

Empty, Blind, Divided

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[0:00] Well, as we come to God's Word this morning, you'll recognize that we cut into the Sermon on the Mount. Just a wee bit of background in relation to the Sermon on the Mount. A theme that runs through the book of Matthew is that Matthew looks and puts Jesus across as the new Moses. You remember back in Deuteronomy, it said that the Lord would raise up a prophet like Moses from among his people and that we were to listen to him. And throughout Matthew, we see different themes that are presented. On the next slide there, you'll see how Moses compares to Jesus.

But what we have to remember is that Moses and Jesus, while there are similarities in their lives, they are not the same. Jesus is a greater Moses and greater than Moses, and we must remember that.

We see in the last one there, Moses went to the mountain where he received the Ten Commandments, and Jesus now speaks to the people on the mountain and again gives out a new law and discusses the law.

We all know the Ten Commandments. We can recognize the Ten Commandments and we can see here where Jesus, earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, speaks about specific areas of the Ten Commandments.

Now you think, well, there's only three areas there that he speaks on. I would like us to think about the other areas of the Ten Commandments that are there this morning.

[2:01] And if we neglect the first commandment, we're in danger of breaking each of the other commandments that are there. Now I'm not saying for one minute that anybody in here has gone off and committed a crime in relation to do not steal, do not commit murder.

Anyone in here has committed a crime punishable by imprisonment or worthy of going to court. That's not what I'm saying. But there is a danger that if we neglect the first commandment there, we are in danger of breaking them all.

As most of you know, here I was in the police for 30 years. And most crimes that were committed. Idolatry of possessions.

Idolatry of needs. And you can see very quickly how we can go and break these commandments. Within our own hearts.

Or going out and committing a crime. You may ask, remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. What's the purpose of the Sabbath day?

[3:17] It's for us to have rest. And to enjoy God. And if we put ourselves first. And say, I need my time. I need my rest.

I'm first. What are we doing? We're immediately forgetting what the Sabbath day is for. We're to come and worship God. But if we think that we need our own time.

We need to be able to go and do our own things. We need to be able to go and relax. We're in danger of breaking them. We see something. We set our heart on it. We spend all our money on it. We're coveting other things. We're stealing time away from God. Now we may not, as we'll see if we go on to the next slide.

I'm not saying that if I went into your homes today. That I would find, as we were discussing with the kids. We carved images. That you set up.

[4:15] And you worship. I dare say if I went into some houses across the island. There are people who worship Buddha. And other false gods. But are we in danger not of creating and carving images.

But are we in danger of worshipping the possessions that we have. The homes that we have. And putting them in the place of God. And as we go through. And as we have read. In the passage before us this morning. Jesus touches. On the danger. Of that idolatry.

We see. In the first. Eighteen verses. What's a common theme. That I be seen by them. That I. They may see. What I have done. That my deeds. May be seen. By others. What's become the idol.

[5:26] I've become the idol. What I'm doing. Each and every one of these things. That are there. Giving to the needy. Praying. Fasting. In and of themselves.

The right things to do. But if we do them in such a way. That we want everybody. To see what we're doing. Who are we seeking glory for? We're seeking glory for ourselves.

And not. For God. Takes us to. Our text this morning. And a focus.

On. Matthew 6. 19. To 24. Do not lay up for yourselves. Treasures on earth. Where moth and rust. Destroy.

And where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves. Treasures in heaven. Where neither moth. Nor rust. Destroys. And where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is.

[6:24] There. Your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy. Your whole 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. No one.

Can serve two masters. For he will hate the one. And love the other. Or he will be devoted to one. And despise the other. You cannot serve God.

And money. And as we think. About that this morning. We'll look at it. Under the heading. Of empty. Blind.

And divided. And our three points. Mirror. The heading this morning. We're storing. But empty. We're seeing.

[7:22] But blind. We're serving. But we're divided. And as we think. About these things this morning. I want us to reflect. On where we are.

With God. We may be walking with God. We may have been walking with God. For many years. But we've maybe lost. Our focus.

We may never. Have walked with God. God. But this morning. God's word. Is speaking to us. Or over past weeks. Past months.

