

Text – Matthew 6:19-24

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[a] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³ but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.^[b]

Title: Choose Your Treasure

3000 words

Due 29th September

Main Point: We all have a treasure we are pursuing. We need to be sure we are desiring, planning for and acquiring the right one.

Introduction (150)

Hook

What would you be willing to do to get a million dollars?

There is something in each of us which is prepared to go to great lengths to acquire something precious.

We spend time, energy, money, we make difficult decisions, we might even neglect relationships, all to get our hands on something of great worth.

But, imagine spending the best years of your life, spending your life saving, neglecting and compromising relationships, only to find that this treasure you were pursuing is worthless.

Just monopoly money. Paper in the wind.

What a waste that would be. What a waste of a life.

In today's passage Jesus reminds us that we are all seek treasure, seeking something precious, by our nature. That is part of who we are.

He is not worried that we are pursuing treasure. He is worried about what kind of treasure you are pursuing. Are you chasing the right kind of treasure.

When you finally get our hands on it, will it have actual value or will it be worthless?

This is what Jesus is teaching us in this passage – Choose your treasure carefully

Outline

To help us work through this passage we will break it up into three parts,

First we will be looking at

1 - What treasure grips your heart? (v 19-21)

Second we will look at

2 - What Treasure influences your mind? (v22-23)

And finally we will look at

3 - What treasure controls your actions? (v24)

Part 1 – What Treasure Grips your Heart? V19-21 (900)

Exposition (450)

Link - Passage

So let us begin – What treasure grips your heart? Let us read verse 19-21 again:

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^[a] destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Treasure not limited to money

When Jesus says “treasure” it is not just limited to money. It includes money but it is much more than money. When you hear treasure, think of anything that you hold as precious. Anything that you prize the most. Think of it as the driving force of your life. That thing which gets you up in the morning. That thing which keeps you going when things are tough.

As humans we all treasure something. And Jesus does not tell us to stop seeking things which are precious. Seeking something precious is good and right.

But seeking a specific type of treasure must stop.

His command is very clear in verse 19:

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,

Does no treasure mean being poor?

What is Jesus talking about when he says “treasures on earth”? Is he saying that we must live from pay-check to pay check with no savings in the bank and no provision for the future?

Certainly not. This is not a command to be poor.

- The Bible is full of rich people who are God honouring.
- The Bible expects us to own property and money.
- The Bible expects us to be wise with our finances and provide for our families.

No, Jesus is not talking about being poor here, He is talking of something much more significant than the numbers of dollars in your bank.

Treasure on earth is whatever holds your affections

He is talking about what can take hold of your affections and loyalty in this world. When you think of earthly treasures you can think of

- Possessions, house, car, money.
- But it would also include health, physical ability, talent, gifting.

Do you see how this command from Jesus to not lay up for yourself treasures on earth is so much more inclusive than money.

This is a reality check. These things on the earth are all passing. These things are all prone to be destroyed, damaged or corrupted. These things can be taken from us. Robbed from us through illness, war, business collapse, inflation, accident, natural disaster, or the simple passing of time.

And of course, we will ultimately be parted from all of these earthly blessings through death.

In Heaven

But Jesus does not just give us a command to stop doing something. He also commands us to do something. He says:

but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven

What does he mean by that? What does it mean to “lay for yourself treasure in heaven”? How do we make deposits into this heavenly bank account?

1 Tim 6:17-19 give us a bit more detail on the idea of storing treasure in heaven. Let us turn there together.

¹⁷ As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸ They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹ thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Did you pick up on that in verse 18. How does Paul explain that we can store up treasure in heaven? We do good, we do lots of good works (rich in good words), we are generous and we are ready to share.

Basically we are to use our worldly things, all these blessings we have been given from God, for the Glory of God, the good of people and the advancement of his kingdom. The focus is on others, not on myself. It is on how I can serve and help other, not how I can maximize my happiness and my pleasure.

So when Jesus is saying *lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*, It is refereeing to a change in mindset. A completely different goal. In our human nature we seek treasure for our own good. But Jesus commands us to seek treasure for the good of others, to serve others and ultimately for the Glory of God.

