

Where Is Your Treasure?

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[0 : 0 0] Well if we could turn back in our Bibles to the chapter which we read, Matthew chapter 6, we'll just spend a few minutes just exploring some of the aspects of this passage, particularly the section verses 19 to 24, which is the title in the Bible I have, I have it, Layup of Treasures in Heaven, so verses 19 to 24 we'll work our way through, but particularly want us to go away with the first few words of verse 24, no one can serve two masters, but we'll navigate our way through these verses just now over the next few minutes.

I want you to think of the word treasure, the word treasure itself captured our imagination, I know if anyone has ever read books or certainly as a youngster, pirates and treasure was always something that captured our imagination, it conjures up images of whether it's treasure chests or gold or jewels, piles of cash piles of gold, it just conjures up that image in our minds when we think of the word treasure, and treasure means a deposit, it's an accumulation, a storing up of things of incredible value, we all have things in our lives that are of great value, indeed we all seek to find more treasure in our lives, we store up in stockpile at which we value, you just have to look particularly in Harris at some of the crops, you'll see plenty boats and cars still on the crop that are obviously of value to someone, so we treasure up and we store these things wherever we seek to accumulate them, and I want to ask the question to you and to myself, first and foremost I'm speaking to myself and in my preparation was very much challenged in speaking to myself, but what do you treasure more than anything else?

What is it in your life that you treasure? What do you value and store away in your own life? Now we read here in these very short verses, verses 19 to 24, that Jesus knows that we as individuals seek treasure and He calls us to accumulate long lasting treasures in life, just look at verse 19 as we start, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

The first point of caution here is not to think that Jesus wants to ruin our lives and He doesn't want us to live lives that are pleasing, He absolutely wants us to seek and store up treasure, many people in our day and age will tell you that Jesus is asking you to give up things of value and leave all joy behind in your life, but that's not the case.

I don't want you to think that following Jesus carries no sacrifice however, let's be clear Jesus wants you to have a good life, his desire is for you to have good things and encourages us to seek and accumulate treasure, however he wants that treasure to be stored up in heaven and not here on earth.

[3 : 1 1] What we are seeing here are two very different types of treasure, that which is stored up on earth and that which is stored up in heaven, stored up in heaven sorry.

So why must we store this up in heaven? Well a simple reason is the earthly treasures don't last, they don't keep very well just as we read there, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

You're welcome to store treasures up here on earth, however Jesus is warning us that they will one day be destroyed. We only have to look at our cars, our clothes or other goods that we value in our lives, they so often degrade and they lose value very quickly.

Everything on earth degrades and is destroyed, literally everything you own and you hold dear will one day perish. I'm sure I'm not the only one over the years that have had bother with cars, I'm sure many people have had issues with cars in their time but it doesn't take long after owning a car to quickly realise how much of a poor investment they are.

As soon as you drive away from the dealer you've already lost money on it and as you continue to drive it each and every day the value continues to decrease.

[4 : 24] Cars don't last, the rust and the parts begin to wear out. Even our houses which are areas of good investment we're told are very good areas of investment, they see a continual cycle of repair, renovation and decoration and looking ahead in years to come your best car will one day be destroyed have no value and will be ready for scrapping.

Again looking at houses they will also one day be destroyed, we don't have to drive too far to see houses that are barely shells anymore. Our houses will all one day be demolished, whether that's in the next 10 years, whether it's in the next 100 years but make no mistake none of them will last or stand forever.

And it's equally true of all of our prized possessions, they all have a limited shelf life and one day become obsolete. I'm sure most of us have phones in our pockets and they're so valuable to us, we in many ways can't live without them, that's where we get all of our, some people can work solely from their phones, they have great value to us but give it a couple of years and you'll maybe see the battery life doesn't work very well, it starts to dwindle, it doesn't charge very well, it keeps a 10 minute charge whereas it used to keep a whole days charge and you have to upgrade, you're constantly then getting contact from your provider asking you to upgrade that phone to the new version, there's a new version every year and we're being encouraged to get that new version.

