

"The Proper View of Wealth"

Part 4

Matthew 6:19-34

Introduction: I would like to take a moment to reflect back over the Sermon on the Mount. In this Sermon Jesus has touched on many areas of the believer's life:

- ✓ In Matthew 5:1-12 He spoke about how we should view of ourselves when He spoke of the Beatitudes.
- ✓ In Matthew 5:13-16 Jesus spoke about how we should view the world when He spoke of us being the salt and light of the world.
- ✓ In Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus spoke about how we should view the Scriptures as He spoke of the eternity of His Word.
- ✓ In Matthew 5:21-48 He spoke about how we should view morality.
- ✓ In Matthew 6:1-18 Jesus spoke of 3 religious services: giving, praying and fasting and how these practices should be carried out in our lives.

Then we come to the section we are dealing with: Matthew 6:19-34 and here He speaks on the subject of material things. As He speaks in these verses however we can see there are really 2 sections within these verses:

- ✓ In Matthew 6:19-24 Jesus deals with the luxuries of life or we could say that which is over and above what we need for everyday living.
- ✓ In Matthew 6:25-34 Jesus will deal with the necessities of life; these are the things which are needed for everyday living.

Wednesday August 28, 2013

There is one verse which I skipped and it was Matthew 5:20. This is the key verse in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:20

²⁰ For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

As we have been moving through our study of the Sermon on the Mount we can now better understand why this is the key verse. The scribes and the Pharisees had poisoned the minds of the people with their teaching. These religious leaders had twisted and distorted the Word of God to fit their own sinful lifestyles and by doing that they had confused many people.

In the present section we are dealing with (wealth) their teaching had poisoned the minds of the people. They had taught that an abundance of wealth was a sign that God was well pleased with your life. They also believed that to be poor was to be out of favor with God. Their teaching was motivated by greed.

Luke 16:13-14

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.

Wednesday August 28, 2013

Therefore, because of the false teaching of the religious leaders about the subject of wealth Jesus spoke about how people of His kingdom should view wealth in Matthew 6:19-34.

As Jesus began His teaching in this section He started by showing the security of investing eternal treasures.

Notice Matthew 6:19

Jesus begins this section by showing how investments in the things of this world will not last. He is speaking in verse 19 about storing or stock piling or hoarding stuff which we will never use but we "squirrel" it away just to know that we have it. In Jesus day there were 3 commodities which people invested in: grain, garments and precious metals.

So, there were 3 dangers they had to be concerned with if this was where they invested all of their extra wealth. They had to be concerned about moths for they will eat clothing that is stock piled away. They had to be concerned about rust (the word actually means to eat and probably refers to the dangers of rodents eating the grain). Grain that is stored away can be quickly consumed by mice, rats, and bugs. They also had to be concerned with thieves who break through and steal. The words "break through" actually mean to "dig through". There were no First National banks in those days so if a person invested in precious metals they would often bury their treasure in their fields and thieves would often dig through the fields of the wealthy search for their buried treasure.

Therefore, to invest your extra wealth in stuff of this world brings great concern.

Notice Matthew 6:20

Wednesday August 28, 2013

Jesus then went on and spoke of the security of investing in eternal treasures. In our studies we looked at what eternal treasures are and we concluded they are the lives of other people. Every dollar which is invested into the lives of other people will gather interest in heaven. That which keeps a person from giving to those in need is greed. People will not give because they are fearful they will suffer loss.

Proverbs 19:17

17 He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the LORD; and that which he hath given will he [God] pay him again.

To give to the poor is to give a loan to God and He promises to repay that which is given.

Notice Matthew 6:21

Here in this verse Jesus tells His disciples that investments are a matter of the heart. Last week in our study we looked at the revival in Nehemiah's day and we were able to see that when the heart is right with God our investments and our giving will also be right.

I. Where is Your Heart?

Part 4

Notice Matthew 6:22-23

These 2 verses contain a truth which we need to pay very close attention to. These 2 verses contain an illustration which Jesus gave to help His disciples and us to understand that our investments are a matter of the heart.

Jesus uses the eye here for an illustration. In the verses He tells us that if the eye is that which allows light into the body and if the eye is

Wednesday August 28, 2013

clear then the entire body is full of light. But if the eye is cloudy or blinded the light is blocked from the body and the body is then full of darkness.

The idea here is that if our focus is upon spiritual matters then all areas of our lives will be exposed to the light of God's Truth and everything will be done for His honor and glory. But if we are focused upon the things of this world it is then we are blinded to much of God's Truth and so we are walking in darkness.

That is the thought behind these verses. But there is a richness here that I don't want you to miss. Let us keep in mind that these verses are set in the context of proper investments or to be more specific, investments into the lives of other people (people are eternal treasures).

There are several words here we need to look at very closely to see their meaning and then we can see the richness of these verses.

