

In search of...

Truth & Right

Volume 09 Issue 51

December 21, 2014

Gold Rush

Matthew 13:44 – “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

Gold! Treasure! History records a great number of “gold rushes” throughout the world. Americans experienced gold rushes in no less than Nevada, Alaska, Colorado, Washington, South Dakota, Wyoming, North Carolina, Georgia, Idaho, and California. A number of people consider the gold rush to be something of the past. However, a recent report on the Madre de Dios region of Peru shows gold rushes are modern too (1). Whether in past or present, gold rushes not only exist as fascinating phenomena to study, but also good parallels to the life of a Christian.

All gold rushes begin with the same catalyst: “Discovery!” Multi-millions of individuals have dug holes in the dirt, a great number even hoping to find buried treasure. For the great majority of these seekers, nothing is found. When seeking uncovers a substance of value, discovery sparks joy as seen in Matthew 13:44. It also sparks action. Treasure found compels the seeker to engage in actions

that assure he can claim it as his own. Spiritually speaking, discovery occurs every time without fail for those who seek heavenly treasure (Matthew 7:7). The value found in the treasure of salvation cannot be measured; what value can be put upon knowing one’s soul no longer carries the burden of sin (Matthew 16:26).

As a man acts to secure his treasure, others will take notice. Observation declares an existing difference. Why is this man selling all his possessions for a field? Men become curious, even suspicious over the changes that occur. One way or another, the truth frequently comes out. “Gold! Gold! Gold from the American River!” Sam Brannon helped fuel the California Gold Rush as he proclaimed discovery on the streets of San Francisco in 1848. At first men may not consider the truth they have heard or seen to be a reality: “The Gold must be brotite (fool’s gold)” or “that guy could never make such a discovery”. Yet, when the truth takes root, the rush takes hold. The message may shoot around the world. With the California Gold Rush, not only did Americans sell everything to get to California, but citizens of England, China, Germany, Canada, France, South America, Italy, and other countries did so

as well. They wanted to experience the California Dream. "As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country." (Proverbs 25:25). With the arrival of good news of the Gospel, Jesus found no place to rest his head (Matthew 8:20). Continually, multitudes sought Him out desiring to acquire the treasure freely given in Christ (Romans 3:21-24).

A number of treasure seekers enjoy success. I myself panned for gold and my eyes watched mercury swallow up flecks of gold in a pan to later release them into a little vial for safe keeping. Using a sluice box in a river to search for gold also produced minor flecks. As a young boy, joy encompassed me fully when I found a stream full of shiny "fool's gold". Success, to a degree, depends on expectation. A little boy seeking to find neat rocks in a stream has great success. An individual seeking only a few flakes of gold instead of a fortune he can retire on also experiences occasional success. Yet, remember, spiritual success always accompanies those seeking heavenly treasure (Matthew 6:33).

Hard work most frequently characterizes the search for treasure. Gold miners certainly experienced their share of this. Perhaps their initial success meant only picking up gold off of the ground. Yet, later on, hours of continual panning, digging, washing, or rock busting followed each day. Mining results in happy, frustrating, sad, exciting, and depressing moments. It's filthy, dirty, muddy, dusty work which dries, tears, and toughens the skin. Gold miners do not sit in the shade waiting for gold to fall from trees. If they didn't engage in working, they likely would find themselves lacking the necessities to provide food to live on. Paul expressed the need for work in the lives of the Thessalonians (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12). He told them if they did not work, were not to be provided food. Individuals cannot

continually enjoy success unless they work. Jesus and His apostles not only instructed Christians to engage in physical work, but goodness, benevolence, evangelism, visitation, and other actions which demonstrated their obedience to Him. Such work identifies those who love Christ (John 14:15); it also ensures reward (success) and not punishment (failure) (Matthew 25:14-30).

The proverb "The poor man is hated even by his own neighbor, but the rich has many friends" (Proverbs 14:20) comes to life for the gold miner. Truthfully, some folks may be honest faithful friends. However, a great number of friends drawn by riches disappear with a changing of fortune. Gold miners found themselves in the predicament of wondering who they should trust. Would the shopkeeper cheat them? Would someone rob their camp while they worked? What about claim jumpers or robbers? "Amen!" fuels the preacher, water attracts the thirsty, and gold draws corruption. The treasure seeker finds persecution by the elements, strangers, enemies, or even his trusted friend (Psalm 41:9). When Jesus walked the earth teaching and proclaiming the eternal kingdom of God, He knew anyone professing His teaching and the treasure by them would be persecuted (John 15:20). They might even need to separate themselves from their families due to the treasure (Matthew 10:34-36).

The final parallel exhibited in Christian lives seen in that of the Gold Rush is abandonment. Most treasure seekers rushing off to find the joy of success abandon the cause after a period of time. Perhaps, they would not do the work necessary or despite their work they quit for finding little to no success. Again, they may quit the search for treasure due to abuses and persecution that arise from others. "No treasure is worth such difficulty, there are better things!" might be reasoned in their minds. Whatever the decision to walk away, the prize they desired

fails to come to fruition. Even a greater loss, some abandon hope of something better all together, their lives only characterized by futility.

