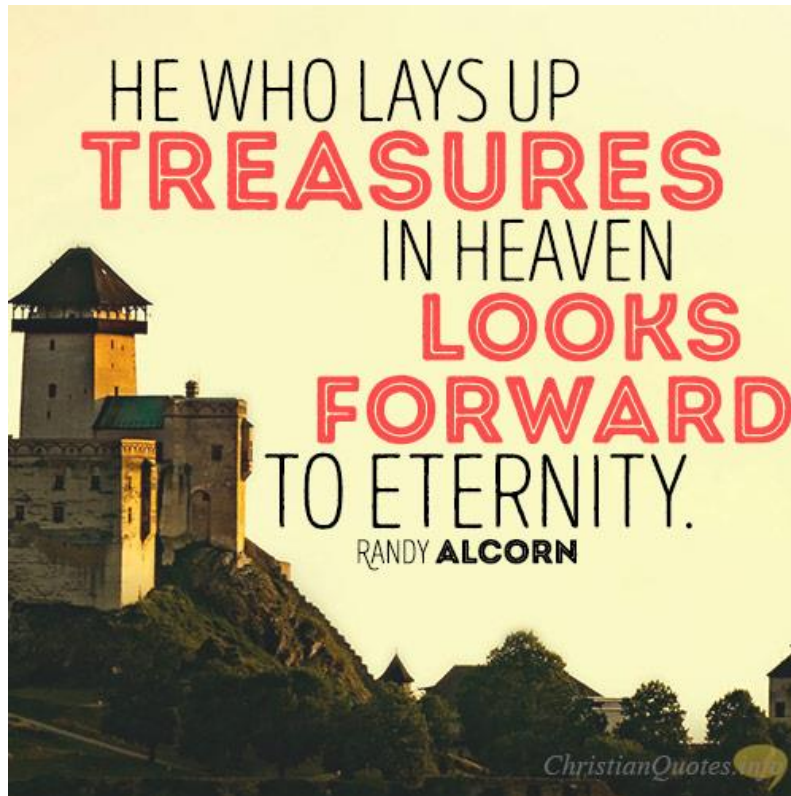


THE TREASURES IN HEAVEN



*Matt. 6:19-20 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*

In the verse above, the Lord told us to “**lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**” while we are still here on earth. And we all know that He is not talking about earthly or material treasures for we can’t bring any of those in heaven. He said that those earthly treasures can be corrupt and can be steal. On the other hand, He is telling us about the heavenly treasures which unlike the material ones, cannot be corrupt and cannot be steal.

So what are these heavenly treasures and how can we “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” while we are still here on earth?

To begin with, let us first consider what it is meant by the Bible when It talks about “**Treasures**” so that we can have a correct grasp of the context.

The word “**Treasure**” came from the Hebrew word “**Genez**” (greek: thesauros) which means “**a thing stored**” or “**a deposit**”. (By the way, from this also came the word “**Thesaurus**”, a word we used to refer to a reference book which contains the lists of words grouped together according to similarity of meaning).

So a treasure is a **deposit**. Why a deposit? Let’s tackle that later. Meanwhile, here is one example of these treasures mentioned in the Bible.

WE ARE TREASURES

Malachi 3:17 And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.

We are God’s treasures. We are His “treasured possessions” (Deut. 7:6). We will be made by our Lord as His jewels. One day, we will be revealed as “**stone most precious, clear as crystal**” (Rev. 21:11).

THE CITY OF TREASURES

Those precious stones when built together, they will form a City. In Hebrews 11:10, Abraham is looking for “**a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.**” This City is described in Revelation 21 as the Holy City, New Jerusalem. In Revelation 21:9, an Angel invited John to “*Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride, the Lamb’s wife.*” And in verse 10, what John saw is “that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” He was told to come to see the Bride, but what he saw is the New Jerusalem. This only means that that Holy City, New Jerusalem is no other than the Bride of Christ herself adorned for her husband (Rev. 21:2). Let us remember also that the Holy City is also the Body of Christ on where He will be tabernacled (Eph. 1:23, Rev. 21:3).

Now, that City is made up of precious stones. This only means that the members of the Bride of Christ who will make up that City are described and appeared to be as precious stones – the **Treasures of our Lord!** Some would be jasper, some would be gold, some are topaz, sapphire, emerald, etc., (Rev. 21:18-21). They appeared to be as precious stones, clear as crystal.

Since the Bible described and likened us to the precious stones, let us then first study the natural stones so that we can have a better understanding of the Spiritual ones, for the natural types the Spiritual (1 Cor. 15:46).