Past years. God's word. Has been speaking to us. We've seen the light. Of God's word. But we've chosen. Because of what's in our hearts.

To turn away from it. We'll focus. On the first. Storing.

[8:20] But empty. And we have the picture there. In the text. About where we are laying up treasures. Where are we storing up treasures. In this world.

Are we. Focusing. On the here and now. Are we focusing. On what we can have here. Right now. With no thought. Of our future.

With Jesus. In the kingdom of God. Are we storing up. Treasures. Here. That will one day rot. That will one day rust.

And may very well. Be taken from us. Again. Going back. To my previous life. I was at homes. That had been broken into.

Folks. Whole world. Was shattered. Because. Of what they had lost. If I was to ask you. How much money. We spend on insurance.

[9:21] To protect. The goods. That we have in this life. How much money. Maybe not so much here. Is spent. On home security. Is that much money made.

On home security. That they advertise on TV. To attract more people. And paint a picture. That everybody needs. Home security. To protect. The possessions. That we have here.

Are we protecting. What we have here. At the neglect. Of preparing. For the kingdom. That is to come. Are we storing.

But empty. Sorry. If you can move. The slide on. I apologize. I forgot to do. The Lord's prayer. With the children. But we see there.

Our father in heaven. Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. We pray that. We looked at it before. About the how. When we pray that prayer.

[10:22] That we're seeking. God's kingdom. To come. But as a shorter catechism. Teaches about that very phrase. It says there. In the second petition. Which is thy kingdom come.

We pray that. Satan's kingdom. May be destroyed. And the kingdom of grace. May be advanced. Ourselves. And others. Brought into it. And kept in it.

And that the kingdom of glory. May be hastened. Now I'm not going to say. That every time you pray that prayer. That that's what's on your mind. But that's what we should be thinking about.

That it's not just words. That we let roll off our tongue. Our father who art in heaven. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. But we actually focus.

On what it actually says. About us. When we pray it. Are we really praying. That we ask. That the earth pass away.

[11:21] And that we know the kingdom of grace. That we. And others. Are brought into it. And kept in it. And that the kingdom of glory.

May be hastened. Because if we were praying that prayer. In that way. We wouldn't be focused. On what we have. In this world. Our thought.

And our heart's desire. Would be with God. Do we just look. At heaven. But our heart. Is tied.

To the world. And the stuff. That we have. Within it. What does Paul. Say to Timothy. About riches. As for the rich. In this present age. Charge them not. To be haughty. Not to set their hopes. On the uncertainty. Of riches. But on God. Who richly provides.

[12:22] Us with everything. To enjoy. God provides. Everything that we need. Now I'm not saying. That having clothing. Having. Nice possessions.

Having a nice house. Isn't. Is wrong. God gives us these things. God knows. That we need these things. The difficulty.

And the challenge is. That as it says there. These things. Are uncertain. They will pass away. And if we put. Our trust.

And our hope. And our effort. And our heart. Is following these things. That's. When it becomes. A problem for us. Paul goes on. To say.

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.

[13:17] So that they may. Take hold. Of that. Which is truly life. Life. Now that's not saying to us. That. What we need to do.

Is we need to do good works. If our focus. In our heart. Is on God. We will be driven. To do good works. We will recognize.

That God has blessed us. If we are blessed. Financially. If we are blessed materially. God has blessed us. God said to Abraham.

You are blessed. To be a blessing. That applies. To each and every one of us. For the much. That has been given to us. Much will be required. Are we generous. With what God.

Has blessed us with. Or are we hoarding it. For ourselves. Hoarding it. For a rainy day. Hoping. That we'll have provided. For ourselves.

[14:12] Not trusting. In what God. Has given to us. And promised. To give to us. We've looked at the parable.

Of the sower. Now you might have started off. Thinking. I'm going to focus. On God. I'm giving my heart to God.

But all of a sudden. Without even realizing it. The weight of the world. The desire. For riches. The desire.

For better position. Has come in. And choked. Your walk. With God. And you're no longer fruitful. In your witness for God.