Spiritually, abandonment is demonstrated well in the parable of the sowers (Matthew 13:3-23). Abandonment from seeking God occurs by those not interested in seeking, ones who cannot handle the persecution, and still more who become distracted with other worldly dreams. Common sense dictates that if you can do your best to find treasure and still fail, abandonment should be considered. However, when one desires to serve God, truly seek, and endure in their service of him until their end, not abandoning their efforts, nor giving up hope, they always receive the treasure they searched to find. Abandonment in this case should not be considered! A spiritual gold rush should always be encouraged. For all who choose to seek the treasure of heaven neither lack nor limit of success exists. There is no next best alternative (Proverbs 15:6).

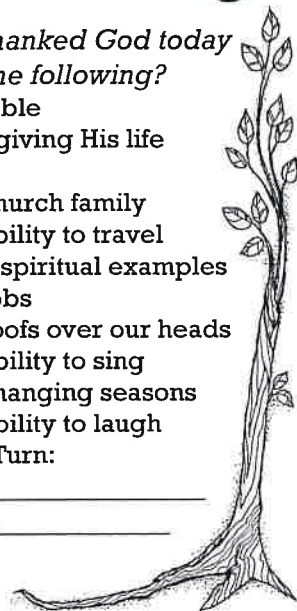
Gold Rush! Discovery, joy, action, spreading of good news, success, hard work, persecution, and even abandonment can be expected in the search for treasure. However, man should not abandon the heavenly for the earthly (Colossians 3:2, Luke 12:16-21, Proverbs 8:10). The effort put forth toward seeking God despite enduring much trials proves more valuable than gold (1 Peter 1:7). Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Philippians 4:8) As when Mary sat listening to Jesus, despite the activities of Martha, let treasure seekers choose the "good part" which is everlasting (Luke 10:38-42) and that which moth and rust will not decay (Mark 6:19-20).

Travis Main

dear God,
thanks for this
beautiful life
and forgive me if
i dont love it
enough.

*Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The ability to travel
- Good spiritual examples
- Our jobs
- The roofs over our heads
- The ability to sing
- The changing seasons
- The ability to laugh
- Your Turn:



This bulletin is published by the
WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST

92 Rose Cottage Lane
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

<http://www.truthandright.org>



Like us on
FACEBOOK under
Wellsburg church
of Christ!

Follow us on **TWITTER**
[@wellsburgchurch](https://twitter.com/wellsburgchurch)



View us on **YOUTUBE:**
[https://www.youtube.com/
user/wellsburgchurch](https://www.youtube.com/user/wellsburgchurch)

Christian Q&A

Ken Prager is the subject of our interview this month. He is a Wheeling police officer, Paula's husband, and Lydia and Addison's father.

When were you baptized?
March 9th, 2004

What is your favorite Bible verse? Why?

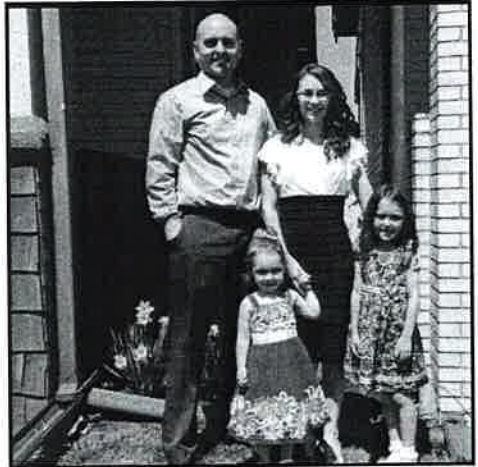
1 Samuel 28:9, "As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the LORD searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will let you find Him; but if you forsake Him, He will reject you forever." - God searches our hearts.

What individual from the Bible do you most look up to? Why?

The apostle Paul. He lived his life in all good conscience, and endured many hardships while remaining faithful to God. He referred to his sufferings for the sake of Christ as, "momentary, light affliction." He knew that something far greater awaited him in heaven if he only remained faithful. Reading about the hardships he endured in his life can help us when we are faced with difficulties far less severe. It helps to put things into perspective.

What do you want others to know about your religion?

God does not show partiality. He wishes for all of us to come to repentance. 2 Pet. 3:9.



How long have you attended the Wellsburg church of Christ?

Why did you start attending?

Approximately 11 years. I was invited to services by my wife, whom I had just started dating at that time.

What advice would you give someone who is new to the Church?

Just to be patient with yourself. It takes time to mature as a Christian, just as it takes time to mature from a child to an adult. As long as you are striving to serve God and put your trust in Him, He knows your heart and will provide for you.

When do you like to set aside time to pray to God?

For me, a good time to go to God in prayer is while driving.