A Christian's treasure is a liberated faith in God's future. . It is a faith that is so free it sees no limitations in its attempt to be committed to the discerned purposes of God. The Christian's treasure is a liberated faith that moves mountains because it is grounded in the abiding hope of the God who invites us into His life. A Christian's treasure is a liberated faith that makes possible all that was thought to be impossible. A liberated faith sees the upside of human convictions, it takes a step into the future, not knowing what can happen but yet feels unbelievably liberated, amazingly free to take that step into the future with God. A liberated faith is one that thrives on the assurance of things unseen, and because it believes in the possibilities of God's future, that faith builds up a storehouse full of treasure that no thief can steal or moth destroy.

I may not have told you this story about me but when I first arrived in the United States, in the middle of winter wearing a pair of sandals. I remember arriving at BWI airport and wondering what in God's name was going on. I remember my friend taking me to my first buffet and simply asking me to eat. I was a little hesitant because I had never been to a buffet before. And then after eating and eating, he asked that I try some ice cream. He said I could have as much as I wanted. After every round of ice cream he would ask me to have some more, and then I would ask the same question. Remember, it was the middle of winter and I had forgotten where I was. The moment I stepped outside the door of the restaurant, I quickly run back inside. I had never felt such cold before.

A liberated faith is like being at a buffet restaurant, and in fact for the first time, and asking about any limits to what you can eat, and then constantly being told that you are free to eat as much as you want in so far as you have the stomach for it. That is liberating, it is freeing. You wonder which food to eat, what to do with all this stuff. You feel overwhelmed by the abundance. It is the same with feeling the presence of God.

There are no limitations, you feed on God's abundance, abide in God's presence for as long as you have the stomach for it, and your heart can rest easy because you can look into that treasured future with God.

A liberated faith isn't about a formal assent to the doctrine of the church, or one that compels you to participate in the church's faith, but it is one that takes us personally captive-the love that refuses to let you

go. It sets you free, for as Jesus said, I came that you might be free and be free indeed-your treasure is the liberty of faith that moves you to hope in the future of God. And because you do not know when this future will come to pass, you stay woke. You don't grow weary either in waiting or doing good, you live not in anxiety but in anticipation.

Christians are often called the people of possibilities, because we believe in the possibilities of the future. For that reason we freely take on the task of God, and freely participate in the creative agenda of God. We know that if others can experience the freedom to which God invites us, we have to freely share our story with them. Over the past several weeks we have been talking about Lake Elkhorn Middle School and our growing relationship with that school. The point is we are not required to do anything. However, being a part of their story evolves from the idea that giving alms, and in fact giving in itself is part of our contribution towards the creative tasks of God. More than that, we are by our acts affirming that we believe in the future God has for each child.

A liberated faith is not one compelled by tradition or custom-for these hold us captive-requiring us to build treasure where thieves can steal or moth destroy, it is one which recognizes itself as the beginning of a freedom that renews the whole of life and overcomes the world. And because I can look into the future and see all the amazing possibilities, it compels me to dress for action, to stay alert, be awake, and be ready at all times for I know not when the master will arrive. But I want to be sure that when the master arrives, he will surely know that I have been waiting all along for his arrival and invitation into the future with him.

For the Christian then, true liberating faith means being possessed by the divine energy of life, and actually participating in that energy. Through trust in the God of the Exodus, and the resurrection, the believer experiences and partakes of this liberating power of God which turns our sins of scarlet into snow. This liberating faith requires you to offer no sacrifices or offerings for my sins. For the Lord says, sacrifices have I not desired, but a pure heart, a heart that is willing to will one thing, which is to be obedient and not rebellious.

A liberated faith makes us the free masters of all things, and subject only to one thing- love. It is this love which makes us ministering servants of all things and freely subjects to everyone. In other words, a liberated faith honors you with a freedom that makes you the master of all things and the

subject of love. And being the subject of love makes you a servant of all. For God's treasured future is dependent on those who are servants of all and masters of none.

A liberated faith brings us into the deepest truth that says we are in the image of an unlimited, unrestricted, unimaginable love. And when we forget that religion becomes a shield or a closed refuge instead of a way to boldly throw ourselves into a harsh world knowing that that is precisely where we will discover a generous God.

The week has been a difficult one because of the shootings and the divisions that often fuel some of these tragedies. The reality is that we have always been a divided society but it appears that our divisions have become all too visible and raw. Some of us wonder whether we can ever get through it and when. But I am an optimist. I know we will get through it because we are a people of possibilities, and that a liberated faith awakens trust in the still unrealized possibilities in human beings-in oneself, in other people and in God's future with us. Point is, there's an unbelievable potential in each of us. And for that I am reminded that God doesn't move mountains, but God gives us the faith with which to move mountains, and because of our liberated faith, the hitherto unexplored creative powers of God are thrown open to men and women-people like you and me who are to use that creative power for good, for the building of God's kingdom.

To have faith in a God of unconditional love is to realize how intimately close God is. He is so close we often forget His presence. In his own day Jesus was immersed in a violent culture, a culture of conflict and anxiety. But he also knew of the deeper truth hidden beneath the surface of human judgement, namely, that this broken, anxious world is oozing with God. The same Jesus invited us to have faith, to believe that the reign of God is among us and within us, he reminds us this morning that it is for the father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom-that treasured space where you feed not on your own abundance but that of God.

A liberated faith makes you vulnerable to love, and to love is to risk being rejected by the other. God takes a risk in loving us because the gift of divine love bears with it the possibility of refusal. God's love respects the independence and freedom of the other because love does not seek to control, dominate, or manipulate; rather love seeks to empower the other for the flourishing of life. A liberated faith trusts in the power of love within us to do incredible things because this love is God's unlimited power.

God doesn't move mountains, but gives us the faith with which to move mountains. Your treasure is a liberated faith that knows there's no mountain too big or too small. Hold on to it. Nurture it to love God for his sake only. For if I love you, what need have I of a coming world? None whatsoever.

Amen.