Because your focus. Has been taken off. Walking with God. Very quickly. Introduced you to a couple. Gillian and Gordon MacLeod.

[15:09] Got married. In December 1994. They were living in two separate houses. At that time. He was working in Skye. She was working in Inverness. They then got a married posting.

And they moved to Harris. All of a sudden. What they had in two houses. Was put into one house. They were quite comfortable. But then the windows. Didn't have double glazing. So they decided to buy. Heavier curtains. What would we do with the other curtains? We put them in the loft. Might need them for another day. Baby came along. What would we do with furniture? In that room. We put it in the loft just now. We may need it. For another day. Gordon's work. Decided that they were going to transfer him. They were going to have to move house. The removal lorry. Turned up at the door. And three bedroom house. Was emptied. Living room. Sitting room. Kitchen. Lorry driver goes.

[16:07] Right. That's everything. You've emptied the loft. Oh. No. Lorry driver went up into the loft. Phoned his boss. And said.

Can you send another lorry down? They had gathered that much stuff. That they didn't need. Taught them a lesson. That we can't live.

That we're going to be here. All the time. And that proved to be true. Because over the next 10 years. They stayed in four or five different houses. But I can tell you now.

Gordon MacLeod never put anything else up into the loft. Became the friend of the charity shop. Or the man at the recycling centre. I'm not going to say that that's the same for the last 16 years. When we eventually moved to Harris. And our oldest daughter says. Having been in three primary schools. I'm not moving. To another school. So there's a wee bit more stuff in the loft now.

[17:06] But. The reality is. We can store up stuff that we don't need. And are we prepared. And ready. To leave this world.

When God calls us. Or is the stuff. That carries. And weighs us down. And that we want to hold on to. That we're putting before.

Before. God. What was going up into the loft. Small packages. Didn't seem very much. But I am joking.

When I say that they had to phone. And get another lorry. To come down. And take the stuff out the loft. And that was only over the course. Of three years. We can very very quickly. Accumulate. And hang on to stuff. That we don't need. And sometimes. We don't even know that it's there. But it's weighing us down. And it's keeping us back.

[18:01] Let's not be choked. In our walk. With God. And we see in the next slide. Spurgeon says to us.

Whatever we make. To be our treasure. We will be sure to become. The attraction of our heart. If we accumulate. Earthly riches. Our hearts will be. By degrees. Tied up.

In our money bags. And on the other hand. If our chief possessions. Are in heavenly things. Our hearts will rise. Into the higher. And more spiritual region.

The position of the heart. Is sure to be affected. By the place. Where the treasure is laid up. Shall sons of God. Give their hearts away. To passing joys. Which decay.

If they remain ours. And are liable. At any moment. To be taken from us. Are we praying. For the hastening. Of God's kingdom. And living.

[18:58] As if you expect it to come. Or have you lost your way. And while you pray. Thy kingdom come. Your life is saying. But not yet.

Let us think. On these things. And apply them. Each one of us. Speak of. And hearer alike. To our own hearts. Our next point.

Is seeing. But blind. The eye is the lamp. Of the body. There's two things. Within the text. Here. And very very quickly.

I'm conscious of the time. And that we have to move. Next door. Our eye lets light in. But where does that light go? That's the outward light.

That comes in. And. Somebody's not well. There's something wrong. Internally. With something. Somebody. Very often. You can tell. Not by the way.

[19:57] That they're slouched. Not by the way. That they're maybe. Putting on a false smile. But you can tell. By looking at their eyes. There's maybe a darkness. About their eyes.

There's maybe a discoloration. About their eyes. I'll still never forget. The day. That our second daughter. Appeared. In the living room. And her eyes. Were bright yellow. Which matched her skin. Indicating. That there was an internal problem. And she had to go to the hospital. And get her gallbladder removed. Fairly quickly. But I can still see. The discoloration.

In her eyes. There was something wrong internally. What gives us life. Is a beating heart. Is our heart. Beating.

With the light of God. Or is it beating. Beating with the darkness. Of the world. Because even if the light comes in. Even if we read God's word.

[20:55] If our heart. Is dark. We don't always see. What God is saying to us. We move on with a slide.