So we see everything in our lives is on a constant degrading cycle and one of the Puritans, his name was Oliver Haywood and I've enjoyed some of his writings in recent months about called Heart Treasure, he says of treasure here, gold and silver are but worthless clay compared with eternal riches and that's what we're seeing here in this passage, gold and silver are but worthless clay compared with eternal riches, Jesus is telling us here that our earthly treasure will not last forever and even more importantly we can't take any of it with us, these earthly treasures won't last, they degrade and are all together fleeting.

One other commentator said, to lay up for yourselves treasures on earth is also to doom yourself to a life of frustration and emptiness, they further went on to record a survey, it's going back a few years now to 1992 where people were asked in America how much money would you need a year to live the American dream, how much money would it take for you to live the American dream, those people who earned less than \$25,000 thought that they would need about 54,000, so just \$54,000 just over double what they were currently earning and those in the £100,000 annual income bracket said that they would need £192,000 a year to live the American dream, but when we think what Apostle Paul said in 1 Timothy 6 verse 6, godliness with contentment is great gain, we see just in that very brief survey, albeit out of date, that there's always this drive for more, there's never this contentment with what we have and what we need, the person earning 25,000 is really just looking for 54, but once they get that 54, they might then be looking for 90 to 100 and it's the same in our own lives, whether it's our careers, whether we have just recently promoted, we might want that next one again and that's what it's like when we continue to strive for these treasures on earth and this is why Jesus teaches us these short verses, he doesn't want us to waste our lives on things that don't last, so he encourages us to store up heavenly treasures that will ultimately last for an eternity, they won't degrade, they won't perish, they won't become obsolete, just look at verse 20 there, but lay up treasures for yourselves, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal, he's just asked us to set our heart on heavenly treasure that cannot be destroyed, so this really leads us to a very important question, if we're being asked to seek treasure that lasts in heaven, how do we do it, how do we do that, what do we do in order to lay up those treasures in heaven?

[8 : 45] Well within the New Testament there's a number of areas where we see the promise of a heavenly reward for acts of righteousness done for God's glory, just look at verse 4 of our own chapter, of the chapter that we just read, verse 4 tells us, well from 3 into 4, but when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret and your father who sees in secret will reward you, look again at verse 6, but when you pray go into your room and shut the door and pray to your father who is in secret and your father who sees in secret will reward you, and then again at verse 18 or 17 into 18, when you fast and noint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others, but by your father who is in secret and your father who sees in secret will reward you.

Before I continue I want you to just be clear that these acts of storing up treasure in heaven will not see you rewarded with salvation, as Matthew Poole says, let your riches, your treasure be that which is heavenly, those habits of grace which will bring you to heaven, the things which accompany salvation, doing these things won't see you saved, but as Matthew Poole says, they are to accompany our salvation.

So heavenly treasure is stored up when we carry out acts of righteousness for God, it's also stored up when we carry out other acts that are pleasing to God, whether in Matthew chapter 10 we see you caring for people and look chapter 12 giving to the needy and as we looked earlier on in our own chapter giving to the needy is a way in which we see God glorified in our actions.

Think of the story of the rich young man who was asked to sell everything he had and give it to the poor, he wasn't able to do this. And it tells us in Luke verse 34 it says, for where your treasure is there your heart will be also.

The rich young ruler's heart was on his possessions and not on the poor and the needy. The question we need to ask, do you want these treasures in heaven? And if so we ought to care for God's people, we need to help the poor and the needy in God's name.

[10 : 59] He just tells us at the end of Matthew 19 that those who make sacrifices in his name will receive multiplied heavenly treasure. What we're seeing here is that Jesus promises rewards where the rats done that please him.

When we give to the poor and the needy and when we make sacrifices for his sake. Just look at Colossians chapter 3, if you have your Bible you can go to, I didn't give this for the screen so don't worry about putting it on the screen but Colossians chapter 3 verses 22 to 24.

I'll just briefly read them just now. It says, bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers but with sincerity of heart bearing the Lord.

