



Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture

SERMON TEXT: Matthew 6:19-34

KEY POINT(S): If we find our true security and beauty in God, we won't look for it foolishly on Earth.

FOR LEADERS

- *Preparing through Prayer!* This Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, and this year we'll be preparing our hearts for Easter through some intentional prayer for the next 40 days! The prompts will be available via Realm, our website, Facebook and Instagram, so if you'd like to pray along with us, be sure to encourage your group to visit the website!

GETTING STARTED

- [1] Icebreaker** – “What was your most favored possession as a child?”
- [2] Communities Video** - Watch this week's Communities video!
- [3]** What were some things that stood out to you from the sermon this week? Was there anything you found particularly impactful or eye-opening?

THE CHALLENGE OF MONEY

Throughout our study of the Sermon on the Mount, we have seen Jesus repeatedly point us to heart issues, and address how simple actions reveal deeper motives in our hearts. Here again, Jesus points us to another issue of the heart in examining greed and money.

- [1]** Why do you think people so often have difficulty speaking honestly about money?
- [2]** In what ways do you think churches have compromised their ability to speak honestly and compellingly about topics of wealth and/or finances? How has this damaged the Church's witness to culture and how might we regain credibility in this area?
- [3]** In your opinion, what role(s) does money play in personal fulfillment or happiness?
- [4]** Have you ever seen anyone destroyed by an obsession with money, whether through wealth or poverty?

Leaders: Money is a tool. It's amoral, meaning that it, in and of itself, has no morality. It's what we DO with money that truly matters, and it's our actions with money that reveal our true heart motives. You can think of money like a brick – A brick isn't good or evil, it's just a brick. But I can take that brick, and I could smash it through a window, or otherwise use that brick to build a school, a hospital or a church. It's the motivation of my heart that truly reveals my ability and skill to handle the tool, and it is much the same with money.

WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS

In the sermon, Ryan explained how money can often blind us to our own reality within a highly wealthy, American culture. He went on to explain that a common trap of our culture is that gradual increases of income often correspond to increases in our standard of living, which is why so many of us unintentionally find ourselves laying up treasures on Earth.

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 6:19-24.



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- 15]** In your own words, what do you think Jesus means when He tells us to lay up treasures in Heaven, rather than on Earth? What does that really look like, and how does it relate to how we use money?
- 16]** What are some examples of things we may often take for granted in our (exceedingly wealthy) culture and cause us to overlook how wealthy we truly are?
- 17]** In your opinion, why do you think it is so hard for people to avoid “laying up treasures on Earth,” and where have you found this to be a challenge in your own life?
- 18]** What does the way in which we spend money reveal about our own hearts and our walk with Christ? Where do you personally feel you could stand to be wiser in how you handle money?

Leaders: Jesus’ statement of “where your treasure is, there your heart is also,” is actually twofold. First, it means that we can identify what we truly treasure by evaluating what we spend our money on. Look at someone’s checkbook, and it will reveal to you what it is they truly love. But there’s also a second meaning to this as well, and it’s that our heart will often follow our treasure. We spend money on what we care about, and our hearts will begin to adorn the things in which we invest ourselves in. For example, we often relish the opportunity to tell someone about our favorite show or movie on Netflix, and invest hundreds (if not thousands) of dollars a year on entertainment, and share with anyone who will listen about how funny / intense / intriguing / brilliant a certain program was...but when it comes to sharing our faith are we anywhere near as zealous? Even by half? Am I just as willing to spend \$10 for someone I don’t know as I am to spend \$10 on a movie? Keep in mind that it’s not the same for everyone. For some (like me), it’s entertainment, but for others it’s comfort, convenience, security, image, or desire to please our friends or our kids. Your bank account will show you which it is.

A MATTER OF THE HEART

In the sermon, Ryan mentioned that neither security or beauty can truly be obtained through riches, but only through God. He went on to say that it is foolish for us to somehow look at money as a solution for our lives, whether that through either hoarding it or spending it.

Ask for a volunteer to read Matthew 6:25-34

- 9]** Do you think Jesus is being idealistic here? Explain, and, given your answer, what do you think is His major point?
- 10]** In what way(s) does our culture feed the narrative that money can somehow buy beauty and security?
- 11]** Obviously, Jesus doesn’t intend that we should be neglectful or irresponsible toward finances, but how do we live well as good stewards and managers for our wealth, without falling victim to idolizing money?
- 12]** What are some examples or patterns that you strive to live by in your own life, and where do you personally feel you could stand to grow in faithfulness in this?

PRAYER

- 1]** Pray that God would reveal areas of greed in your life, or areas where you are finding security, beauty or happiness in the things of this world rather than in Heaven.
- 2]** Pray that God would help you to truly trust Him as our Provider, and that we would be faithful in where He calls us to handle our own wealth.