



Where is your treasure?

Where is your heart?

FRIENDS, I think it's true that almost every one of us likes to think that our loved ones who have died have all gone to heaven. Some may even think their loved ones went directly to heaven without even pausing for a soul-polishing trip to Purgatory. Sadly, more often than not, this is not the case. While we do not know for certain if our loved ones have attained heaven—or its alternative, we can know what it takes to get there.

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel that wherever our treasure is, so too must our heart be. He further explains that the end will come for all of us on a date we do not know, and at an hour we do not know. So we have to question ourselves, "where is my heart – what do I treasure?"



Saint Lawrence and the True Treasures of the Church

I think it's very interesting that these readings come on the same weekend in which we celebrate the feast of Saint Lawrence (August 10). Here is a saint who understood where his heart and treasure were!

Saint Lawrence was one of seven deacons in charge of giving help to the poor and needy under Pope Sixtus II who were martyred during the persecution of Emperor Valerian in A.D. 258.

When a persecution broke out, Sixtus was condemned to death. As he was led to his execution, Lawrence followed him weeping, "Father, where are you going without your deacon?" he said.

"I am not leaving you, my son," answered the Pope. "In three days you will follow me." Full of joy, Lawrence gave to the poor the rest of the money he had on hand and even sold expensive vessels to have more to give away.

The Prefect of Rome, a greedy man, thought the Church had a great fortune hidden away. So he ordered Lawrence to bring the Church's treasure to him. The Saint said he would,

in three days. Then he went through the city and gathered together all the poor and sick people supported by the Church. When he showed them to the Prefect, he said, "This is the Church's treasure!"

In great anger, the Prefect condemned Lawrence to a slow, cruel death. The Saint was tied on top of an iron grill over a slow fire that roasted his flesh little by little. But Lawrence was burning with so much love of God that he almost did not feel the flames.

In fact, God gave him so much strength and joy that he even joked to the judge, "Turn me over, I'm done on this side!"

Just before he died, Lawrence said, "It's cooked enough now." Then he prayed that the city of Rome might be converted to Jesus and that the Catholic Faith might spread all over the world. After that, he went to receive the martyr's reward.¹

Faith is a gift, what do I do with it?

Again, I ask, what do you treasure? Are you doing the necessary work of a disciple in order to attain that heavenly promise? Lawrence recognized the true treasures of the Church, when he brought to the Prefect the lowest of the low from Roman society, and the crippled and others afflicted with myriad disabilities. But it was not just the recognition that made Lawrence's actions good in God's eyes—it was the fact that Lawrence knew that he, as a member of the Church, was called to care for them, to *love* them!

Jesus spoke of stewards and servants taking proper care of the things of which they were charged to look after. Those stewards and servants who took proper care of the master's affairs and possessions were rewarded handsomely by the master himself upon his return.

What gift are we charged with guarding and preserving and caring for? Our greatest gift is our faith, in that it allows us to know God and discern His will and have a relationship with Him. You might argue that our greatest gift is our salvation, or even Jesus Himself; but I hold that without faith, the gift of salvation, and indeed, Jesus Himself would be a gift we wouldn't understand nor know the true eternal power and promise He offers.

Saint Paul said "These three remain, faith, hope, and love (charity); and the greatest of these is love." Why? Because at the end of our lives, we will meet our just judge and will no longer have need of faith, for we shall see that which we believed but could not see, nor will we need hope, for once we are judged, our eternal destiny will be settled. But love is eternal and will never end, for God *IS* Love.

¹ <https://www.saintlawrencewr.org/about-saint-lawrence-the-martyr.html>