Whatever you do work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward, you are serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

We see slaves or bond servants who have promised an eternal reward simply for faithfully doing their duty for God's glory. I don't know where each of your hearts are today or indeed where you've been in your life what you've done in your life but these words should encourage us where a slave with very few rights, very few possessions can see treasures stored up in heaven when they seek to do God's will on earth.

[12 : 24] And the same is true for all of us. I'm going to turn to Timothy, 1 Timothy 6 verse 17 to 19. Again you don't need to go there in your Bible, I'll just read it just now.

But 1 Timothy 6 verse 17 to 19 says, as for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

Being good work and working for God will see treasures stored up in heaven. So analysing all of this scripture proof that shows us that the reward that we can receive is in heaven.

So it shows us that by using all of our earthly treasures, whether that's our time, our money, our energy, our talents, we use them for God's glory.

[13 : 28] We will see treasures stored up in heaven where Jesus tells us that they will last forever. The Christians should be investing their earthly wealth in eternal things.

It should always have our mind on eternity. I was reading recently, Jonathan Edwards, the American Theologian, I've not written it down so I might get the wording incorrect.

He says his mind was always on eternity and he resolved never to do anything that he wouldn't be afraid to do if it was the last hour of his life. It's something that we often should reflect on in our own lives.

Whatever consumes our time in the 24 hours each day, if it was the last hour on earth and last hour in your life, would you do what you're doing at this moment? And it's something, it's all on thought for us when we think about where our time goes.

Does it go to the Lord or does it go to the things that we enjoy in our own life? Do you and do I live solely for the pleasure of ourselves or are we using what God has given to us to see him glorified?

[14 : 32] Are we seeking to see him glorified in all that we do? Are you, am I? I ask myself these questions as well. And as I mentioned earlier, God is not against enjoyment.

He gives us what we need in order to have enjoyment in life. He created what enjoyment actually is. Remember, God doesn't want to see you in a miserable life. That's not what we're hearing here.

But rather to use what he has given you to have joy in him and ultimately in eternity. And we just think of the first Catechism, many of us can recount it in our heads.

Our chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever. We can't forget that enjoyment as well. That eternity that we have is worth investing in as Christians.

The new heaven and the new air, where God's righteousness and glory dwells, whilst here on earth we have a heavenly reward to be investing in. In the verses here in chapter 6, Jesus is encouraging us to use what God has given us to make lasting, valuable and eternal investments.

[15 : 39] I know some people, not since we moved here, but in my time in Glasgow, who declined a promotion in the workplace. And the sole reason that they declined that promotion is because they would have to work Wednesday nights when the prayer meeting was on.

So again, for me, that is an act of laying up treasures in heaven, where they're seeking to see God's will done. They're not seeking that extra pay packet every month into their salary.

They've declined promotion and progression within an organisation solely because it takes them away from the prayer meeting on a Wednesday evening. It could be giving up annual leave. I know the congregation here have holiday clubs and maybe people are giving up their annual leave to come and help out at a holiday club.

These are examples of how we use the resources that we have to store up treasures in heaven as we seek to see God glorified in all that we do. Whether you have time or money, we should be using it for God.

Yes, we need to be sensible in using it for the things that we need and require in our day to day. But when we are able to, we ought to be using it for God as well. And there's a joy in giving to the Lord.

[16 : 46] And I know that's certainly true of the holiday clubs. Many of the holiday clubs that we have in North Harris as well. There's a joy in coming together and sharing the gospel with these young ones.

Now, understand for the non-Christian, this may seem like something fearful. It's maybe something that is really of great concern to you hearing this. You might be sitting here thinking that you've worked very hard for these things.

I've worked however many hours a day to make this money and to buy that house and to earn the money to be able to get this car. But let me just point you to the words of verse 21.

It says there in verse 21, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Interestingly, when we read this, Jesus isn't telling us to follow our hearts.

No, he's saying that our hearts will follow our treasure. So first we must decide what our treasure will be and decide to invest in this where our hearts will then subsequently follow.

[17 : 44] So who or what is it that you're going to follow today? Your affections will follow this decision and you will delight in that which you have set as your treasure.

