

Part Eight
Treasure in Heaven
Matthew 6:19-24

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust 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!

²² “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.

STUDY

1. READ

- a. What kind of earthly treasures is Jesus referring to in verses 19-20?
- b. What does Jesus say in verse 24 about money?

2. MEANING

- a. What are heavenly riches and how do we store them up?
- b. What does Christ mean by saying where our treasure is so is our heart?
- c. What does “eye” refer to in Matthew 6:22-23? What do you think is a healthy eye and an unhealthy eye?

3. APPLY

- a. How do we square Jesus’ command not to store up with the need to provide for our families, including their future? What are some ways you are aiming to store up treasures in heaven while also providing for your family?
- b. How can we discern what our treasures are? What are the treasures that you have to guard your heart against idolizing?
- c. What are some general principles to practice the discipline of simplicity and not storing up earthly treasures?

NOTES ON THE PASSAGE

v. 20 – **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven** suggests that we often have a choice between activities that lead to greater rewards on earth in the present or those that could store up greater future rewards in heaven. The results of making a poor choice can have disastrous consequences (see Mark 8:36; Luke 12:20-21).

v. 21 – Throughout Scripture, the **heart** often refers to the center of one's being including one's emotions, logic, and will.

vv. 22-23 – The eye is a **lamp** that reveals the quality of a person's inner life. A **healthy** eye (clear vision) suggests loyal devotion to God, while a **bad** eye (impaired vision) implies moral corruption.

v. 24 – The word **serve**, as it is used here, implies the work of a slave rather than an employee. In Jesus' day, a slave is the property of a single master, and therefore he works exclusively for the master. Jesus is saying here that a disciple can only serve one master, either **God** or **money**, but not both.

COMMENTS

Verses 19 through 24 focus on identifying the treasures we seek and whether they are heavenly or earthly. In verses 19 through 20, Jesus specifically focuses on how earthly possessions are temporary and fleeting. Jesus points out that to be concerned with material possessions not only shows a wrong perspective, but it is also foolish since earthly possessions will not last. Heavenly treasures in contrast cannot be stolen or destroyed. In these verses, Jesus does not tell us what heavenly treasures are. But in 1 Corinthians 3:11-15, we see that heavenly treasures build up the kingdom of God. We learn that works that build upon the kingdom will be eternally rewarded.

In verse 21, Jesus gives a clear warning about discerning where our heart is. Jesus is imploring us in this verse to do the tough work of discerning where our heart is and therefore, where our idols might be. In order to discern our hearts, we should ask ourselves 1) what occupies my thoughts when there is nothing else to do?, 2) what is it that I fret most about?, 3) what or whom do I most dread losing?, 4) what things am I measuring others by?, and 5) what is it that I cannot be happy without? When we identify an idol, we should replace it by putting our focus back on Jesus and building up His heavenly kingdom.

Verses 22 through 24 might initially appear confusing, but essentially Jesus is saying that loving earthly riches runs the risk of creating spiritual blindness. In verse 22, healthy can denote generosity. Therefore, a person with a healthy eye is a person with a generous heart. Meanwhile in verse 23 the person with an unhealthy eye is often greedy or stingy. In verse 24 Jesus lays out a stern warning that earthly riches tend to master us and control our lives. We can only have one master – God or something else. Is Jesus saying here that we should get rid of all of our material wealth? Not necessarily. If our material wealth tends to consume us, we might be better off if we give some of it away, but we all need some money to provide for our family and take care of our needs. The point that Jesus is making is that God must be put first in front of all other material riches. To practice simplicity, we must learn to be content with what we have and to distinguish between a need and a want. Other strategies are to practice generous giving, live within our means, live by faith, and remain humble.

References

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