Treasure
By Bill Williamson

During Judith’s last weeks before her death in Gold Beach, Oregon, I was a frequent visitor at the Curry General Hospital. I was losing my life mate, and wife, to lung cancer. I was on a first name basis with many of the nursing staff. Of course some were better at caring for Judith than others.

One such nurse worked in both General Care, and the Emergency Room. She had just moved from Utah state, and appeared to be alone. Her name still is not known to me even as I write this. She had an unusual disposition toward her patients, caring for them in the gentlest of ways. When it was time for any kind of injection, she would pull a chair to Judith’s bedside and sit patiently while she administered the drug ever so slow. She explained that this was the proper way to do it to avoid discomfort to the patient. She approached every aspect of her duties in this way. We liked her a great deal.

On May 20, 1997, Judith breathed her last, only to leave us and join Jesus whom she loved dearly. Family members arrived from different parts of the Pacific Northwest.

During the week following her death, I awoke early every day to walk along the city beach by myself. I enjoyed the crashing waves of the surf. Members of the family and I would sometimes drive to Agate Beach, about eight miles away, on the days that the sun would prevail, and the wind was not too strong. It seems we invariably searched for Agates. The little children could scarcely find one. As I would often see small ones, I would point them out to those too small to find their own. I seemed to have little interest in the pretty stones. During my early morning walks I saw no Agates.

By the end of that first week all of the visitors had gone home. However, I continued to go to the beach daily, but not to Agate Beach. Instead, I walked along ‘Gold Beach,’ and it was not known for Agates. I arose around 5:00 A.M., and was on the beach by 6:00 A.M.. My walk along the beach, and back home, would take about an hour and fifteen minutes.

The first day that I walked alone, I had barely begun the trek along the sand when I spotted a large, beautiful Agate. It was larger, and more beautiful than any we had found earlier the week before at Agate Beach. I stooped and picked it up to examine it more carefully. It was golden orange in color had been wetted by the surf and the early sunlight shone through it wonderfully. I placed it in the pocket of my sweater and started on down the beach, my eyes darting back and forth looking for another. I suddenly felt the Lord speak these words to me, ‘Your treasure is not on earth, but is in heaven!’ I slowed and considered what I had just heard. I knew in a moment that I was not
to keep the stone. I retrieved it from my pocket and with one last glance I thrust it back to the beach where it came from. I continued my walk and had precious time with my Father along the way.

The next morning as I entered the beach area, I had not strolled far when my eyes fell upon an even larger, more beautiful Agate. I picked it up also, and then remembered Father’s words. I returned the stone back to its place on the sand. This scene was repeated every day for a number of days. One morning, I asked Father, ‘shall I always leave them?’

He replied to me, ‘I’ll tell you when it is the right one.’

I said, ‘I long for the treasure in heaven and these earthly treasures had no pull on me.’

As I neared the south jetty, where my walk along the sandy beach ended before I turned toward town and home again, I saw a lone figure coming my way. Soon, as she moved closer, I could see it was the nurse with no name. As I recognized her, she recognized me and waved. We talked a few minutes. She told me of her sorrow for the loss of Judith. We parted after a caring embrace there on the sand.

In all, I walked daily for two weeks, alone, each morning finding a single, large, beautiful Agate. I left each in place where I had found it. I came to expect to see one. I did not search them out. I simply walked and conversed with Father, admiring his exquisite creation. Nearly everyday one of the many sea lions would raise his head as he came in close to the beach. It seemed they were looking into my eyes. I loved these encounters. I would stop and talk with them for a moment, and then turn and walk away, as the sea lion dipped beneath the surf and disappeared again. Two more of these mornings I encountered the nurse with no name and we spoke briefly each time.

I had been settling matters in town, cleaning my apartment, and preparing to leave Gold Beach behind. My last full day in the area had come. I rose again at my usual time and strode off for the beach. My mind kept going to the Agate! I wondered about today.

As I left the paved surface of the beach parking area and took a few steps onto the beach, I asked Father, ‘Do I pick it up today, Lord?’

‘Yes,’ was the answer that came quickly. I turned and headed for the distant jetty. It was a lovely morning with Osprey flying overhead. They would fly far out over the ocean in search of fish to take to the young who were still in the nests in the large firs on the distant hillside above Gold Beach. Many sea lions were playing in the surf almost beyond where my vision was able to detect them.

I walked almost the entire stretch of beach, nearing the jetty. I suddenly remembered the Agate. I had not seen one. I usually did not search for them, but I always saw them before I arrived this far down the beach. As I was thinking about the Agate, suddenly a sea lion appeared some ten feet from the sand, near me. I turned, took several steps toward him, following the surf as it receded off the thick gravel bed along the beach. I stood and peered into his eyes as he seemed to be staring back into mine. It seemed almost a communication, although there was none. After a long look, he slipped downward to be seen no more. It may have been a good-bye!

Thinking about the sea lion, I turned toward the jetty, moving quickly away from the impending surf. My eyes fell upon the moist gravel bed ahead, and there it lay! A very large Agate! The surf had just rolled over it, making it wet, enhancing its brilliance in the early sunlight. My heart leapt! My heavenly Father had said to pick it up today. I reached and found it with my fingers and placed it in my palm. What a wonder it was, much larger than all the rest. I pushed it into my sweater pocket and looked up toward the jetty. There, in the distance near the jetty, a figure was coming my way. There was no one else on the beach except this lone figure and me. I asked Father, shall I give the stone to this person Lord. He answered, ‘yes, it is for her!’ At that moment I could
see it was the nurse with no name.

We both smiled as we reached one another. We talked briefly as I told her this was my last morning on the beach. I was to leave soon. We embraced for a long moment. I felt a hurt inside of her. Something she carried. Something she came to this beach that it might be covered over. Her eyes seemed to contain a tear as I reached into my pocket and pulled out the marvelous stone. I held it out to her. As I placed it into her hand, I said, ‘Father God wants you to have this to remember him by.’ She spoke nothing as I turned and strode away.

I did not look back, and I have no idea what transpired between Father and this wonderful nurse. She had been such a blessing to Judith. But, I knew that the faithful Lord that had directed my steps each morning to the single Agate, was smothering her right now with his love. She would begin to know God in ways she never had.

I thank you, Lord, for this opportunity to be blessed by you, as I obeyed your voice. Bless her Lord, with much love. Heal her hurts, Father!