



"Send us to bring them in"



TREASURES OF DARKNESS

By Colleen Wheeler



Years ago, the Lord illumined this Scripture verse to me: *"I will give you the treasures of darkness and hidden riches of secret places, (Isaiah 45:3 NKJV)*. Over the years, I have often asked myself, "What are these treasures that God wants to give?" Most of us think of treasures in terms of money, expensive jewelry, new cars, lavish homes, and other extravagant material things. Yet many who have these riches are still unsatisfied and striving for more and more.

Isaiah prophesied about a Persian pagan king named Cyrus. God gave Cyrus an extraordinary amount of gold and silver. These abundant treasures testified that Jehovah called him by name. Cyrus was handpicked and prepared by God, to tell the world about the one and only true God, as well as to free God's people from seventy years of Babylonian captivity. God told Isaiah that He would use Cyrus to fulfill His righteous purpose and that He would guide all of Cyrus's actions. The Lord chose King Cyrus to do His will, he was God's anointed, and obeyed the His instructions.



DEEP TREASURES INSIDE

For Cyrus, the buried gold and silver treasure gave him a revelation that Jehovah was the one and only true God. For us, we must be hidden in Christ so that He can refine us like gold. As a result, we discover that our treasures and riches are in Him and Him alone. We need this revelation: these treasures are hidden in darkness until they are brought to light.

The Father of lights gives us every perfect gift and every good thing (James 1:17). He has placed special treasures and riches deep inside each Christian, yet many become weighed down during their trials and times of testing. The treasures and riches that God has predestined for us become buried by the dark stormy days that overshadow our souls.

The Lord's desire is to set us free and restore us by shining His light upon the dark areas of our past and or current situations and circumstances. This in turn will extract the treasures and riches of Jesus that are inside of us.

We are in a crucial hour In our history; the end of time is upon us and we must be prepared. He uses our trials and times of testing to make us into mighty, radical glory carriers. We must

yield to what He is doing in us so He can position us to be launched into the harvest as well as be a prepared people to receive the multitude that are coming into our churches.

CHAMOMILE OVER THE HARVEST FIELD



While I was browsing the Web for an image of a harvest field, I came across an interesting photo of a huge chamomile flower overlaying an entire harvest field. This made me think about the sleepiness that has been upon God's harvesters, creating a wedge between the church and the field. (Chamomile tea is used as a sleep aid.) Many are fighting the trials God has given them to walk through in their own strength and they are becoming exhausted. As a result, the spirit of slumber and laziness opens the door for the enemy.

The devil works extra hard to wear down the saints so they will become distracted from God's tools that are needed to strengthen them. Foundational things, such as the Word, prayer, and fellowship, are traded for TV, overeating, and other ungodly habits that lull the worn-out Christian further into sin, inducing more fatigue and straying even further from the Lord.

"Do not participate in the unfruitful deeds of darkness, but instead even expose them; for it is disgraceful even to speak of the things which are done by them in secret. But all things become visible when they are exposed by the light, for everything that becomes visible is light. For this reason it says, 'Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you'" (Ephesians 5:11-14 NASB).

Others get caught in the trap of overworking to the point of physical exhaustion; even things in the kingdom might cause burnout if not properly balanced. But this is not the time to become blinded by temporal things or distracted by laying up our treasures on this earth (Matthew 6:19). We must lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven (Matthew 6:20) and return to our sweetest treasure, our first love (Revelation 2:4).

Times are dark; we must wake up. Open your eyes and see that the harvest is white (John 4:35). We must dig deep into our hearts and ask the Lord to lift off the darkness of despair, open our eyes from our slumber, and reveal to us our "hidden treasure" in the field of our hearts. Then look for Jesus in the "harvest field" and do what He tells you to do. His purposes will be revealed. His heart will become your heart. When our hearts break for the things that break His heart, the gospel will go forth to the ends of the earth. Once Jesus is found, nothing else matters. You will want to sell everything you have in order to have Him. True wealth is in Christ, who has given us an inheritance in heaven, by whom God has shown the riches of His mercy and grace.

