

“Serve Him Until You See Him For Eternity”

Matthew 6:19-24

Rev. Sean Lee

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¹⁹*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For 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, ²³but 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.*

Introduction

The book of Matthew is about how Jesus is the king and how we are to live for his kingdom. Matthew 6 is part of what we call the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), which is essentially about how we are to live out the Gospel every single day. This chapter is answering the question, “How are we to handle worldly ambitions?”

We’re going to watch a video clip about a little baby. This is a picture of how we feel when we interact with worldly ambitions.

Video explanation

There’s a glass cup and the mom’s like, “Don’t do it!” The baby looks back at the cup and the mom’s like, “Don’t do it!” and then the baby goes back. The baby keeps wanting – his eye is on this glass cup – to either drink it or to knock it off the table. The mom’s like, “Don’t do it, no!” and then the baby looks back and forth.

For Christians, we understand that worldly ambitions are wrong. But there’s something in us that keeps looking and wanting; our eye keeps desiring. So how are we to handle worldly ambitions? These worldly ambitions are not just about money or possessions. It’s asking, “What will this get me? How will this contribute to my kingdom? How will it get me to my purpose?” In today’s passage, Jesus is saying that instead of this worldly, ambitious way, there’s a better way to live. Instead of asking ourselves, “What will this get me?” we’re to daily live by asking ourselves, “What will this give to God’s kingdom?” In other words, Jesus calls us to live out the Gospel by living for eternity and to lay up treasures in heaven. Every single day, we have choices that we are to make. There are two treasures, two motives, and two masters to serve.

I. Two Treasures

We are going to answer two questions. What are the treasures on earth? And what are treasures in heaven?

A. What are the treasures on earth? [19]

Verse 19 says, *“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.”* To define it, a treasure is an abundance of something that is precious and valuable to you. The Greek word for treasure is *thēsauros*, where we get the word *thesaurus*, meaning a treasury of words. When we put this definition back into verse 19, it becomes, *“Do not lay up for yourselves a treasury of treasure. Do not lay up for yourselves treasure upon treasure.”* Jesus is warning us to not stockpile.

A commentary noted that when Jesus gives this warning, he’s not referring to the necessities of life or the everyday uses. He’s also not referring to investing wisely and being good stewards of God’s money or saving. But rather, he’s talking about stockpiling or amassing luxury for our own selves beyond what we could ever possibly use. The implication is that there is an abundance too numerous for use so it just piles up. What Jesus is warning us in verse 19 is not about what we have, though that may matter, but about the attitude towards what we have. Jesus isn’t saying anything against providing for our family or planning for the future, but what he is saying is that the greed and the coveting and is wrong. Jesus is looking at the motive, which is the issue.

Furthermore, not only is that the issue, but Jesus says that this laying up of treasure on earth is all perishing. Verse 19 says, *“Where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.”* “Moth” refers to wearables: clothing. “Rust” refers to eatables: food. *“Break in and steal”* refers to valuables: jewelry. Wearables, eatables, valuables – what do they all have in common? They’re all perishables. It’s all temporal, not eternal.

Back in the day, pharaohs of Egypt were buried with gold and treasures to take with them in the afterlife. They believed that they could take all this gold and treasure, but in reality, they left it all behind. There’s a story about a filthy rich man who passed away. One of his acquaintances said to another, “What did he leave?” to which the friend replied, “All of it.” All treasures on earth, no matter how much you amass, will all perish. Jesus is saying that if it’s temporal and not eternal, you cannot take it with you. It’s not only talking about possessions but also worldly ambitions like power, position, and reputation. We try to amass it, we try to gain it, but those things will not last.

B. What are the treasures in heaven? [20]

What are treasures in heaven? Verse 20 says, *“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* The treasures of heaven are eternal and forever. It’s not perishable but eternally reliable. Financial planners will often tell you to not just think three months or three years ahead but to think 30 years ahead. Christ, the ultimate investment counselor, takes it further and says, “Don’t ask how your investment will be paying off in 30 years. Ask how it will be paying off in 30 million years.” That’s what Jesus is getting at. That’s not only true of how we invest our money but every part of our lives, including our God-given resources of time, talents, and possessions.

In short, what is Jesus saying here? Live for eternity. Live for things that will matter not just five years, 10 years, 50 years, but a hundred billion years later. And what are those things? There are a

lot of things but it's noted that God's Word will last forever. Every time we read it, every time we meditate on it, every time we share it, it will last forever. The souls of people. Serving people and ministering to souls, even the hundreds and thousands that will be coming on campus in a few weeks, is something that will last forever. There is a quote that says, "Only one life to live will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last." Live for eternity. But why is it so hard to carry out? Why can't we just live for the kingdom and eternal things? It's because we have two motives at work.

