

What matters is where your treasure lies



CITY BIBLE FORUM

What matters in life – Sermon on the Mount - Session 6^{i 1}

To explore how being a follower of Jesus means putting God first, and valuing that relationship above all else (from Matthew 6:19-24)

Matthew 6:19-24 ¹⁹“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.” ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” ²¹ “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” ²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!” ²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

Q1. What is something that is precious to you and why is it precious to you? (It could be a person, thing, experience or memory.)

It is important to God what we value or consider precious, and we will soon find out why.

Before we look at what Jesus has to say, let's look at where we are up to in Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount".

From previous weeks

¹ Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version, NIV, Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

In the past few weeks, we have discovered that what matters to God is where our heart lies.

The Pharisees, who were part of the religious leadership in Jesus' day, were extremely zealous in their devotion to God, keeping 613 laws.

Matthew 5:20 "For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven."

But what God is concerned about, is your heart. Jesus does not say that you need to keep 620 laws instead of 613 if you want to have a righteousness that's greater than the Pharisees. What he says is that following God, being his disciple, is a matter of the heart.

Jesus then gives examples of how God looks at the heart. For example, it's not about whether you murder someone, but about whether you are angry with someone. And it's not just about whether you love your neighbour – it's about whether you love your enemy.

Last week, we considered Jesus' teaching about doing things in secret where only God can see what we do, instead of doing things for the approval of other people. Secrecy safeguards sincerity – and God will reward you as he sees what is done in secret because he cares about where your heart truly lies.

Two treasures

Treasure: (from Dictionary.com)

- 1. wealth or riches stored or accumulated, especially in the form of precious metals, money, jewels, or plate;*
- 2. wealth, rich materials, or valuable things*
- 3. any thing or person greatly valued or highly prized*

Matthew 6:19-20 ¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and

steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”

Q2. What's the problem with storing up treasures on earth?

They won't last because they can't be kept safe.

Q3. Where does Jesus tell us to store up treasures for ourselves?

Somewhere where they will last – heaven, which is eternal.

Q4. What treasure is Jesus talking about, do you think?

Whatever it is we value or highly prize.

Why does it matter?



Q5. How does this person feel about the ring?

This character from the movie “Lord of the Rings” is possessed by the ring, and when they lose it, will pursue it at all costs.

Matthew 6:21 ²¹ “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Q6. What do you think Jesus means when he says, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”?

What we treasure shows what we value.

Two visions

Matthew 6:22-23 ²²“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”

Q7. What do you think Jesus is talking about here?

Our eyes are like lamps – they enable us to see. If what our eyes are focused on are good things, then that has a beneficial effect on us. If what they focused on is unhealthy, then that will have a detrimental effect on us.

The eye is how we see things. When we see something we like, we want it and give our attention to it. If the thing we see is good for us, then it is healthy for us and impacts us in a positive way. But if the thing is not good for us, it will also impact our whole being as a person – but in a negative way.

We can have blind spots too, which means we are unable to see that we are actually being driven and controlled by the thing we are so focused on. And we fail to realize what it is costing us.

For example, you might see a corner office and think, “I really want that office” and put all your time and efforts into getting that corner office. You think about how to impress your boss. You spend extremely long hours at work. Your thoughts are consumed by how to fulfill all the key performance indicators. But when we are so focused on that corner office, we can fail to see that it is actually costing us our relationships with friends and family or our health.

Two masters

Matthew 6:24 ²⁴ "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Q8. Under what conditions are you unable to serve two masters at once?

When those 2 masters oppose each other.

Q9. Why do people serve money?

Because of what they think money will give them – security and significance.

Q10. Why can't you serve both money and God?

As masters they oppose each other. Either we get our security and significance from money or we get it from God.

Q11. If you want to follow God, what do you have to do?

Make money your servant, rather than your master.

Q12. So we see that God doesn't share his position as master. Do you think he is just being petty and wants all the attention for himself?

Not if serving him as master is in our best interests. The problem with having money as your master is that it doesn't quite deliver – it can be lost, and you end up needing more and more.

A heart problem

"The human heart is an idol factory that **takes good things** like a successful career, love, material possessions, even family, and **turns them into ultimate things**. Our hearts deify them as the center of our lives, because, **we think, they can give us significance and security, safety and fulfillment**, if we attain them." (Timothy Keller in *Counterfeit Gods: The Empty Promises of Money, Sex, and Power, and the Only Hope that Matters*)

Q13. Is there a problem with having your family as the most important thing?

Yes, because it's turned a good thing into an ultimate thing. That then puts pressure on those family relationships to meet needs they were never designed to meet. Relationships implode under that kind of pressure.

Q14. If you're a follower of Jesus, how do you know when something has become too precious to you?

If you're not prepared to give it up, or couldn't cope with the idea of losing it.

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