

July 26, 2026

Pastor Kathy's printed sermon

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Amen

Today, my sermon title is... what or who is your treasure?

Taylor Roy McCreary was born in the year 1890 in a tiny house in Pigeon Hollow -- not too far from Schellsburg. He was poor, dirt poor, but most everyone else whom he knew was poor, also.

His family needed him at home – to gather and chop wood for fuel, to plant and maintain the vegetable garden, and to hunt for game for the dinner table. He left his one room school house for good after his 3rd year – but at least he could read some.

Taylor married a girl from Cessna, Anna Pearl Bowser, and they began a family. The first baby Jeremiah died from diphtheria and was buried in Cessna -- with a simple stone marker that had a **large J** scratched on it. It's still there.

And then 5 more children were born. Money was hard to come by, so Taylor decided to find work in the mine shafts of Cambria County. The work was dirty, hard, and dangerous, but the money was steady.

Pappy Taylor had always looked old to me, especially when I was a child. He had a nearly bald head with grey/white hair circling it like a long fringe. On the left side of his head with a big round knob. It was in the coal mine that Taylor received this knob when the roof fell in on him – injuring his head and breaking his back. He would never heal enough to again work underground.

Life was tough for the McCreary family. Only one child was old enough to find work. The rest of the family lived off the land – the grape arbor, the vegetable gardens, the fruit trees, fish from the streams, squirrels, rabbits, deer, and berries of every kind. They even ate ground hog, as I remember. And Grandma Anna Pearl knew how to make a good blackberry soup.

My family lived down the hill from Pappy and Granny – out in the country on a dead-end lane. Granny died when I was 5, so the only way that I knew this 50 some year old woman was from a half dozen pictures of her. And Pappy remained at the homestead.

He had lived, what we would call, a tough life. Not a life that I would call “blessed” as the Beatitudes in Matthew’s writing describe. But in my eyes -- Pappy Taylor was a **saint** – with a small **s**. He loved to talk about the Bible. He even **invited** the Jehovah Witnesses in every time that they came to his door! He read the Bible best that he could since and... even more important, he lived his love of Jesus.

I would walk up our country road to visit with him as often as I could. I **loved** to spend time with him. I remember him smelling like cherry tobacco from his pipe that was frequently lit and hanging from his lips. He always wore a flannel shirt and long-sleeve underwear...even in the summer time.

No matter what he was doing – working in his garden, white washing his fencing as he did ever summer, digging the grass out of his brick sidewalk with his pen knife – he always...always stopped to sit on his hickory rocker and talk with me. He was a calming, steady presence. Pappy made me feel good about myself. He made me feel as if I were beloved by giving me his time and attention. And since my homelife was not calm and steady...**Pappy was my treasure** and his memory still is precious to me. He was the safe place in my life. He was my living saint with a small **s**.

I’ll bet that those of you who worship here today also have a saint who made you feel safe and precious. Someone who loved you as Jesus loves you. Someone who was **meek** – not as in shy or backward – but as gentle, kind, compassionate, and caring.

Someone whom you **treasured** as Jesus treasures you.

Someone who was **patient** with you as only a grandparent, a parent, or a special friend can be. Someone in whom Jesus abided, and even if they never said so – you knew it.

These are our “living saints,” and after they physically die on earth, they continue to dwell in our hearts as examples of Jesus’ disciples. They are not only “blessed” in their eternal lives, but they were the guides who showed us how to live a Christian life. They are not Saints with a capital **S** – as people in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches who had gone through the process of being declared Saints, and often times were said to have done miracles.

These are our personal saints with a small letter **s**, who have lived a good life and shared a recognizable relationship with Jesus Christ. They have been examples of the Beatitudes

– **meek**, not shy or timid, but patient and lacking resentment and not boastful; **peace makers**, who aim to strengthen our relationships not destroy them; **pure in heart** because they recognize that God lives inside their very being.

I would wager that everyone in this room is a saint to someone. Brothers and Sisters, there is someone who looks at your life today and how you live it and senses the characteristics of Jesus dwelling in you – whether you realize it or not.

Christ lives in you, and his light shines out as a pathway to become a treasure to someone else.

And we are blessed that Jesus abides in us, dwells in us, tabernacles in us. We in turn, honor and treasure his precious presence by imitating Jesus in the world around us and shining **his light** to all whom we meet as his disciples.

Notice how all of the 5 parables point to God’s initiative.

God **plants** the mustard seed.

God **works** the yeast.

God **provides** the treasure.

God **offers** the pearl.

God **gathers** the fish.

Our response is **joy, trust, and discipleship** – not trying to earn the kingdom, but simply having the faith to accept it.

And I need to add something that struck me this morning. My Pappy probably would have never imagined that 7 decades later, a congregation in Everett would hear about *“a little girl walking up a country road to experience Jesus’ precious grace.”* He probably only thought that he was just simply loving his granddaughter.

Thanks be to God for his treasured gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen