

Dangers of Materialism **Matthew 6:19-24**

Introduction- Jesus in this wonderful teaching we call The Sermon on The Mount is calling his followers to be different from the popular culture. He warns us of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Now it's the value system of the Gentiles he calls us to renounce.

What is the value system Jesus warns us of? It's a value system that's materialistic and covetous. Jesus knew that materialism was a very real danger. It is the cause of personal failure in the lives of many Christians! The Bible warns us over and over to beware of covetousness. Paul said, "the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil..."

The spell of materialism is hard to break. It will enslave the heart, the mind, and the will. So Jesus sets before us a choice between two:

1. Treasures, vv. 19-21 - "Heart"
2. Two Visions, vv. 22-23 - "Mind"
3. Two Masters, vv. 24-25 - "The Will"

Jesus is saying we can't sit on the fence!

I. Where's Your Treasure? vv. 19-21

Here, Jesus points our attention to the comparative durability of the two treasures. Treasures on earth, that are corruptible and treasures in Heaven that are incorruptible and therefore secure. So if you are going to lay up treasures, wouldn't it be wisest to lay them up where they will last? What does Jesus mean when He says don't lay up treasures on earth? (vs. 19)

First, what does he not mean?

1. He's not putting a band on possession in themselves; scripture nowhere forbids private property. **Illus.** Ex. 20:15 "*Thou shall not steal*," eight commandment. **Illus.** Acts 5, Annias and Sapphira. **Illus.** Some cult groups say, "**sell all your possessions.**" Rich young ruler.
2. He's not saying you can't save for a rainy day! It's good to provide for your family.
3. He's not saying we can't enjoy the good things given to us from God as our Creator.

So what is he saying? Jesus is forbidding the selfish accumulation of goods. Note, the key, vs. 19, "*for yourselves.*" Jesus is speaking against ruinous preoccupation with

possessions. It's making material goods an end, and the possession of them the ambition and aim of your life....

How about you? Jesus points out some reasons why we should not lay up treasures on earth.

1. Moth and rust corrupt and thieves steal, vs. 19, clothes, food and money. So all earthly possessions will perish.

2. The don't satisfy, vs. 21, where's your heart?

If the heart loves material things, and puts earthly gain above heavenly investments, the result can only be a tragic loss. The treasures of earth may be used for God. But if we gather material things for ourselves, we will lose them; and we will lose our hearts with them. Instead of spiritual enrichment, we will experience impoverishment.

Jesus tells us what to do in verse 20. How do I lay up treasures in Heaven? It's to do anything on earth that has an effect on eternity.

What does it mean to lay up treasures in heaven? It means to use all that we have for the glory of God. It means to "hang loose" when it comes to the material things of life. It also means measuring life by the true riches of the kingdom and not by the false riches of this world.

Ask, "*Where's your treasure?*"

I Tim. 6:17-19, "Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."

II. How's Your Sight? vv. 22-23

Jesus now moves from the comparative durability of the two treasures to the comparative benefit to be derived from two conditions.

Two visions

1. Single, it's the single eye on God! It's sincere, not divided, vs. 22. The single eye is also the generous eye. The benefit, "*Whole body full of light.*" vs. 22. I Tim. 6:6, "*Godliness with contentment is great gain.*"

2. Eye is evil or dived, vs. 23. James's doubled minded man. **Illus.** Lot contrast with Abraham. **Illus.** Your eye like a camera lens...the shutter.

Jesus' argument seems to go like this:

“Just as our eye affects our whole body, so our ambition (where we fix our eyes and heart) affects our whole life. Just as a seeing eye gives light to the body, so a noble and single minded ambition to serve God and man adds meaning to life and throws light on everything we do. Again, just as blindness leads to darkness, so an ignoble and selfish ambition (e.g. to lay up treasure for ourselves on earth) plunges us into moral darkness. It makes us intolerant, inhuman, ruthless and deprives life of all ultimate significance.”

-John R.W. Stott

How's your sight? Is your eye on God or on the things of this world? Colossians 3, “Set your mind....”

III. Who's Your Master,” vs. 24

Jesus now explains that behind the choice between two treasures (where we lay them up) and two visions (where we fix our eyes) there lies the still more basic choice between two masters (whom we are going to serve). It is a choice between God and mammon, that is between the living Creator himself and any object of our own creation we term 'money' ('mammon' being the transliteration of an Aramaic word for wealth.)

Some people disagree with Jesus here. They believe they can serve both quite well. Either they serve God on Sundays and mammon on weekdays or God with their lips and mammon with their hearts or God in appearance and mammon in reality, or God with half their being and mammon with the other half. Jesus says, no compromise. The picture is that of a slave, not an employee. If He's your Master, you and all you have are His!

The orders of those two masters are diametrically opposed and cannot coexist. The one commands us to walk by faith and the other to be proud, the one to set our minds on things above and the other to set them on things below. One calls us to love light, the other to love darkness. The one tells us to look toward things unseen and eternal and the other to look at things seen and temporal.

The person whose master is Jesus Christ can say that, when he eats or drinks or does anything else, he does “all to the glory of God” (I Cor. 10:31). He can say with David, “I have set the Lord continually before me” (Ps. 16:8), and with Caleb when he was eighty-five years old, “I followed the Lord my God fully” (Josh. 14:8).

So we must choose:

- Two treasures, heaven or earth
- Two visions, single or dived
- Two masters, God or mammon

And when the choice is seen for what it is - a choice between Creator and creature, between the glorious personal God and a miserable thing called money, between worship and idolatry - it seems inconceivable that anybody could make the wrong choice. For now it is a question not just of comparative durability and comparative benefit, but of comparative worth: the intrinsic worth of the One and the intrinsic worthlessness of the other.

“Only one life will soon be past and only what’s done for Christ will last.” - C.T. Studd

Who owns your possessions? The Lord Jesus Christ tells us that either God owns them and you serve Him, or else your possessions own you, and you serve them. In any case, no one ever really possesses them himself, although many persons think they do. May God give us each the victory that comes when our gifts, wealth, time, friends, ambitions and talents are turned over to Him and we use them to establish indestructible riches in heaven.