Paul. In writing. To the Ephesians. Spoke about his encouragement. And praying for them. And as we go on.

His prayer is. That they would have the eyes of their heart. Enlightened. Enlightened. That they would see. The hope. That they would have. And what Christ had done for them.

Both through his death. And through his resurrection. And that they would. Put all things. That God having put all things. Under their feet. That they would recognize.

That God. Is all that they need. That the heart. The eyes of their heart. Would be enlightened. Just to maybe emphasize.

[21:52] This point last night. I was. In Tarbert. At the communion service there. And Neil Lachey. Who we had here. Last year. Was preaching.

And he was preaching. On Jesus washing. The disciples feet. And then. How he had shown the grace. To wash. The feet of Judas. And how they were then.

At the table. In the same room. Judas. And Jesus. Judas could see Jesus. He spoke to Jesus. He asked Jesus. Is it I? Jesus came.

As a light of the world. And Judas. Could see him. But Jesus knew. What was in. Judas's heart. And he encouraged.

Judas. To go and do. What he had to do. And even. As Judas. Was there. He could see Jesus. He had seen. What Jesus had done. For him. In washing his feet.

[22:49] He was close enough. To Jesus. For Jesus. To reach. And give him. The bread. That he had dipped. Yet the darkness.

That was in his heart. Didn't see. The light. Of Jesus. What happened. To Judas. Judas. Went out. Into the darkness.

And we all know. What happened. Thereafter. The eye. Is the light. Is the lamp. Of the body. But is there a danger.

That what's in our heart. Is stopping the light. Of Jesus. Getting in. That we can truly see him. That we can truly. Understand.

What his word. Has to say to us. And just finally. Moving on. To the second. The final point. We cannot. Serve. Two masters.

[23:44] Sorry for moving you on. So quickly. But I'm conscious. Of the time. No one can serve. Two masters. Doesn't say. That some people can. It might. Doesn't say.

That you may be able. To serve two masters. It says. No one. Can serve. Two masters. I don't know. If you've ever. Had two bosses. At work. Might be easier. To think about.

If you've ever. Had two pals. That fell out. With one another. And you were. The go-between. And you had to show. Loyalty to one. Or loyalty to the other. It becomes very. Very difficult. You become divided.

Between the two of them. And what we're being told here. Again. Is that we cannot. Serve God. And serve money.

Or serve our possessions. As it may have been translated. Which takes us directly back. To the first. Commandment. You shall have no other gods.

[24:38] Before me. You shall have no other gods. Before me. Whether that's yourself. Whether it's your possessions. Whether it's somebody else's possessions.

Whether it's something. That elevates you. You cannot. Have. Two masters. We see the next slide.

People of Israel. Had wandered away from God. Lord. And he says to them. If my people. Who are called by my name. Humble themselves. And pray. And seek my face.

And turn from their wicked ways. Then I will hear from heaven. And forgive their sin. And heal their land. You may not have wondered. In the same way.

That the children of Israel. Have done. But you may be needing this morning. To come. And acknowledge. And seek God's face. And turn to him.

[25:37] And know his blessing. Because as the passage goes on. But if you turn aside. And forsake my statues. And my commandments. That I have set before you.

And go and serve other gods. And worship them. Then I will pluck you up. From my land. That I have given you. And this house. That I have consecrated. For my name. I will cast out.

Cast out of my sight. And I will make it. A proverb. And a byword. Among all people. We cannot. Serve. Two masters.

Do you need this morning. To turn my side. And pray to God. And ask him. To come into your heart. Calvin.

Says to us. What is said here. Particularly. Of riches. May be applied. To all faults. Of any kind. With equal propriety. As God always. Highly values sincerity.

[26:37] And abominates. Two faced characters. Men are entirely deceived. If they think. That he will be satisfied. With half. Of their hearts. He cannot.

Serve. Two masters. Sinclair Ferguson. Says it in one sentence. Life. In the kingdom of God. Calls for a single minded.

Allegiance. To the king. And the king. Is God. Where is your allegiance. This morning. Is your heart beating.

With the light of Christ. Or do you need to come. And bow before him. Let us pray.