the inner sanctuary and covered it with gold. ²² He overlaid the whole temple inside with gold until the temple was completely covered. He covered the whole altar that was in the inner sanctuary with gold. (I Kings 6:20-22)

Voice 2: Oh, no! Gold is tarnished; even the purest gold is changed. Sacred jewels are scattered on every street corner. Zion's precious children, once valued as pure gold—oh no!—now they are worth no more than clay pots made by a potter. (Lamentation 4:1-2)

Voice 3: Much gold and many pearls exist, but wise speech is the most precious jewel. (Proverbs 20:15)

Voice 1: The LORD has richly blessed my master, has made him a great man, and has given him flocks, cattle, silver, gold, men servants, women servants, camels, and donkeys. (Genesis 24:35)

Voice 2: The people saw that Moses was taking a long time to come down from the mountain. They gathered around Aaron and said to him, "Come on! Make us gods who can lead us. As for this man Moses who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we don't have a clue what has happened to him." (Exodus 32:1)

Voice 3: Acquiring wisdom is much better than gold, and acquiring understanding is better than silver. (Proverbs 16:16)

Voice 1: The Lord said to Moses: Don't make alongside me gods of silver or gold for yourselves. (Exodus 20:23)

Voice 2: Aaron said to them, "All right, take out the gold rings from the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."³ So all the people took out the gold rings from their ears and brought them to Aaron. Then he made a gold image of a calf, then he built an altar in front of the calf. (Exodus 32:2-5)

Voice 3: Take my instruction rather than silver, knowledge rather than choice gold. (Proverbs 8:10)

Voice 1: All silver and gold, along with bronze and iron equipment, are holy to the LORD. They must go into the LORD's treasury." (Joshua 6:19)

Voice 2: Jesus said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves before other people, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued by people is deeply offensive to God. (Luke 16:15)

Voice 3: A good reputation is better than much wealth; high esteem is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1)

Voice 3: My fruit is better than gold, even fine gold; my crops are better than choice silver. (Proverbs 8:19)

Voice 3: Words spoken at the right time are like gold apples in a silver setting. Wise correction to an ear that listens is like a gold earring or jewelry of fine gold. (Proverbs 25:11-12)

Voice 1: Humankind doesn't know its value; it isn't found in the land of the living. (Job 28:13)

Living the Word

Gold is valuable. My rings are gold. a sign of love or honor.

A sign of wealth. Some cultures the bride comes to the wedding with all of her possessions as the gold jewelry she wears.

A sign of power?

"A rich man who died and went to heaven complained that he wasn't allowed to bring his wealth with him, so he was encouraged to return and bring back just one suitcase full of his possessions. The rich man was smart and filled his one suitcase with the gold bars into which he had converted his extensive wealth. When he returned to heaven he was asked to show everyone what was in his suitcase. Upon revealing its contents, one of the inhabitants of heaven asked the man, 'Why did you bring back pavement?'"

Revelation 21:21 *The twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was made from a single pearl. And the city's main street was pure gold, as transparent as glass.*

Why the cross can be gold: to value and honor Christ's sacrifice and resurrection.

A gold cross necklace...As a decoration or with another meaning behind it?

The book of proverbs has a lot to say about gold...

Take my instruction rather than silver, knowledge rather than choice gold. (Proverbs 8:10)

Acquiring wisdom is much better than gold, and acquiring understanding is better than silver. (Proverbs 16:16)

Much gold and many pearls exist, but wise speech is the most precious jewel. (Proverbs 20:15)

A good reputation is better than much wealth; high esteem is better than silver and gold. (Proverbs 22:1)

There are 535 references to gold in the scriptures – the litany was only a sampling Gold can be a blessing or a curse...as it can show what we really value...

Blessing, curse, what we value

While I was the Pastor at the United Methodist Church in New Richmond, Janet, one of the saints of church, was getting ready to celebrate her 90th birthday. I asked her daughter one of the golden attributes of her mother:

'The "golden" attribute of my Mom that has stood the test of time and is remembered as long as I can remember my Mom is her commitment to the Lord and the desire for her family to know Jesus Christ as their Savior. When my brother and I were growing up she would have devotions & prayer with us at the breakfast table every morning before we went to school.

She prayed with us every night and she made sure we went to church every Sunday and we participated in youth groups. There was not a valid excuse for not attending worship on Sundays! It reminds me of the scripture "train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6)

At 90, Mom continues her daily devotions and reading God's Word and continues to pray for her family...her grandkids and great grandchildren that they would see their need for a Savior and have a personal relationship with Him so we can all be together again in our heavenly home....

When I think about "gold", I think "precious" and "valuable"...and this most precious aspect of Mom is just that!'

Matthew 6:21 *Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* Thank you God for Janet and others who live and share such 'gold'

Matthew 2:11 *They entered the house and saw the child with Mary his mother. Falling to their knees, they honored him. Then they opened their treasure chests and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.*

Non Jewish, pre Christian, the Wisemen from another country, came to bring gold to baby Jesus for it was written that this baby would be a king. Do we really put Christ as the lord or king of our lives?

Philippians 3:8 *But even beyond that, I consider everything a loss in comparison with the superior value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have lost everything for him, but what I lost I think of as sewer trash, so that I might gain Christ*

Is gold a blessing or curse in your life?