

# Unclaimed Treasure

By: Larry DeLong

Though the stories of people letting huge amounts of free money slip right through their fingers are rare, it nonetheless happens from time to time. One homeless man died penniless on Chicago's skid row because he had no address; therefore, the authorities were not able to contact him concerning a \$4 million inheritance waiting for him in England. Another person from the Houston area bought a winning lotto ticket worth \$12 million. Though this person was given 180 days to claim their winnings, he/she never came forward to receive their fortune; therefore, they lost it all. Since no one knows who the person is, the reason for not claiming their money remains a mystery. I don't condone gambling in any way; but the point is, small careless acts of not taking care of one's business can turn out to be very costly.

I can't imagine having a large fortune practically in your hip pocket and not taking the necessary steps to acquire it. Yet, such is the very thing billions of people are guilty of. Jesus Christ has paid the price for the "free gift" of salvation for every person who has ever lived or ever will live upon this earth. As Paul said in Romans 5:18, "*by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*" All we must do is take the necessary steps to acquire that gift. However, for some reason, most people let opportunity after opportunity slip right through their fingers, and they never take hold of their salvation.

The gift of salvation is greater than any earthly treasure one could ever dream of or hope for. Why? Because the treasures of this earth are fleeting and temporary, whereas the spiritual treasures are eternal. Most people who win big lotteries blow right through the money in a matter of a few years (with the help of new-found friends, of course), and often end up worse than before they won the money! Even if they do use a little financial sense and save most of it or build their fortune even more, they still cannot take it beyond the grave. That is why Jesus said in Matthew 6:19-20, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.*"

The person who won the lottery forfeited their fortune because they did not come forward with the winning ticket in time, and no excuses are accepted. So it is with those who do not take the necessary steps for their salvation – they forfeit their opportunity for eternal life. And when they stand before the great Judgment Seat, there will be no excuses accepted (Matthew 7:21-23). Do not throw away **your** fortune through worldly cares and reckless living. Obey the Gospel of Christ and live for Him every day so you can begin laying up treasures in Heaven. Claim your treasure today!