

Short & Sweet: Bitterness or Betterness?



Bitterness or Betterness?

“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.”

Matthew 12:34b-35

When I was little, I was fascinated by treasure and treasure maps. I loved reading books about buried fortunes (*Nancy Drew and The Quest of the Missing Map* was a favorite). How exciting to follow a parchment map to the foot of a tree, and with spade in hand unearth a treasure.

Buried. Beautiful. Valuable.

X marks the spot.

Treasure is a key word in Mathew 6:35. In the original Greek it transliterates as *thesauros*, which means *a place to collect things and the place in which good and precious things are collected and laid up*. Interestingly, *thesaurus* also means a *casket*. Think for a moment.

A container for good, precious things or a casket for dead, lifeless things.

In my living room I have a cedar chest, a place where I collect precious things. It holds treasures of the past. Corsages ... diplomas ... love letters ... a wedding bouquet ... baby booties ... scribbly pictures ... handmade Mother's Day cards ... funny little birthday presents from funny little sons.

Why do I store mementos in my cedar chest? So I can remember; so I can relive again and yet again the beautiful memories my keepsakes invoke. As I hold a treasure in my hands, it continues to move and change me, to mold my soul.

The heart is like a cedar chest—a place to collect things. We decide what to fill it with. Good things. Lovely things. Beautiful things. But, we can choose to fill the heart with bitter things, reliving them over and over, wounding ourselves afresh with every remembrance, shredding our heart and shattering our soul. Bitter memories will also continue to change and mold us.

It seems then we have a choice.

What shall we store in the heart? At times we choose bitterness. Why?

I prayed for insight and an answer came clearly to my mind. We treasure bitterness because we feel something is owed to us, something feels unfinished.

But, when Jesus said, "It is finished," bitterness died on the cross. It was never meant to be stored in the heart to taint and poison. Give bitter memories to Jesus and trust Him to use them for good. Then, fill your heart with His life-giving Word. Hide it deep in the soil of your heart. His Word becomes buried treasure.

Precious. Beautiful. Valuable.

The Cross marks the spot.

"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things." Matthew 12:35

The choice is yours.

Action Points:

1. Ask God to search your heart and remove any bitterness lurking there. He promises to *remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.* Ezekiel 36:26
2. Check your heart by examining your tongue. What are you saying? Are you speaking words of life into your relationships, challenges and trials or words of bitterness and death? *“For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.”*
3. Pray the Word. Find scriptures that address your current challenges and pray them into your life. *“This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it.”* Joshua 1:8

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