

Matthew 6:19-24 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys 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. 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. 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.

Matthew 6:19-24 | Personal Generosity

If we are going to be able to say Christ is enough we have to talk about money. Our cultures relationship to money is a never-ending practice of discontentment. Money offers nearly unlimited promises. The first promise is to make the world feel simple. Money can't really be threatening because it can be so easily known. You can count it. Add, subtract, multiply, divide. Money can buy you time. Money can put you in the right clothes. Money can overcome your heritage and raise you to the highest classes in one generation. Money can make your father love you, and your friends fear you.

Ecclesiastes 10:19 Bread is made for laughter, and wine gladdens life,
and money answers everything.

What is this, another problem money can solve? Easy just get more of it then! Problem solved. Come back next week for more Solomonic insights! If the answer is always more money you can never say enough. You know Baal demanded worship but he was only god of the storm. If he gave his early rains and his late rains in season what more could he offer for your worship? Mammon, now there is a god who is never satisfied. If you worship Mammon you likewise will be never satisfied. You will never say that Christ is enough and your new God will never be enough either.

What is the opposite of worshipping mammon. Generosity. To cultivate a spirit of generosity is essential to saying Christ is enough. All that must change is your heart, your eyes, and your God.

1. Heart

Matthew 6:19-24 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Let's just get a simple first pass understanding. Everything decays. Your favorite shirt will wear out. Your shoes will get holes. Your house will be reclaimed by the earth. The cut of your jeans will go out of style. If you're internet is like my internet then you need to know that there is no such thing as the last t-shirt you'll ever need. So just don't click.

So what is life then? Are we just polishing the brass on the titanic? Is it all going down? Well in order to understand this we must get a sense of what it means to store up treasure for ourselves in heaven. What almost automatically happens in our hearts when we hear verses like this is we think physical things don't matter and all that matters are spiritual things. But this is to misunderstand the heaven and earth dichotomy that Jesus is drawing.

To frame Jesus as teaching that physical things don't matter and only spiritual things matter is the strangest reading of the story we could possibly have. He is God who is spirit. But what's so surprising about Jesus? He took on flesh! He became incarnate, a man with a body. He really dies and then what's so wild about his death so that we're still talking about it today. He came back! And not as a ghost but resurrected in his body. Remember the empty tomb. Jesus is here to redeem the world. The problem isn't that these great spiritual things are trapped in some physical form (you are a soul, you have a body (thumbs down)), but that all of creation is out of order.

You see the pattern of heaven is what the earth is meant to be conformed too. Heaven is the blueprint of God's perfect intentions. Yet by man's sin and the fall of creation under the curse of our sin all is subject to corruption. Your highest spiritual ideals are subject to corruption just like "the last t shirt you'll ever need" is subject to corruption.

But here is Jesus' plan, the whole world is being brought into conformity with the heavenly pattern. He uses a flaming sword to accomplish this. He divides truth from lies so that only truth remains and all that is not in conformity with the heavenly pattern burns up. What is the center of this heavenly pattern? That Christ is Lord.

So what is it to lay up for yourselves treasures on earth and not in heaven? It is not as though one person flits their time away building and the other rights off all physical pursuits as foolish. Let us join Siddhartha and meditate by the river. No, they both build. The question is what they build with.

1 Corinthians 3:12-13 Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— ¹³ each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done.

We are here to build with those things that conform to the pattern of the New Heavens and New Earth. This is because they are established under the Lordship of Christ with Christ and his grace as the foundation. So what do you store up? And tell me does this tell a story of Christ's Lordship of your own?

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

Therefore what you store reveals your Lord. What you treasure reveals your heart. If all that you treasure makes sense in a world out of conformity with Christ's Lordship then it will suffer the inevitable decay that all outside of him is due. But if your treasure is the coming kingdom, all that is ordered this way in your life will be stored in heaven. So even if it looks burned up now, it can't be touched. And one day it will be heard in full.

Here is hope and the risk. If you don't hope in Christ, then his coming means a final burning of all you love. If you hope in Christ, then even if all you love on earth gets burned, you can't lose it.

2. Eyes

Matthew 6:22 "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. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Now in the middle of this talk about money and treasure Jesus explains this strange principle of eyes. But as we follow the context we will see it is not so strange. Because what Jesus is talking about is judgement. The eyes are the organs of judgement because they see what is there. God does not lean in and smell, or reach out and touch all that he had made and say that it is good. No God saw that it was good. It is in right seeing in particular that one is able to make right judgement.

The eyes are what bring light into our body. And If the eye is healthy then our whole body will be operating in conformity with the truth of what is really there. However if our eyes are bad, then it doesn't matter how many lights you turn on it will be darkness. Now if we are convinced that we are able to see and judge what is good and what is bad but we are doing so outside of the Lordship of Christ. It is only self deception.

How do you know when you're being deceived? Of course you can't. And money is deceptive. It teases your anxiety and says, you're barely making it, when you live better than any king before 100 years ago. But it also says that you can't part with it. You would be unwise. God won't provide. Your giving is useless. But where are your eyes? Is your money there to be brought into conformity with the Lordship of Christ or make it so you never have to depend upon him? Jesus talks about the eyes because an understanding of the kingdom requires entirely new ways of seeing and evaluating what is good.

Goodness is not just an insatiable quest for more. In fact that can be practicing a pattern of discontent. Goodness is all that we have being brought into conformity with the Lordship of Christ. When you see well you will serve well.

3. God

Matthew 6:24 “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.

You know money gives the appearance of a slave, you hold it in your control. But it functions as a master. When money is your master it gives you strange eyes. Where the only good money is that which is oriented towards serving you. It tricks you into thinking you the master but you not, because you will do whatever money demands. You’ll ruin evenings, pick fights with your spouse, you’ll lie at work and hoard. And then a preacher will stand up and say. You should give a not insignificant amount of money to the church. And you won’t be able to hold both together.

In fact the feeling will be that God is a cruel master. He is the one who never gives enough and then in your lack he demands more. You cannot serve two masters, you cannot serve God and money.

The truth is one master is cruel and demanding. The other master has given you all you have and his demand is that you not be enslaved to the one who hates you. Great trust God in your heart but hold on to what you have. Of course there is no option for this, it is to pretend in the same way that our hope is to be taken out of the world into heaven rather than that the earth in all its particulars will be finally wed to heaven in perfect form. This is of course what we pray for. The way we do this is to give. Live lives of generosity. You must start by giving to the church, as an offering to God. You can’t serve two masters. It is in giving that we say our highest good is God, not money.

This flows from a place of contentment with what God has given you. So I exhort you to have this heart in you, a heart that is content in what he has from God and therefore gives. Here are 5 ways that the Christian rests content in what he has. Jeremiah Burroughs.

1. “In what he has, he has the love of God, he has God’s love to him in what he has.”
2. “What they have is sanctified to them for their good.”
3. “What he has, he has it upon free cost, he is not likely to be called to pay for what he has.”
4. “What he has is not by mere donation, but is a right of purchase, it is paid for, and it is their own.
5. “Every little that they have is but as an earnest penny of all the glory that is reserved for them.”

In Christ all is yours, therefore you can give and have nothing to lose. But outside of Christ, all that you have will merely slip away. If you hoard you lose, if you give you enjoy and keep.