II. Two Motives

We have two motives at work. To understand how this works, we're going to answer three questions related to this motive. What is the eye? What are the motives? What is the great darkness?

A. What is the eye? [21-22]

Verse 21-22 says, 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...* The eye, singular, is the lamp of the body. What's the function and purpose of the eye? The eye shows the body which way to move and which way to turn. It navigates us like a lamp. If you ever go on a camping trip, a lamp guides you and navigates you on where to go. In other words, the eye is what moves us. What also moves us? Our hearts and our desires dictate our actions. Therefore, the eye is really the heart. The eye is the motivation of the heart. To put it another way, what we see is what we want. In what we pursue, for temporal or eternal, vision determines our values. Our values determine our priorities. Our priorities determine our pursuit. And our pursuit determines who we are becoming. The eye is the lamp of the body.

B. What are the motives? [22-23]

So where does the motivation to live for eternity come from? Our hearts and our desires. Verses 22-23 says that there are two motives, two eyes, and two desires of our hearts. There is the healthy eye and there is the bad or evil eye. Verse 22-23 says, 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.* When our eye is on the eternal, that means we're full of light but when our eye is on the temporal, we're full of darkness. The temporal eye is a bad eye. When verse 23 says, *"But if your eye is bad,"* it literally means that your eye is diseased, disordered, corrupted, and messed up. An evil eye was a phrase used among the ancient Jews to denote an envious and covetous man or disposition. They would say, "Hey, you have an evil eye," which means, "You're envious or covetous."

In us, there are two visions and two desires. We understand how that feels. In one moment, we want to live for eternity. We say, "I'm doing this thing. No one sees me but I love it. I want to do it because I want to live for the kingdom, for eternal gain." Then a second later, we don't care. We want the temporary. In one moment, our eye is on what matters a hundred billion years later and in another instance, our eye is on what makes us happy and what gives us pleasure. We want what we want.

The Bible says that we have this dual nature in us. It's a two-eye, two-desire nature in us. That's why it's hard to live for eternity. There's this rivalry and battle in us. And to make it worse, it's much darker than that because verse 23 says, "*If the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*" The great darkness is our great depravity. In other words, if our eye, heart, and motive is in darkness – there is the rival nature within our hearts where we choose to live for the temporal and not the eternal – it blinds our whole body, our whole course of life, our whole philosophy. The decisions that we make will be corrupted and disordered because we're making decisions based on temporal gain, not eternal gain. Not for God's kingdom but our kingdom. That's why verse 23 says, "*How great is the darkness!*" When we keep on choosing that way, we'll start entertaining thoughts and desires like, "Living for eternal things is a waste of time. It's not worth investing in eternal things." You start agreeing with the lies, saying, "You know what, I can live for pleasure. I'll worry about eternity when I get there. I know I'm saved. I'll live in a shack in heaven, it's fine." And so we relegate our lives to a spiritually-minimalistic life.

Pastor Tim Keller once said, "When you say, 'I won't serve you God if you don't give me X,' then X is your true bottom line, your highest love, your real god, the thing you most trust and rest in." That's your treasure on earth. "I won't serve you God if you don't give me the small group pairing I desire! I won't serve you God if you don't give me the family I desire! I won't serve you God if you don't give me the career I desire!" Then that "X" becomes your highest love, your real god, your treasure on earth that you're pursuing and eyeing. You're walking around life blindfolded and in darkness to the point where you start giving demands to God.

There's a recent viral challenge called the Bird Box Challenge, inspired by the Netflix movie called *Bird Box*. The movie is about an invisible entity that can make people have hallucinations if they're exposed to it. These hallucinations cause people to kill themselves. To avoid being haunted by their hallucinations, the characters in the film have to keep their eyes covered with a blindfold. And so the Bird Box Challenge was made. Many people thought it would be amusing to do daily tasks, such as mowing the lawn and playing sports, blindfolded. It got so crazy that one person did the Bird Box Challenge while driving their car. When I heard about the Bird Box Challenge, my natural response was, "You're crazy. It doesn't make sense." Jesus is asking the same question here. Why would you lay up treasures on earth, where it will perish? Why would you do something where you think you're gaining but after a few years, it'll be gone? As crazy as the Bird Box Challenge is, it's just as crazy as laying up treasures on earth. Verse 23 says, "*How great is the darkness!*" It's so blinding.