GRAB HOLD OF JESUS HEART

A few months ago, the Lord revealed to me a vision of an off-white vintage wedding dress, and, where the human heart would be, a heart shape was completely hollowed-out. I shuddered knowing what the Lord was saying. When a Parasitical spirit is operating, the true heart, the true passion of Christ is missing within the church, His Bride. People are not looking for religion to conform or condemn them; they are looking for real people with a heart of love and compassion.

In the gospels, Jesus continually confronted religious groups who were masking their own sin with pride as they judged, intimidated, and criticized others who did not fit into their man-made systems and rules. Jesus tells these people how far away they are from true holiness.



Jesus says to them, ***"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also."*** Jesus called the Pharisee blind because they were seeing through man's eyes, not through God's eyes. He continues ***"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness."*** (Matthew 23:25-28 NKJV)

To some degree, most Christians interact with one or the other side of this religious system and sometimes even both sides. Eventually, all parties end up hurt, because when a Parasitical spirit is operating it blocks out God's love and mercy. But true righteousness comes from the heart and is born out of love for Jesus. Religiosity must die so the life of Christ can be released and manifested within the heart of His Bride. She needs to give up her old way of doing things and seek the Lord for new ways to operate fully in the realms of Glory He is releasing on the earth today!

The Lord is in the process of restoring His heart to His church today! He will have it no other way and is actively purging the hearts of men and women. He is shifting His righteous ones into position to be used to reap the end time harvest while He is actively purging and cleansing our hearts.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21 NKJV). True riches and treasures can be found in deep intimacy with Jesus in the secret place. May we all grab hold of Jesus' heart and take a journey there. Let us humble our hearts and ask Him to reveal any trace of a Parasitical spirit within us. We need to allow Him the freedom to make of each of us a pure and holy Bride without spot or wrinkle. He will give us the revelation we need to awaken, be strengthened, and be delivered from our foolish pride.

As we seek Him, earnestly desiring to dwell in His Presence, He will pour out His love, His compassion, and His passion into our hearts. We will find ourselves empowered to love one another with His love and our neighbor as ourselves (Matthew 22:37-40). Our hearts will be revived and start beating with the true love of Christ. As false religious props fall away, the heart of Christ will be unveiled. Then the Bride of Christ will be clothed in His Glory and His holy Presence will be poured out from His love-filled vessels.

SEASON OF SHAKING



"For thus says the Lord of hosts, 'Once more in a little while, I am going to shake the heavens and the earth, the sea also and the dry land. I will shake all the nations; and they will come with the wealth of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory,' says the Lord of hosts" (Haggai 2:6-7 NASB).

The Lord is shaking everything out from us that needs to be dispelled. He will not stop until salt is released from us. Many of us are in a season where we do not understand what God is doing. Economic collapse and financial losses are causing our churches, ministries, and relationships to be shaken to the very core. Our lives are filled with unpredictability and our charted territory is looking unfamiliar.

I remember being in an unfamiliar place. The person led me through a brightly lit building, up the stairs, and pointed me toward the restroom. When I was ready, I opened the door to leave, but to my dismay it was pitch-black dark, somebody had turned the lights off. Panicked, I felt around for the light switch when suddenly the floor disappeared from underneath me. I was in midair for what seemed like minutes and I tumbled down a flight of wooden stairs. When I reached the bottom, I lay stunned and bewildered. Somehow I managed to get up, find the doorknob, and hobble outside into the light of day.

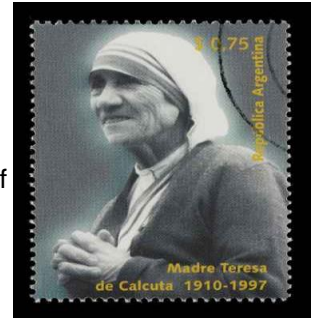
Maybe the direction of your life once felt secure, you knew where you were going. Suddenly the bottom dropped out from beneath you and you found yourself in the midst of a painful situation. Perhaps someone caused you to stumble; they pointed you toward a door, but ended up deceiving you and left you in the dark frantically groping for a light switch to illumine

your reality.

In the midst of uncertainty and calamity, when we can't see the way to go, when our future looks dim, when people disappoint us, when our bank accounts are low or empty and the promises God has spoken for our lives seems to be on other side of the universe. We may stumble in the darkness and feel the bottom has dropped out from beneath us. We may have fallen down, been tossed around, bumped up and bruised. But He is always there to catch us, lift us up, dust us off, and send us out again to be salt of the earth.

DARKEST HOUR

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you; but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation" (1 Peter 4:12-13 NASB). Mother Teresa's spiritual experience is described in her book *Come Be My Light - The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*: "Her long experience of darkness, her sense of rejection, her loneliness, the terrible and unsatisfied longing for God, each sacrifice and pain had become for her as one more 'drop of oil' that she readily offered to God, to keep the lamp-the life of Jesus within her-burning, radiating His love to others and so dispelling the darkness."



God used her most uncomfortable experiences and darkest hours of despair, pain, and suffering to draw her closer to Himself. The light of Christ revealed all the secret riches and treasures that were hidden in the darkness of her soul. The dust cover of her book quotes her famously: "If I ever become a Saint--I will surely be one of darkness. I will continually be absent from Heaven--to light the light of those in darkness on earth."

God formed within her a treasure through a revelation of His love, and like a magnet she drew from it. She was empowered after having had an encounter with the Lord. The treasures of grace that are in the Lord Jesus are revealed when we are brought out of darkness into God's marvelous light, and when we come to know Him and the power of His resurrection by the sweet manifestations of His presence and love. We will then be filled with love and go into the darkness and dispel it.

HE WILL MAKE A WAY THROUGH THE WILDERNESS



Many times in our darkest hours of despair, frustration, and loneliness, in the dark nights of our soul, God is working out something new in us. Isaiah addressed the Israelites exiled in Babylon with prophecy. In their case, *exile* means they were forced to live outside the Promised Land.

Into the midst of this darkness, Isaiah spoke a word from God. *"Behold, I will do something new, now it will spring forth; will you not be aware of it? I will even make a roadway in the wilderness, rivers in the desert. (Isaiah 43:19 NASB)*

The God of Israel will make a way in the wilderness. He calls us by our names and woos us into the secret place to drink of His love. His love is sweeter than wine. We cannot put new wine into old wineskins (Luke 5:37). We cannot run with the old when He wants to give us the new. It doesn't work; it doesn't fit. In the place of unfamiliarity, our wilderness, we long to perceive what He is doing. He is breaking us out from what is familiar and what is old for our good. He is making a way for us to enter into our promised land, our destiny and callings. He is stirring up our passion for Him, drawing us closer to Him. He calls us to a bridal love, to experience deeper intimacy with Him. In the wilderness He restores us to our first love and we become virgin-like as if we've been touched by His presence for the very first time.

God is doing a new thing. Why does it take so long to perceive it? Could it be because of self-will and reliance?

For years I had an old Bible software program that I loved. I learned how to use all of its features and knew it like the back of my hand. A few months ago, after using the same computer for many years, I purchased a new one. Sadly, my favorite Bible software program was no longer compatible. For several months, I tried everything I could to make it work but nothing did. Finally, with much pain and despair, I finally accepted the fact that the old program was not going to work with the new computer. I purchased a new Bible software program, called Logos, and it worked perfectly with my new computer.

Our most treasured spiritual possession is the Word of God. Perhaps He is calling some of us to a new revelation in His Word. This treasure is the sweet fragrance of the knowledge of Him. Multitudes are in the valley of decision, waiting for the good news of God's transforming grace and the rich truths we are called to preach.

WE HAVE THIS TREASURE IN EARTHLY VESSELS



But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves; we are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying about in the body the dying of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are constantly being delivered over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death works in us, but life in you. (2 Corinthians 4:7-12 NASB)

God's power is perfected in our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9). We are pressed in, beaten down, perplexed, rejected, used, abused, and abandoned, yet the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ overcomes all our imperfections, weaknesses, personal insufficiency, and sufferings to prove that this treasure is not from us, but from the power of God. He does this so that only He will get the glory.

