

"X Marks the Spot"
Matthew 13:44
July 27, 2008
By Pastor Nancy Easton

Good Morning! Mrs. Enney is away on vacation this weekend. She and Mr. Enney are attending a reunion, where they are seeing many old friends and having a wonderful time. Next week, Mrs. Enney will be back in this seat, where she will again see many old friends—all of you—and all of you along with Mrs. Enney will have a wonderful time here. But today **I** get to tell a story, and I am very glad to do so. Plus, I'm glad to be able to **sit** and tell a story. Mrs. Enney is really lucky because she has a comfy chair to sit in while she talks with you. Usually I get stuck having to stand up there on the platform.

Anyway, I brought something to show you. What's it look like to you? (Show them a "treasure map.") It's a treasure map. Of course, it's pretend, and it isn't a real map of a real treasure. But when you're busy playing treasure hunter or pirates, you can make a pretend treasure map. Where do you think the treasure is hidden or buried? Where will it be found? (Help them see that where the "X" is on the map, the treasure is also.) Here, where you see the big "X" is where the treasure is located. That's how we get the phrase you sometimes hear—"X marks the spot!"

Pirates often looked for buried treasure that might be jewels or gold coins. Treasures are things that people believe are valuable and precious and important to them. People really want to find these valuable and precious things, and so they look for them, and once they find those valuable things, those treasures, they want to keep them.

My daughter Rebecca let me bring in to show you a little box she has in which she keeps some "treasures." Even the box looks a little bit like a treasure chest, doesn't it? Let's open it up and see what she keeps inside. Here are all kinds of "jewels" and shiny stones. Now, they're mostly pretend jewels, but they are pretty. I can see why Rebecca likes to keep them in this box. And down at the very bottom is her most precious stone. Let me show you it—it's a real slice of a stone that had a crystal that formed in it. It's called a geode.

Jesus told a story about buried treasure in our Bible lesson today. He didn't talk about pirates, but he did talk about a man who was walking along and found a treasure in a field. He really wanted that treasure, and it turns out the land was for sale. So he buried the treasure there, then went and sold everything he had, all so that he could go and buy that land, and then the treasure would be his as well. He was so happy and filled with joy because the treasure was his. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven, and being a part of the kingdom, being in a world with our loving God, is just like that—a treasure that we want more than anything, and it is worth everything.

But do we need a map to find that treasure, and is it buried or hidden somewhere? No—I think the treasure is right within eye-sight, always visible. I'm going to show you some places where the treasure is. You don't need to follow me, just stay there, and follow me with your eyes. (Go to the cross) X marks the spot! Jesus gave his life up for us on the cross, so that we would have life, and that's a real treasure. (Go to altar, set for communion) X marks the spot! The treasure God gives us is here in the meal of Holy Communion as it feeds us and makes us stronger. (Go to lectern) X marks the spot! The words we read from the Bible, God's story of his work with his children, are words to treasure. They are precious to us, and we learn from them. (Go to baptismal font) X marks the spot! The waters of baptism are a treasure—when you and I were baptized, God made wonderful promises about our lives under his care. And you can trust God to keep his promises. (Point to congregation) X marks the spot! Each and every person here is a treasure to you—they love you and pray for you as you grow. (Pat a few heads of the children) X marks the spot! **You** are precious in God's sight—real treasures! God made you, and now God pours his love and his power into you that you might be more and more like Jesus every day.

And if you're to be more and more like Jesus, will you hide yourself away like buried treasure? No! You'll share yourself and what God has given you with the people around you. You'll love your neighbor like Jesus loves us. You'll be a treasure to the people around you, for they will come to know God's love because of you.

And as Mrs. Enney would say . . . The End.