The first word we need to consider is the word "single". The word means "healthy" here but I really believe Jesus had another idea in mind when He used this word. You see this word comes from a root word. The root word has a very interesting meaning for it means "generous". Let me show you some other places where the root word is used.

James 1:5

⁵If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

It is translated here "liberally" and means "generous".

Romans 12:8

Wednesday August 28, 2013

⁸ *Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.*

It is translated here "simplicity" which means "generously".

2 Corinthians 9:11

¹¹ *Being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God.*

It is translated here "bountifulness" which means "generously".

Now let me pull this all together because the thought here is so important.

Matthew 6:22

²² *The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single [generous], thy whole body shall be full of light.*

I believe Jesus is saying that when our "hearts" are generous then we will be filled with spiritual understanding.

Let us consider the opposite then we will put all of this together.

Matthew 6:23

²³ *But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!*

In contrast to the "single eye" Jesus here speaks of the "evil eye". But we must ask, "What is an evil eye?" If we search the Bible I believe we can get a clear picture of the meaning of an evil eyed person.

Deuteronomy 15:9

⁹ *Beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him nought; and he cry unto the LORD against thee, and it be sin unto thee.*

Here we get a glimpse of the meaning of an evil eye. The reference is pointing to the year of Jubilee when all slaves were to be set free. The person who withheld freedom from their slave was considered to have an evil eye. That meant they were stingy, greedy, or tight-fisted.

Proverbs 23:4-8

⁴ *Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.*

⁵ *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.*

⁶ *Eat thou not the bread of him that hath an evil eye, neither desire thou his dainty meats:*

⁷ *For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: Eat and drink, saith he to thee; but his heart is not with thee.*

⁸ *The morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.*

Here in this passage the writer is focused upon warning the reader about living for the riches of this world (:4-5). Then he warns not to eat the bread of the one who has an evil eye. The man with the evil eye will feed you grudgingly and everything he gives to you he will expect something in return. He will tell you to eat and drink but his concern is not for your person but he feeds you only for the purpose of what he can get from you (:6-8).

Proverbs 28:22

²² He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.

A man that hasteth to be rich is a man who gathers all he can in order to fill his pockets and his barns and that man would never even consider giving away any of what he has because it would slow him down in his journey to become rich.

So from these passages we can see that the term "evil eye" refers to someone who is stingy or greedy with what they have. It is really the opposite of generous which is the meaning of the "single eye".

Someone with a generous heart is full of spiritual understanding but someone who is greedy or stingy is walking in darkness.

Matthew 6:23

²³ But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

The statement at the end of our verse is not a question it is a warning. When we are greedy it is a sign that our hearts are not right and when that is the case we are walking in darkness and do not even understand how great the darkness is. When we are generous it is a sign our hearts are right with God and when our hearts are right we are filled with spiritual understanding.

Let me show you how greed will blind you to spiritual truth.

John 12:3-6

Wednesday August 28, 2013

³ *Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.*

⁴ *Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,*

⁵ *Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?*

⁶ *This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.*

Judas was motivated by greed and for that reason he was blind to spiritual riches because he was consumed by earthy riches. I know Judas was unsaved but the very same principle applies to God's people. Greed will blind you and hinder your spiritual understanding. That is exactly what Jesus is saying here in Matthew 6:22-23.

Notice Matthew 6:24

Here in this verse Jesus tells why we must not be living for the riches of this world. It is not possible to live for God and to live for gold. He tells us that we cannot serve 2 masters. The key to understanding this verse is to pay close attention to the word "serve" for it refers to slavery. It is from the word that refers to a "doulos slave". That was a person fully committed to their master. The idea here is that we are slaves and we cannot serve 2 different masters. A slave is a person completely sold out to his master. There is absolutely no room in his life for a second master. He is committed 100% to the master which he belongs to.

Jesus goes on and says that if we attempt to serve 2 masters we will end up despising one of them. He says we cannot serve God and gold for one of the 2 will become despised in our lives. Now there are many

believers who do not believe these words for they believe it is possible to serve both but they are wrong. Let me illustrate what Jesus is saying here. There are 2 ways to respond to this teaching:

1. As we have come through these verses on money if you are someone who hoards as much as you can and you give very little away to help others if any at all, then you are looking forward to getting out of this section. You do not like what is said here and really if the truth be known you don't agree with what Jesus said. You see while we have been studying this passage the Lord has been convicting you and you are fighting against the convictions. You would much rather erase this text from *God's Word*. Actually you despise this section of *God's Word*.
2. But if you are a person who has surrendered all you have to the Lord for whatever the need may be then you have no problem with this study. You completely understand the what Jesus is saying here and it thrills your heart as you remember back to the times you have given your money to help those who were in need because this study has now increased your faith in God. The Holy Spirit has used this text to give you encouragement to continue living with a heart filled with generosity.

Conclusion:

I just want to leave you with one thought:

"When the stuff of this world controls our heart then God has certainly lost His authority in our hearts for Jesus said we cannot serve 2 masters."