CLARITY, COLOR, CARAT AND CUT

Precious stones are made from minerals (like carbon) many kilometers below the earth under the condition of extreme temperature and pressure through eons of time. It is said that those minerals are as old as the earth itself.

Now, there are four characteristics (or four **C**’s) that defines the value of a precious stone: **Clarity, Color, Carat and Cut**

Clarity

An expert jeweler knows that the first thing to look at for a high grade precious stone is its **Clarity**. Whether it is a diamond, ruby, emerald, amethyst, etc., it should be clear from any impurities or “**Inclusions**” as they call it, in order for it to be considered as flawless and of high quality. Inclusions are scratches, trace minerals, or other tiny characteristics that can detract from the way that light bounces from mirror to mirror (known as facets) within a precious stone.

The quality of its clarity can be seen on its outstanding Brilliance – its ability to refract and reflect the light that shines on it. Presence of impurities greatly affects its brilliancy. If its refractive index is high, it would be more brilliant. Brilliance can only be achieved through clarity and it is the one that makes your precious stone to be noticed even across the room. Precious stones are valued because of their brilliance.

Color

Precious stones naturally come in every color. Color of rubies for example, appeared to be blood-red, emeralds are bright green and amethysts are deep purple while diamonds are colorless. These colors are due to the presence of trace elements in them (usually metals) or the combination of those trace elements and the elements themselves that made up the stone. The blood-red color of rubies for example, comes from the presence of chromium in it. Bright green color of emeralds is due to the presence of both iron and titanium.

One will find out that due to their rare nature, colorless precious stones like diamonds are the most expensive. This is because one can rarely find a mineral so pure that no other minerals are present on it.

Carat

When jewelers refer to a precious stone’s carat, they are actually referring to the weight of the stone, not the size. The weight of a precious stone has the most significant impact on its price. The heavier the stone is, the rarer it is and the more expensive it will cost. The compactness and the hardness of the stone are the ones that contributes to its carat.

Cut

This is the most complex factor affecting the stone’s price. A raw precious stone needs to be cut to bring its optimum performance and to serve its intended purpose. When a cutter cuts a precious stone, he or she must make difficult decisions about how large it will be and what shape the final product will become. After these decisions are made, it is the craftsmanship and fine motor skills of the cutter that determines how much the stone will sparkle and how much attention it will draw. The slightest mistake can ruin the stone’s symmetry and in doing so, can dramatically decline the beauty and price of the stone. Even a flawless and colorless stone can become dull when badly cut.

High quality symmetry and polish accompanied by intricate proportions of facets will increase its brilliance. When properly cut, a stone will reflect almost all of the light that enters it through its top. If improperly cut, some to most of the light will exit out of the bottom or side of the stone.

Having known these things about the natural stones, we will now tackle the Spiritual Stones and know why we are typed to the natural precious stones.

SPIRITUAL STONES

Just like the natural ones, our genesis is even before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). Before we became precious stones, we are just carbon, in sin-tainted black color who walks in the darkness (Prov. 2:13). Before the Master Jeweler sets His hands on us, just like what the Psalmist says, we are just dust (Psalm 103:14).

... that day when I make up my jewels (Mal. 3:17).

Right now, we are on this process of “**making the jewels**”. Our Lord is working on us in this process of purification through the **Baptism of Fire** (Matt. 3:11), by which He subjects us to **extreme fire** and **extreme pressure** through **time** for us to be refined and become His jewels “clear as crystal”. Any jeweler knows that these three elements: **Fire, Pressure** and **Time** are essential for precious stones to be revealed. Cutting and polishing are very important processes to revealed our optimum beauty and for us to be built as parts of the New Jerusalem fitly joined together (Eph. 4:16).

The question is, are we willing to let the Master Jeweler formed, cut and polish us in order to reveal the precious stones in us?

If your answer to the question is “Yes”, then here is the process:

BURIAL, BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST, FIRE, PRESSURE AND TIME

*Matthew 3:11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with **FIRE**.*

STEP 1: The Burial

Before anything else, just like carbon, we need to be buried first so that we can die from our old self (Gal. 5:24) and so that it will be no longer us who live but the Master Jeweler Himself that lives in us (Gal. 2:20). Carbon atoms need to be buried below earth on about 100 to 150 miles from earth’s surface for them to become a diamond. It’s because it is only in this part of the earth that we can achieve the “**diamond environment zone**” where the required heat and required pressure for diamond to form are present.

