

Saturday "Sermon"

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November 3, 2007

Passwords

I recently bought a "thumb drive," one of those small USB devices you can put in your pocket for transporting digital files. While these tiny drives are very convenient, one of the dangers of their portability is that the little gizmos are not hard to lose, and if that happens, important information can be compromised.

The drive I bought came with some security software designed to protect against this danger. Using this software, I can copy files from my laptop to the thumb drive and then make them invisible to anything but the semi-secret program that created them. I had to play with the thing a while before I was convinced that my information was really on the drive, since I couldn't see it using any of my normal computer tricks.

The software is designed so that several passwords must be entered before the information becomes visible. This thing is so clever that there is some risk that, if I'm not careful, I can hide my own files from myself!

All of this reminded me of something Paul wrote in the Bible. Paul wrote about "*God's secret plan, which is Christ himself. In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Colossians 2:2-3).

In one of the Sherlock Holmes tales, the famed detective said that "If you want to really hide something, put it out where people can see it, and they'll overlook it." That's a lot like what God does with us.

There is nothing God desires more than for us to discover how much God loves us and to return that love, both in time and for eternity . . . but God wants our love to be genuine and completely uncoerced. In order to accomplish this, God's love has actually been made quite easy to discover, but it's hidden at the same time, in the very way Sherlock Holmes suggested, so that we have to want to find it: "*The heavens tell of the glory of God. The skies display his marvelous craftsmanship. Day after day they continue to speak; night after night they make him known*" (Psalm 19:1-2).

God's love is available to us both in the grandeur of creation and in the beauty of the Bible, but in each case the message is password protected to prevent discovery by any except those who truly desire to find it. And again, like Sherlock Holmes suggested, the Master Password is not really all that hidden. The password is JESUS. He, and only He, can unlock the mysteries our hearts long to know.