Application (450)

What is your treasure

So what is your treasure? What do you prize most? What are you willing to pour your time and resources into? What are you aiming at

in life? This is not asking what your career of choice is, but what is the purpose of your career?

Jesus makes it clear that there are two targets. An earthly one and a heavenly one

Take this time to check yourself. Which target do you hope to hit. Which goal is in your heart? Are you storing up treasures on earth or in heaven.

Don't get me wrong. Aspiring for a good job, making investments, developing your gifts and talents are all good things. The danger is what place they have in your heart.

Is your career your everything?

Is your car, your house, your property your everything?

Is your health, strength, sense of humour your everything?

How would you feel if these were destroyed or taken away?

These things will not last, Jesus warns us. Don't make these your treasures. Instead Use these earthly gifts to make heavenly treasures which will last, which will never fade away, which will have eternal value.

Part 2 – What Treasure Influences your Mind? V22-23 (900)

Exposition (450)

So with these two treasures in mind, let us move on to the second section, where Jesus is asking us "What treasure influences your mind?"

Please read with me v 22-23 again.

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, ²³ but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Define eye

Jesus is using the eye as an illustration of our perception of the world around us. The eye here is talking about your understanding, your presuppositions, your arguments, your reasoning, your mind. It is the Lense through though which you perceive the world.

Here Jesus is giving us another reason for storing up treasures up in heaven. Not only do earthly treasures get eaten up and destroyed, but having your treasures on earth will result in you being full of darkness and confusion.

Bad eye

What does Jesus mean by a bad eye or a bad mind? We can make use of the illustration Jesus uses to help us here. A bad eye is one which is blurred, or troubled by double vision. That is the picture of the bad eye.

Jesus is saying, if your treasure is on earth, your mind will not think clearly or rightly about the world around you. Your mind will be influenced by prejudices, lusts and desires of this earth. Influenced by earthly treasures. There will be no clarity on how to think. No clarity on how to assess the influences and opportunities before you.

Jesus touches on a sad irony here. He touches on how blinding the pursuit of earthly treasure is. People perusing earthly treasure are convinced that they are seeing clearly. They are convinced that this is good and right and fulfilling. They think they see the light, while in fact they don't even realise they are blind. That is what Jesus is getting at when He says

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

How tragic, how sad. You think you are seeing clearly but in fact you are in great darkness. This is the reality of the one who is pursuing treasure on earth.

Good eye

But if your treasure is in heaven your eye will be good. That is you will think clearly about the world around you. You will think clearly about the influences and opportunities around you.

A person with a good eye, or a good mind, will see things clearly for what they are. That person will see the folly of pursuing worldly things. That person will be marked by spiritual understanding and perspective. Their thinking will be dominated and regulated by truth and not the clever lie of the world. They want to glorify God and serve people and that will motivate their thinking.

In verse 21 we learned that

where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Well these few verses could just as well be summarized as “Where your treasure is your mind will be also”

Your main aim in life, your treasure, will influence how you think, and as we will see soon, how you think will influence what you do.

Application (300)

What stops you from seeing clearly?

By nature we possess a mind which is bad and full of darkness, so we must be active to clear it and strive to see and think clearly.

Do you think that you see clearly?

If you think your perception of the world is absolutely crystal clear you are probably still blind. And what you think is light is in fact darkness. Do not be fooled by the wisdom of this world which makes you think you are seeing clearly. Don't let the words of Christ be true to you here *“If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”*

What is stopping you from seeing clearly? How do you think of the opportunities the world offers you? Some opportunities are blatantly

sinful. They allure to your fleshly desires but are clearly prohibited in scripture.

But it is not just evil things stop us from thinking clearly. Think of Luke 21:34 where Jesus says:

³⁴ *“But watch yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness (evil desires) and **cares of this life**, and that day come upon you suddenly like a trap.*

Even the cares of this life can trap you. Where to live, what to eat, your career, education, investment, holidays. All these and more are “cares of this life.

If your treasure is not in heaven, the cares of this life will trap you and warp your thinking

How are you training your mind to think clearly?

So how are you training your thinking? Yes first and foremost your treasure must be in heaven. That must be settled first of all.

But, as mentioned before, by nature we possess an eye which is evil. So we need to recognise this and work to clear our eye. So what do you feed your mind?

