

Allen Pruitt

Do you ever just get up and go walking?

And do you find yourself  
in places you hadn't expected to be?  
Down in the dirt,  
picking up a rock you found,  
a rock that you've decided  
looks like something special?

Or shaking the flowers off a Crepe Myrtle in bloom,  
white  
or pink  
or purple snow  
falling in the heat of the summer,  
just floating down  
like something out of a Frank Capra movie.

What about when you hop in your car,  
with no particular place to go?

Our town can seem a little small sometimes.  
And then you drive over  
to a place like Hogansville  
and park in front of an interesting store,  
and inside - all sorts of kooky things:  
old mantels  
from long forgotten houses,  
oil cans once tossed aside  
and now old enough to seem like art,  
buckets full of doorknobs and hinges,  
which we might wish could tell us stories  
about what they have seen,  
*or we might not...*

We all have that impulse,  
 to get up,  
 to get out,  
 to go see.  
 Or at least I hope we do...

The late Fred Craddock,  
 preacher of stories,  
 would talk about it this way:

*I read something recently - I knew this, but I had forgotten about it -  
 that years ago people used to go out walking,  
 usually on a Sunday afternoon  
 - sometimes alone,  
 sometimes couples,  
 sometimes the whole family  
 - and they called it "going marveling."*

*Marveling.  
 They would look for unusual rocks,  
 unusual wild flowers,  
 shells,  
 four-leafed clovers,  
 marvelous things.*

*They would collect them,  
 bring them back to the house,  
 and show off the marvelous things they had found.*

*Isn't that a delightful thing,  
 to go marveling?<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Craddock, Fred. Craddock Stories. p. 65.

...Marveling.

Isn't that just wonderful,  
the idea,  
the notion

that we could just go out into the wild world  
and see what is marvelous?

I wonder how many of you have ever been on a treasure hunt?

Maybe you have done little treasure hunts for your children:  
birthday party games  
or even hide and seek after dinner,  
when little ones are so small  
that they can hide anywhere.

A house which to the parents may seem too small and overstuffed  
is an enormous wonderland to children,  
big enough to dream in,  
big enough to get lost in,  
certainly big enough to hide from their daddy,  
and only a giggle gives them away.

When is the last time you went on a treasure hunt?

When is the last time you set yourself about the task  
of looking for something of value?

Not searching for something you had lost  
and were anxious to find,  
but seeking for something never yet found  
and even the searching brings you peace,

something you might never find,  
something marvelous and hidden?

“For where your treasure is,  
there your heart will be also.”

Treasure and heart.  
Jesus is certain  
and he speaks plainly:  
heart follows treasure.

If you can find the treasure,  
you will soon find the heart,  
or at least know to be expecting it right soon.

There is only one treasure Jesus ever has in mind:  
kingdom treasure,  
the kingdom IS a treasure.

The Kingdom of God.  
We pray for,  
we wait on,  
we hope toward that day  
when it is on earth as it is in heaven.  
But for the time being,  
treasure,  
hidden treasure.

Seek and find it.

There is only one treasure Jesus ever has in mind,  
but we treasure all kinds of things.  
And our hearts follow right a long.

Heart follows treasure you know.

If you treasure something  
it will get into your heart.  
Good things,  
nasty things,  
petty things,  
kindness and righteousness too.

What do you treasure?  
Is that where you want your heart to be?  
Or are you ready to seek after new treasure,  
something marvelous and hidden?

Treasure and heart.  
But before all that,  
Jesus says something else.  
“Do not be afraid little flock,  
for it is your Father’s good pleasure  
to give you the kingdom.”

No need to fear,  
God is selling the kingdom for a song.

And so if all these possessions are weighing you down,  
if you are made anxious  
by the burden of acquiring and of maintaining,  
sell it all,  
give it away,  
and go searching for something else,  
something that won't ever wear out,  
"an unfailing treasure in heaven."

Everything fails though;  
that's the problem.  
Everything dies.

Jesus tells us to "***Make for yourselves,***  
*purses that do not wear out,*  
*an unfailing treasure in heaven.*"

But how can we make for ourselves  
anything that won't wear out,  
much less anything worthy of taking on up to heaven?

"Make for yourselves... an unfailing treasure in heaven."  
What is it that won't wear out?  
What kind of treasure can we make,  
or even find,  
that we can take with us all the way to heaven?

Love.

Love can be given away  
and doesn't run out.  
Love can be used again and again,  
and it never wears out.  
Love beckons us toward and follows behind us,  
all the way to heaven.

The love with which we love our children,  
with that same love  
they will one day love our great, great grandchildren,  
who we never knew,  
but who, through love, knew us.

I heard a story the other day.  
A man had a grandfather who loved him well.  
As the grandfather grew old he said to his grandson,  
"Take my axe;  
it belongs to you now."

A few years passed and the grandfather died;  
always the grandson treasured the axe.  
He cared for it,  
sharpened it.

When the handle broke  
he replaced it with the finest wood.  
When the head split,  
he found a blacksmith to make him a new one.

Year after year he cut wood for his family,  
and as he sweated,  
always he remembered his grandfather  
who had loved him so well.

Through the many years  
the axe was fitted with three new handles and two new heads,  
and when the grandson too became old  
and loved his grandson well,  
he passed along the axe.

“I want you to have my grandfather’s axe;  
it belongs to you now.”

Is it still the same axe?  
Three new handles,  
two new heads.  
Is it still the same axe?

It is not the same tool,  
the same instrument for cutting and splitting wood,  
that much is clear.

But is it still the grandfather’s axe,  
*his* grandfather’s axe?

Generations of work and warmth and food and fire  
have gone into and come out of that axe.  
Three new handles,  
two new heads  
and the hands of many generations:  
is it still *his* grandfather’s axe?  
Is it still worth passing along?



Good questions don't always have right answers.

But how else to hunt treasure,  
except by going on a quest.

And how else to quest,  
except by questioning?

It's hidden and hard to find,  
this treasure,  
any kind of treasure worth having really.

It's hidden  
and mysterious  
and something marvelous too.

Remember hunting for treasure?  
Remember how to get out  
and go looking at all the marvels of this world?

If you do,  
it'll lead you on toward the kingdom;  
it'll bring you nearer  
to the salvation of your soul,  
this treasure hunt we're on.

And besides all that,

it's fun.