

"The Proper View of Wealth"

Part 2

Matthew 6:19-34

Introduction: Last week in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we looked at an introduction to Matthew 6:19-24. In our study we looked at several thoughts:

1. The false teaching of the religious leaders.

The religious leaders had poisoned the minds of the people of their day with their teaching on money. The religious leaders taught that wealth was a sign that God was well pleased with how you were living and the flip side of that would be anyone who struggled to make ends meet would be living in a way that offended God. We can see the result of their false teaching in the response of Jesus disciples to a statement which Jesus had made.

Matthew 19:23-25

²³ *Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

²⁴ *And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

²⁵ *When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?*

We also looked at what it was that motivated the religious leaders and that was greed.

Luke 16:13-14

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¹³ No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

¹⁴ And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him.

2. We also looked at what is NOT being taught in this passage.

Notice Matthew 6:19-24

Many have used this passage to teach that we as believers are to possess very little as we go through this life and to have some of the luxuries of this world is a sin. But that is not what Jesus is teaching here. The word "treasures" in verses 19, 20, 21 is the very word we get our word "thesaurus" from. A "thesaurus" is a treasury of words that have been stock piled. The idea here in this passage is that we are not to stock pile stuff. We are not to gather more and more of stuff that we will never use.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with buying things that are useful in our lives. There is nothing wrong with buying that which we can use in the lives of other people.

1 Timothy 6:17

¹⁷ Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;

Jesus is talking here about hoarding stuff that will just be laid up for the purpose of just possessing it.

Matthew 6:19a

¹⁹ **Lay not up for yourselves** treasures upon earth,

The words "lay up" here help us to better understand what Jesus is saying. If we **lay** something **up** that means that it is not being used. So in those 2 words we can see that Jesus is speaking about gathering more and more stuff for the purpose of just possessing it.

I. Where is Your Heart?

Part 2

Notice Matthew 6:19-24

Now I believe in order to understand the thoughts behind this passage we need to understand the history of Jesus' day.

In Biblical days wealth was not kept as it is in our day today. There were no bank accounts, no stocks, no bonds, and no banks to store your money in. Instead their wealth was in 3 separate commodities. It was garments, grain, and precious metals. Let me show you some verses that will support this.

Joshua 7:1

But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the LORD was kindled against the children of Israel.

Joshua 7:20-21

²⁰ *And Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus and thus have I done:*

²¹ *When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it.*

Achan took that which was valuable from the city of Jericho, the garment, the gold and the silver. Let me show you another passage.

2 Kings 5:1-5

Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper.

² *And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife.*

³ *And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.*

⁴ *And one went in, and told his lord, saying, Thus and thus said the maid that is of the land of Israel.*

⁵ *And the king of Syria said, Go to, go, and I will send a letter unto the king of Israel. And he departed, and took with him ten talents of silver, and six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.*

When Naaman desired to have Elisha come to heal him of his leprosy he sent his messenger to Elisha with gold, silver, and 10 changes of garments.

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Just from these 2 accounts we can see that wealth was in garments and precious metals. Now let me show you one more that will help us to see it was also in grain.

Luke 12:16-19

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Here is a parable of a man whose fields brought forth a great harvest and so he built barns to store his wealth which was grain and in verse 21 Jesus referred to his grain as treasure.

Now let us get back to our text.

When Jesus is speaking the words of **Matthew 6:19-24** He is thinking of wealth in three commodities; garments, grain, and precious metals.

Notice Matthew 6:19

There are 3 things which Jesus speaks of here that were a concern for those who had invested in garments, grain, and precious metals.

1. **Moths** - Because the people of Jesus day had their wealth invested in garments moths were a major concern. Now just to help you to see that Jesus is speaking about storing up more and more stuff or hoarding and He is not saying that we cannot have any of the comforts of this world He uses the word "moth". Think with me for a moment. When moths get into you garments, do they eat them while they are on your body or while they are stored? If the moths are eating your garments while you are wearing them then you need to move a little faster. Moths eat that which is in storage. Therefore, the reference to the moth helps us to see that Jesus is speaking here about stuff that is stored up and not being used. He is not speaking about the things you have and use in your everyday life.
2. **Rust** - This is a very interesting word. When you read this word you automatically think about a car rusting or some other type of metal that the rust deteriorates. That is not the idea here. The word "rust" here in this verse means "to eat". Remember the 3 commodities? They were garments, *GRAIN*, and precious metals. The main concern you would have if your investments were in the storage of grain in Jesus day would be the chance that mice and rats could get into your grain supply and they would eat away your wealth. I believe that is the very idea that Jesus had here. Many of Jesus day had barns filled with grain and there was always the concern of rodents getting to the supply.
 - ❖ In 2008 about 50% of grain that was stored in India was eaten by rodents. There was a big push for the people of

India to start eating rats and they were being promoted as a delicacy. (BBC News August 13, 2008)

3. **Thieves** - They had to be concerned their garments were not eaten by moths. They had to be concerned the rodents did not eat their grain and they had to be careful thieves did not steal their precious metals. Now there is in this statement a very interesting thought. The phrase says that thieves would "break through and steal". The words "**break through**" actually mean "**dig through**". Let me show you where people would often hide their precious metals.

Matthew 13:44

⁴⁴ *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.*

People would often hide their treasure in a field or inside their home somewhere. Many of the homes were made from dirt and so the thief would "**dig**" through the house or he would "**dig**" up the field in hopes of finding that which the wealthy man had buried.

So, in Jesus day the gathering of earthly stuff for personal satisfaction brought with it a great deal of anxiety because of all the ways in which it could be lost.

Application:

We invest in different ways today but the bottom line is that when we gather the stuff of this world as our treasure we face the very same anxieties. If your treasure is in stocks you worry about the stock market crashing. If your treasure is in land you are concerned that the

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price of land will go way down. If your treasure is in homes you worry about the market taking a dive and the worries just go on and on.

Some people say, "Well I have my investments in the bank", some say, "I have a security system on my house", I have heard people say, "I bought a large safe and it is all locked inside."

I say this, "Someday you will lose it and it will belong to someone else." I know this because when you die they only put one thing in the box and that is you.

I read a story about a wealthy man who had died and his family gathered for the reading of the will. When the attorney came in the room to read the will one of the family members could not contain themselves and they shouted to the attorney, "How much did he leave?" The attorney replied, "He left it all. He took nothing with him."

I read another story of a man who had inherited a couple hundred shares of oil stock. He was a believer and when he received the stock he began to watch the market and it came to the place where all he could think of was his oil stock. So he went to his Pastor and said he would like to give him a gift and he gave the oil stock to him. The Pastor received the oil stock and the very same thing happened to him. The concern for the stock began to consume him and he finally sold it.

These 2 stories are exactly what happens to us when we lay up for ourselves treasures upon earth.

There is only one place where investments are 100% secure.

Notice Matthew 6:20

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Jesus now speaks of a place of investment where there is no anxiety connected with it at all. That place of investment is heaven. As I read this verse there is a question which comes to my mind, "What are the treasures of heaven?" He tells us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven but He does not tell us exactly what heavenly treasure is.

I believe our answer is found in a parable in Luke 16.

Luke 16:1-9

And he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

² And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

³ Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.

⁴ I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

⁵ So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

⁶ And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

⁷ Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

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⁸ *And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.*

⁹ *And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.*

Verse 9 contains the answer we are looking for.

Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness;

The meaning here is that we are to invest the wealth of this world into the lives of people. The word "**mammon**" here refers to "**money**" the word "**unrighteousness**" does not mean money is evil. It means that money has no righteous value in and of itself. But money can be used in a way that eternal rewards will be harvested from the proper use. Let me show you the result;

that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.

The word "**fail**" means to "stop living" or "die". Jesus is telling us here that we are to invest money into the lives of people and when we get to heaven we will be greeted by those who were saved because of the financial contributions which we made.

The treasures Jesus speaks of in **Matthew 6:20** are the souls of people.

Conclusion:

We have two options as we pass through this life. We can invest in the stuff of this world which we will one day lose or we can invest in the souls of people which will last for all eternity.