- What do you allow yourself to be influenced by?
- What do you watch?
- What do you read?
- What do you listen to?

Does it help you think clearly about the world around you? Or does it blur your vision? Does it reinforce truth or the lies of this world? Not only in your endeavours to learn but also in your entertainment and recreation.

What are you feeding your mind? Can you say: Yes and Amen Phil 4:8 when in concerns the things you read, watch and listen to?

⁸ *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

Do you help your mind to be filled with truth and light?

Part 3 – What Treasure controls you actions? V24 (900)

Exposition (450)

So having thought about what treasure controls our heart and what treasure controls our mind, it brings us to our third and final point “What treasure controls your actions?”.

We can see the progression which Jesus is driving towards: What is precious to your heart, will affect the way you think, which in turn will affect the way you act.

Look at verse 24 again

²⁴ *“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”*^[b]

Serving Money

Jesus is talking about service now. The things you actually do. These are your actions, your active choices to do or not do something. And again we have a contrast of two opposing things. Serving God or serving money. Serving the king of kings or serving the kingdom of self.

And the key thing he drives home is that it is impossible to serve both. We cannot fool ourselves that some devotion to money is acceptable as long as we balance it out with some Christian stuff.

No, He says, You will either hate the one and love the other.

You will either calculate your every move, setup situations, take opportunities, interact with people and behave in such a way to maximize what money and wealth can do for you.

Or you will calculate your every move, setup situations, take opportunities, interact with people and behave in such a way to maximize what God wants of you.

You are either hoping to get blessing from money or trusting God for blessing.

But money and God give you opposite commands. They require different things from you. Their commands pull you into different directions.

God commands you to walk by faith, money commands you to walk by sight

God commands you to be humble, money commands you to be proud.

God commands you to be generous, money commands you to keep it all.

God commands you to look to eternal things, money commands you to look to temporal things.

God commands you to store up treasures in heaven, while money commands you to store up treasures on earth.

Money makes for a great slave, but a terrible master. We must use money to serve God. It is a mere tool to be put into his service.

Money makes a terrible master, not only because it is deceitful and never satisfied but mainly because it takes our service and devotion from our rightful master

You cannot walk in two directions at the same time. It is impossible.

Jesus demands single-minded and wholehearted followers. Anything less is not acceptable. It is impossible to be devoted to both God and money. If you serve money, it is a display of hatred and rebellion against God.

Application (450)

Do you see how serious this is? The love of money and worldly things impacts our soul. It attacks your allegiance to Jesus as king.

There was a man who lived a long time ago. He was seen to be a Godly man. He was a dedicated follower of Christ. He saw God do mighty works. God even used him to do miraculous works. He healed the sick and even drove out demons. Yet this man was a lover of money and when an opportunity presented itself, he betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. Judas who walked along side Jesus, served money and it destroyed him

So take some time to ponder the choices you make, the opportunities you take, the things you pursue.

Do you listen to the promises money make?

Do you trust God for your happiness or believe that more money would make you happier.

Do you live your life for the pursuit of money instead of using your money to pursue God?

What do your actions reflect about who you are serving?

Saying yes to serving money means saying no to serving God. There is no both-and scenario here. It is one or the other.

When are you prepared to put in the hard yards?

Another way you can search yourself is by asking yourself what are you prepared to put in the hard yards? When are you happy to work late and do those extra tasks.

When times gets busy what do you neglect?

When money gets tight, where do you cut back on?

Ultimately who do you listen to: the commands of God or of money?

Conclusion (150)

We are either serving God or serving money

Our actions reveal who we serve.

And who we serve reveals how we are thinking about this world.

And how we are thinking about this world reveals where our treasure is.

Either On earth or in heaven.

And so in closing I want us to remember the command of Jesus in this passage. Everything else we looked at today was to persuade us to take this command seriously,

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven

If you want your service to be to God and God alone, don't start by trying to change your actions.

If you want you thoughts to be thinking rightly, don't start by trying to change the way you think.

If you want to serve God and think rightly, your treasure must be in heaven.

The most precious thing to you must be to glorify God

And then you will think right, and act right and your service will be to God

Let us pray.