Is it work? Is it your salary? Is it cars? Is it sport? Is it music? Is it fishing? Could it be anything of these things? Are you going to follow the encouragement of Jesus to not waste our earthly lives on things that are fleeting and temporary?

Are you going to live a life that is lasting treasures in heaven? Even briefly into verses 22 and 23, I'll just read them just now. The eye is the lamp of the body.

So if your eye is healthy, your body will be full of light. 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?

We see Jesus now focusing here on our desires. We see a shift away from dealing with our treasures to looking at the eye, light and the darkness. The eye represents our desires.

[18 : 45] If what we have our eye on is healthy, then our whole body will have light. Our life will have light. If however we have evil desires, then our whole body and indeed our whole lives will be in darkness.

Jesus is telling us to have clean and healthy desires for God. It's easy to see how our desires and ambitions are related. What you pursue is what you have your eye on and it will subsequently determine how you shape the course of your life.

Jesus is clear in the fact that we ought to pursue Godly desires. Perhaps a Godly goal would be answering a call to head off to another side of the world in the name of the Lord. You may wish to please God by increasing your giving to the poor or to the church or to mission work.

Maybe you want to please God by undertaking to read the whole Bible in a year and growing closer to Christ and growing in greater knowledge of him. There are countless ways that we can please God and see our desires and ambitions centre around him.

Ultimately, as we just read, what we desire governs our whole person. So make sure your desires are directed to that which pleases God. Finally, the kind of main focus I wanted us to look at is verse 24.

[20 : 01] It says, there no one can serve two masters, rather he will hate the one and love the other, but he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. So if you've somehow lost me in these verses or you've nodded off, then I urge you to focus on this verse specifically.

If you've not felt personally challenged up until now, then I think this certainly will, as we conclude with this verse. I know I felt a real sense of chastisement and challenge in my studies and preparations around this verse.

Jesus is clear as anything here that we can only have one singular devotion. This verse is not one that takes a whole lot of interpretation. It's pretty explicit. There's a clear image that we can focus on here.

A choice must be made. No one can serve two masters. So there's a choice that we ought to be making. James and Fawcett and Brown in their comedy say that this term of serving, no one can serve two masters.

[21 : 07] That word serve means belong wholly and be entirely under command to. He must give his master exclusive service.

The analogy here again goes back to that slave and master relationship. A slave can only serve one master. The master receives total obedience and devotion from the slave.

The only possibility for that slave is to serve that one master. You cannot serve two masters. It doesn't say here you can give it a go. It doesn't say you can try your best.

We're told here you cannot, no one can serve two masters. He will hate the one and love the other or will be devoted to one and despise the other.

He then moves on to apply this principle where he says you cannot serve God and money or the translation in the authorised version might be Mammon. I think it is in the authorised version.

[22 : 03] It's important to understand the translation of that word money or Mammon. It's not just physical money as in cash that we have.

It means more than just money. It's about wealth in every way. It's about all that we have and all that we can give. These things are not evil in and of themselves. God has richly provided many of us with such wealth to enjoy.

Jesus is not saying that what God has provided is bad for us. He is, however, saying that you cannot serve these things or live for them or prioritise them over God.

We must choose an allegiance. We're sure that in our lives we've attempted to serve both. I know I have attempted to serve both as well. At some point we have to make that choice.

It's either the world or things of this world or it's to serve the Lord. Jesus is clear here that we cannot serve both. There's no maybe. There's no possibly. We simply cannot. Either we will choose the things of this world and choose to devote ourselves to them or we live for God and God alone using all the things in this world that we've been given by God as tools for his service.

[23 : 15] Let me ask you and ask myself what role does money, Mammon, or valuables, or stuff that we have playing our lives? Is your career your main focus? Is your wealth or possessions your chief priority in life?

Is your ability on the football pitch with a musical instrument or on a fishing boat or at the loom? What abilities you've been given by God? What governs your day so much so that God is unable to squeeze in?

We've got 24 hours in the day. How much of that time has been given to God? As I say, I reflect on myself where there's times that you look back on the day and you think I've spent a matter of minutes in quiet time with the Lord or in prayer and it's simply not enough.