Unless we are buried, the Master Jeweler cannot continue to work in us, for it is impossible to revive a live man. This first step is very important for the second step to take place. Without dying, no new birth will take place. Just like in the time of John the Baptist, we need to accept first that we are sinners and we need to die to sin (Rom. 6:1, 1 Peter 2:24) so that we can live.

Note: It is not you who works in order for you to die to sin; it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself Who works in you so that you will be buried from your old self. In fact, from this first step up to the last step, it is not you who work but the Lord works in you. Take a look at these verses:

Romans 6:3-5 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:

Phil. 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

STEP 2: Baptism of the Holy Ghost

“*Ye must be born again*” (John 3:7). This is the step where the carbon atoms, after burying below the ground, is being quickened (receives its first application of heat). Carbon atoms can produce either of the three: coal, graphite and diamonds. This second step is very critical; for it is this step that decides which carbon atoms will become diamond and which will become coal or graphite.

First of all, it should be clear that diamonds did not come from coal or graphite contrary to what is usually being thought in most science class.

One great factor that should be considered in the formation of diamond, coal and graphite is the source of carbon. The fact is, coal and graphite are the compressed remains of ancient plants and animals while diamonds are way older than terrestrial plants and animals. On the other hand, carbon source for diamond formation came from the earth’s mantle at the time of earth formation. That’s why naturally formed diamonds are as old as earth itself. That fact alone should tell us that diamonds are not actually made from compressed coal or graphite.

The source is also the reason why coal and graphite is formed from highly impure carbon that often contains elements like oxygen, selenium, hydrogen, nitrogen and sulfur. Diamond, on the other hand, requires a very pure source of carbon, any defect in purity can cause the diamond to change color or become undesirable.

Now, the main difference of these three: coal, graphite and diamond are their molecular structure which is directly affected by the source of carbon. The impurities from the source of carbon atoms for coal and graphite alone greatly affect their molecular structure which prevents them from being turned into diamonds. This is the reason why this second step, which is the first application of heat, determines whether carbon atoms will become a diamond, coal or graphite.

Just like those natural stones, the determining factor also for us to become precious stones is the source of the carbon atoms (Seed) itself. Those seed of the Master Jeweler or those who are chosen before the foundation of the world (Rom. 8:29-30, Eph. 1:4), are the only one who will pass the second step which is the **Baptism of the Holy Ghost** (quickening of the Spirit). Anyone whose source is not from before the foundation of the world cannot become a diamond. It will not pass the first test of fire which is the quickening of the Spirit (1 Cor. 15:45).

This second step is the “Born Again” experience of the Seed of God. Because he/she have already died, he/she will then be quickened (Baptized) of the Spirit of God.

Quickening of the spirit is giving life to the Seed that has been dead so that it can now have eternal life. We will then breathe in that Spirit of life and what accompanies this is the great struggle of overcoming your old self. This will be the start of the journey of becoming a diamond.

Some carbon atoms whose source is not before the foundation of the world will also feel that they have passed this second step and they will also think that they will become a diamond. This is because coal and graphite just like diamonds, are also good conductor of heat. Even in the Bible, tares and wheat are both worshipping the Lord. Both enjoy that sunlight and the rain that comes from God. Both have the gifts and the signs. Both will claim that they are baptized by the Holy Ghost. But we must remember that during this stage, it is still difficult to tell the difference between the coal and the diamond, the tares and the wheat (Matt. 13:29). It is on the harvest time that the big difference will be seen (Matt. 13:30).

STEP 3: The Baptism of Fire

After the Bride receives the baptism of the Holy Ghost, the next will be the baptism of **Fire** (Matt. 3:11). Now, the element that takes away impurities and makes a precious stone to be crystal clear and lustrous is no other than **Fire**. The first two characteristics, which are Clarity and Color, of the precious stones are due to the amount of fire (heat) they received and how they are exposed to it. Without fire, the stone will not be as clear as crystal and would not be rare.

Fire reveals the substance. Anything that cannot pass fire will get burned and all that will be left is a pure substance that cannot be burned by fire. Any impurities in a carbon compound that cannot pass extreme heat will be burned and all that will remain will be the pure carbon atoms. Carbon compounds are exposed to extreme temperature that ranges from 1000C to 1500C in order for diamonds to be formed. Slightly less than this will become graphite or coal. No exposure to fire and the carbon compounds will not become a diamond.