The life of Christ is revealed in affliction. The treasure of the gospel has been entrusted to His earthly vessels, even though we are imperfect, subject to infirmities, limitations, anxiety, unsteadiness, and insecurity. We are His chosen earthy vessels; we are weak, fragile, flawed, cracked, and leaky.

God has placed this saving gospel and its glory in those who have put their trust in Him. We are nothing. Yet He chooses to fill us with His glory and release the treasure of His precious fragrance into a lost and dying world. His glory is released through pressures that come into our lives.

SURRENDERED VESSELS

When we desperately seek answers to what God is doing in us through other people, we sometimes bypass seeking the Lord's counsel in the secret place of prayer. In some cases it seems that God intentionally sets up a scenario where our phone calls, e-mails, or text messages are not responded to. He does this so that we will drop to our knees and cry out to Him instead of seeking others for answers. God wants us to come to Him humble and weak, to break us from self-seeking so that our dependence will rest on Him and Him alone.

Jacob was left alone in the wilderness, where it was dark, and He wrestled with God until daybreak. He would not give up until the angel blessed him. The Lord changed Jacob's name to Israel, which means "He strives with God." Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning "face of God," because he had seen God face-to-face and lived.

Back in the early eighties when I was living in darkness in sunny California, I was lying down on the lawn in the front my house and had a miraculous encounter with Jesus! As I was looking up into the clouds, I became astonished as I witnessed the cloud formation slowly change into the face of Christ! This vision left a lasting impression on me until I finally surrendered my life to Him twelve years later. Likewise, He is calling us to a face-to-face encounter with Him.

We must get alone with God and seek Him even if we, like Jacob, wrestle with Him and leave limping. Jesus wants us to give up the reigns and control, yet our flesh wants to fight to get our own way. But we end up fighting God Himself. Do not let Him go. He desires to meet us in our darkest hours, in the midst of our trials of loneliness, pain and suffering. Yet He loves it when we finally repent, surrender, yield, and allow Him to have His way.

THE VOICE OF WISDOM

Jesus is calling us to seek Him for wisdom. He wants to instruct us regarding what we should do in this hour of darkness. He wants to bring us peace, safety, faith, understanding, and security.

Turn to my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you. (Proverbs 1:23 NASB)

But he who listens to me shall live securely and will be at ease from the dread of evil. (Proverbs 1:33 NASB)

Make your ear attentive to wisdom, incline your heart to understanding; for if you cry for discernment, lift your voice for understanding. If you seek her as silver and search for her as for hidden treasures; then you will discern the fear of the Lord and discover the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding. (Proverbs 2:2-6 NASB)



HE IS CALLING YOUR NAME

"Now, therefore,' says the Lord, 'turn to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.' So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the Lord your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; and He relents from doing harm" (Joel 2:12-13 NKJV).



The Lord is longing for a surrendered heart, a radical God lover who is willing to die in order to live for Him, willing to lose his or her life so Jesus will win, willing to be weak so He can be strong, and willing to be emptied of self and sin to be filled with His glory.

He is breaking open our vessels, mind-sets, old ways, dreams, and desires so that His purity, holiness, and fragrance will be released like the sweet perfume of a rose. When we spend time with our fragrant Rose, we will come away smelling like a rose and will be fragrant to a lost and dying world.

Can you hear Him? He is calling your name, saying, "Come to Me. I am your Rose of Sharon. I am your treasure. I am calling you to come out from the midst of your darkness. I love you, My beloved one. My arms are open wide. Can you see Me? Here I am; come to Me."

He will give us treasures and riches in the secret places of sweet intimacy with Him. There He will begin to unfold His revised plan for our lives. He will give us the riches and treasures we need to be launched into the light of day. Soon we will see the ground cracking open, a new leaf, a beautiful treasure, beginning to emerge.

Will you return to the Lord and allow Him to deal with you during the dark days of trials? He has treasures and riches stored up for you, waiting to be revealed by the light of His love. But you must draw near to Him in this hour. Then you will become His mighty glory carrier, and His fragrance will be released into the earth like never before!