The choice is simple though and we're told here in this passage that the choice is simple. It's either your master or God's on earth that you live for, the valuables and the things that you have, or it's God that you live for using the things around us as tools to serve and glorify him.

If your career is your main focus or it's one of your main focuses, are you working hard maybe in the workplace to share the gospel? Are you showing an extra level of work like we spoke to the young ones about the mini-eggs?

[24 : 27] Do you stand out in the workplace as a Christian? Is it clear to those around you that you're a Christian? I remember somebody mentioning in a service, I don't know who they quoted so I think it was a second hand, but they said if you were to be arrested for being a Christian would they have enough evidence to sentence you and put you down?

And it's a somber thought for us all, if you were convicted as a Christian would they have enough evidence on you? And it goes to the workplace, as I was mentioning there, is it visible to those around you that you work with or work for that you are indeed a Christian?

Are you using your talents as a vehicle to see God glorified? We cannot do both, we cannot live in the workplace apart from God and then go home and seek to do the things of the Lord later on in the day.

We cannot do both, we have to serve one only. And there's a brief story, I'm just going to read the story in its entirety. It's from Dr. Martin Lloyd Jones, it's one of his books and just at the tail end of the book he tells the story of the farmer and I think it's quite an interesting one.

So I'll read it in its entirety as it came from the book. And he said, I remember once hearing a pastor tell a story which he assured us was simple literal truth.

[25 : 45] It's a story of a farmer who one day went with great joy in his heart to report to his wife and family that their best cow had given birth to twin calves, one red and one white.

And he said, you know, I have a sudden feeling that we must dedicate one of these calves to the Lord. We will bring them up together and when the time comes we will sell one and give the proceeds to the Lord's work.

The farmer's wife asked him, which he was going to dedicate to the Lord, which calf was he going to dedicate? There's no need to bother about that now, he replied. We'll treat them both in the same way and when the time comes we'll do as I say and off he went.

In a few months the man entered his kitchen looking very miserable and unhappy. When his wife asked him what was troubling him, he answered, I have bad news to give you, the Lord's calf is dead.

But she said, you had decided which was to be the Lord's calf. Oh yes, he said, I'd always decided it was to be the white one and it's the white one that has died.

[26 : 46] The Lord's calf is dead. The Lord's calf is dead. We may laugh at that story but God forbid that we should be laughing at ourselves. It's always the Lord's calf that dies.

Whatever it is in our lives, when money becomes difficult, the first thing we economise is our contribution to God's work. So always the first thing to go. And the example I gave of the person who was offered a promotion and refused because it clashed with the prayer meeting, there will be many people that may have taken that job and thought, this is my priority.

I can go to a prayer meeting every now and then when I'm available or when I have annual leave, I'll definitely go to the prayer meeting. Oftentimes it's the Lord's work or the Lord's calf in this example that is the first thing to go.

The endeavour to serve God and Mammon, to stand well with both worlds, to lay up your treasures on earth and at the same time be rich toward God is a spiritual impossibility.

John Bunyan tells us of Mr Facing Both Ways, who kept one eye on heaven and one other on earth. Many people like to be like Mr Facing Both Ways, being known as the Christian yet wanting to keep one foot in the world as well.

[27 : 56] If we are like Mr Facing Both Ways, it may well be that you're never truly giving your heart to Jesus in the first place. It's a solemn thought for us to ponder. Now my family originally come from the Isle of Rassie and I was reading of a local missionary that was there a couple hundred years ago named Alexander MacLennan.

He was from Rona and he said on one occasion he compared the true believer to a sailor who anxious to reach a certain port was scanning the sea and the sky to see if there was a favourable wind for his journey.

As a believer the great aim of their journey through life was to get to heaven and he was afraid that sin and Satan would blow them off course and make shipwreck of their profession.

The hypocrite on the other hand was like a man to whom sailing was merely a pastime and he could sail before any wind that was blowing. Let me also say that if you choose not to make a choice then I'm afraid you've already made a choice between the two.