This is the reason why the Baptism of Fire is very important to be experienced by those who have been born again. It is fire that makes us radiate and make us as clear as crystal. Our exposure to extreme temperature made us to effectively reflect and refract light which gives us brilliance. That's the reason why we must not believe those prosperity gospel teachers, evangelical circles and even Endtime Message preachers who preach and teach that as believers, we have the right on this earth to have freedom from sickness, financial problems and suffering from almost any kind and any nature. Those are liars. Don't believe them.

Their line of thinking is so contrary to what the Bible is teaching about the baptism of fire and to what the Lord had said in John 16:33 that "*In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" The Lord Jesus had emphasized before He was caught up that we shall have tribulation in this world and that we shall overcome them because He has overcome! See?

Sufferings and tribulations are necessary for us to be freed from all impurities. That's the way the Master Jeweler can bring the best in us for us to become a brilliant stone. Without the suffering, we cannot be changed. That's why we must embrace suffering

and tribulations in our life for they are the fire that cleanses us. The great part is that, our Lord doesn't leave us in the dark in times of suffering. Along with extreme fire, light emanates with it and we are being comforted.

In actuality, if we are precious stones, we are all winners in this life. For if we were not given spiritual and physical blessings, we are given sufferings which are actually blessings in disguised for they made us strong and raised us to our optimum brilliancy.

STEP 4: Pressure

Actually, step 3 and step 4 happened at the same time. So while carbon atoms experience extreme heat, they are also experiencing extreme pressure. Pressure needed for the formation of diamonds is about 725,000 pounds per square inch (psi). There is this great pressing on carbon atoms that they can form a strong chemical bond – the covalent bond.

Pressure application is what contributes to the hardness and the compactness (carat) of diamonds. Without pressure, diamonds will not be known as the hardest mineral on earth. The word "Diamond" itself comes from the Greek term "Adamas," which means "**Unconquerable.**" It can only be cut (conquer) by another diamond. The more compact the diamond is, the rarer it is and the more expensive it will cost.

Aside from suffering and tribulations, the Bride also experiences troubles, burdens and persecutions on every side which press her into compactness which leads to elevating her value and making her unconquerable. She cannot be conquered by any other minerals because there's no mineral that is as hard as her. She can only be cut by another diamond and that is no other than Her Groom – our Lord Jesus Christ, the Master Jeweler. This is the reason why the apostle Paul said in 2 Cor. 4:8 "*We are pressed on all sides, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair;*"

It is pressure that produces character, endurance, and hope. That's why when troubles, burdens and persecutions comes, we should not avoid them. Instead, we should take them as opportunities to press us so that we will become strong.

TIME – The Most Important Ingredient

Time is the most important ingredient in forming precious stones. It is the determining factor that decides if carbon atoms will turn into flawless diamonds. As we all know, diamonds are as old as earth itself which means that they have been exposed to fire and pressure since time immemorial. Extreme temperature and pressure is nothing if it is only for a short period of time. But when exposure to them is lengthened, it will reveal who truly will endure to be a diamond. It is also through time that shaping and polishing is done.

Being a believer, upon experiencing this euphoria of a born again experience, we tend to claim and proclaim that we love our Lord with all our heart, soul and mind. But after a long while of exposure to suffering, tribulations, struggles and persecutions, we tend to despair that even the actions of lifting our hands to praise the Lord and to proclaim that we love Him seem so hard to do. Why is this? This is because time tests everything!

Time will challenge everyone. If I am a Groom returning for His Bride, time would be my best friend. Because it is only through time that I can tell if my Bride is Faithful. The test of time will challenge everyone who claims that they love the Lord. Anyone that will not stand the test of time will not be considered as faithful. That's why He is delayed.

In order to become a diamond, being faithful is very important. It is the quality of the Bride of Christ that sets her apart from the rest. And you can only achieve this through Time. There is no other way by which we can achieve faithfulness but only through Time alone. Take a look at this verse of Revelation 17:14:

*“These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and **faithful.**”*

Those who are with the Lord in the war are the once who have been called, chosen and were proven **faithful**. Being Called and being Chosen are doings of the Lord, they do not require the element of time. But Being Faithful is another thing. This requires so much time and endurance to all pressures and fire that you will be expose with.

True Love grows. And all growth requires time. The more time you have with your love, the more you love Him. That's why do not be dismayed if our Lord delays. He just wants your love for Him to grow. So embrace Time. True diamonds encourages more time because they became more and more pure and brilliant the longer they are expose to fire and pressure.

So this is why we are considered as Treasures!

May the Lord will continue to guide us into all His truth is my prayer.