This is why we need great help from a great Savior. Verse 22 says, "*The eye is the lamp of the body...*" The word "lamp" comes with great news for us. The eye is the lamp of the body because a lamp illuminates and navigates us into the right path in the midst of darkness. The Bible says that Jesus is the lamp that will help us. Psalm 18:28 says, "*For it is you who light my lamp, the Lord my God lightens my darkness.*"

Revelations 21:23 – *And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light and the lamp is the lamb.*

Revelation 22:5 – *And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.*

Jesus is the lamp that will now direct us and guide us. Even through our dual nature desire, Jesus will be the lamp to our feet and light our path. One day, we will not need the light of the lamp for God will be our light for eternity.

The point is Jesus saves us in our great darkness. Though our darkness is great, Christ is greater and he will help us live for eternity. How is your eye? How is your vision? Jesus needs to give us spiritual LASIK surgery. He alone will be our light and salvation.

III. Two Masters

The ultimate question in whether we will live for eternity depends on who our master is because this dual nature battle can get tiring and wearisome. One moment, we want to live for eternity and in another moment, we want to live for the now. This passage ends with the ultimate help which is, “Who is your master?” Are you the master or is Jesus your master? Verse 24 says, *“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.”*

Verse 25 goes right into a passage about being anxious about life. It says that you can’t serve two masters; you have to serve one master. Verse 25 says, *“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”* Then verses 31-33 says, *“³¹Therefore do not be anxious...but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness...”* Who is the master of your life? If God is your master and your treasure, the one that you’re serving, then you won’t anxiously be wondering if it is really worth laying up treasures in heaven. Instead, you will daily seek first His kingdom.

Verse 24 says, *“He will be devoted to the one, and despise the other.”* When Jesus is your master and he’s the one that you’re serving, you’ll be devoted. There will be a focus in your life. Dual nature and temptation is real, but you will have a conviction to live for eternity. You’ll serve God until you see Him for eternity. This is the grace of God. The power of God is going to help us to be resilient and help us persevere until we see Him. So instead of, “What will this get me?” we will say, “What will this give Him?”

When Jesus is our master, we’re able to be devoted to him. Verse 21 says, *“But where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* The Message Version renders it like this: *“The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be.”* The word “want” is saying that when Jesus is your treasure and your master, he is going to help you to want to live for eternity. Jesus is going to be the one to help you create in your heart that wanting. When we surrender under the kingship of Christ and when he becomes our master and treasure, Jesus will change us to want to lay up treasures in heaven. He will give us a kingdom mindset. He will transform the hard moments and places to become the moments and places where we most want to be. Why? Because Jesus is there. This master is the only one in the world that can change our hearts. I realized that it is not good enough to be in the right place doing the right thing. We

also need the right heart that declares, “I will serve Jesus until I see him for eternity.” Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Conclusion

As we conclude, I shared this story before but I just felt that it was fitting for this passage and it’s also a reminder for me. Whenever I struggle with the question, “Should I live for eternity or should I live for the temporary?” I’m reminded of my grandmother. She passed away years ago but towards the end of her life, she had Alzheimer’s. She forgot a lot of family members and how to do things. But one thing she did every day was write out God’s Word. She had this journal where she wrote out Scripture, word for word. My uncle, who took care of her, shared with me that at the end of her life, her hand was so feeble and weak that it took her minutes to just write one word. But word by word and day by day, she read the Word. She meditated on the Word. She wrote out Scripture every single day, journal after journal. My uncle told me that within a few years, she wrote out the whole Bible three times. I’m reminded of Psalm 119:105, “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path,*” even in the midst of Alzheimer’s, even in the midst of feeble hands. I didn’t know about this whole story until I went to the funeral and saw boxes of these journals inside her casket because one of her requests was that she wanted to be buried with God’s Word. Just as every single day she buried the Word in her heart, she physically wanted to be buried with God’s Word.

Two things stuck out to me. One, even though she had Alzheimer’s and she was weak, by the grace of God and the power that only Jesus can give, she was able to lay up treasures in heaven. She was able to live for eternity, doing something that will matter a hundred billion years later. While I recognize people in this world, including myself, piling up temporal gain, she stored up eternal gain, word for word, day by day, literally trembling at God’s Word. No matter our circumstance, we can live for eternity. The second thought that I had was, “What am I doing with my life?” Am I investing daily in the two things that will matter the most: God’s Word and God’s people? Reading, meditating, and sharing the Word? Serving, evangelizing, and discipling God’s people? Or am I only seeing, “What can this get me?” Jesus says, “I will change your heart so that now you will think about, ‘What can I give for the kingdom?’” Only one life to live will soon be past. Only what’s done for Christ will last.