We must choose and that's not from me that's coming clearly from the chapter here in the verses which we read from the Lord. He demands all that we can give. We choose to serve God and the things of this life like our possessions, our talents, our money will be gripped far more lightly.

[29 : 14] These things become a gift from God, a tool to be used for his glory. And if we use our money or mammon to serve God we will see treasures in heaven lasting into eternity.

Going back to the beginning of our service treasure is a joy to behold and if we treasure if we have treasure in heaven then we will also have joy in heaven. If however we live for things of this world none of this will produce eternal joy and we'll see you left with nothing but regret and misery.

You choose money over God I think you have all you need here then remember in the end you will have nothing. On the other hand though when we choose God over money we choose joy itself.

Today is the perfect checkpoint for you and for me to ask ourselves what is it that we're living for? What are we choosing to live for? Matthew 6 verse 24 here is a powerful reminder of the importance of putting God first in our lives.

We should strive to live a life that is dedicated to serving God following his commandments rather than being consumed by the pursuit of wealth and material possessions.

[30 : 24] To the Christian among us I want to draw your attention to the words of Martin Lloyd-Jones where he says the mere fact that we believe in God and call him Lord Lord and likewise with Christ is no proof in and of itself that we are serving him, that we recognise his totalitarian demand and have yielded ourselves gladly and readily to him.

Let every man examine himself. And to the non-Christian among us what is your driving desire? Where is your treasure? Jesus asks us, not Jesus invites us to the good life, he invites you to use the world and this life to accumulate for yourself treasures in heaven.

Will you choose to turn to him and ask that he enters into your life or will you leave this place on another Lord's day and say no thank you? I want to seek my own desires in life and remain apart from God.

In a way today we are making a choice, I think is it here where it says you are now entering the mission field on the way out? As we leave today we will be making a choice, as soon as we go through those doors we will be making a choice, each and every one of us.

We will either be entering into the mission field where we know the Lord and we seek to do his will or we will be entering the field missing. We will be lost, we will be lost in this life and we will be lost in eternity.

[31 : 44] No one can serve two masters and for those that are not yet believers I urge you to not let the sun go down on another Lord's day without turning to him and asking him to enter into your life reminding us that no one can serve two masters and I pray that you would indeed turn to him, you turn to him today or again none of us are guaranteed to enter into tomorrow let alone to see out the rest of this day.

I pray that you would remember that today is indeed the day of salvation and when you go out the doors you are making that choice to follow the Lord and to go into the mission field and not a place where you are lost.

Amen and may the Lord bless these very brief reflections on his word. We will just say a short word of prayer before we conclude with our singing.

Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we again come before you and give you thanks for who you are Lord. We thank you that when we look to you we ought to be reminded of eternity, we ought to be reminded of eternity in all that we do but as we've already said today our lives here are so temporary and fleeting, they're but a grain of sand in eternity, they're unseen elements of time when we look at the idea of eternity Lord and we pray that each and every one of us here today whether online or in this house Lord would remember that in eternity we are all entering into eternity and we will be separated by those who have trusted in the Lord and have placed you at the centre of our lives and those that have realised our truth too late.

So we pray Lord that we would have eternity in view, that we would seek to use the wonderful gifts and the wonderful provisions that you have for us and that you've given to us, that we would seek to use them for your glory in all that we do, whether in the workplace, whether in a fishing boat, whether in the local shop that we would seek to see your well done on earth as it is in heaven Lord.

[33 : 43] So equip us, strengthen us, we ought to take the multitude of opportunities that we have, we often pray for opportunities to share a word in season but accompanying that we ought to pray for the courage and the boldness to take the huge number of opportunities that we have each and every week to share that word in season Lord.

So we pray that we would be indeed laying up treasures in heaven, not here on earth, and that we would indeed be placing all that we can, all that we do in this life to please you, to do all that seeks to glorify you and to enjoy you further.

For we know Lord that all that we do for you will see those treasures laid up in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy and we can have that eternal, eternal love and joy for you Lord.

Be with us just now Lord, forgive us for all of our sins and Christ's precious name we pray. Amen.