

TREASURE IN THE HEAVENS (Part 1)

Luke 12:33

33 Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

First of all, when the Bible talks about our “treasure” it's talking about our **wealth** or **anything we have laid up in store**. And, according to this verse, the way we lay up our treasure “in the heavens” is by *giving alms* or giving to others!

Now, the Bible has a lot to say about this topic. Jesus uses this phrase “treasure in heaven” several times in the gospels. In fact, he mentioned it earlier in this very chapter. However, before we look at it, I want us to go to verse 1 of this chapter.

Luke 12:1

1 In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Hypocrisy means *to pretend to be someone or something you're not*. Moreover, hypocrisy is a major theme in this chapter. In fact, there seems to be a correlation between hypocrisy and where we put our treasure!

Luke 12:16–20

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: 17 And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? 18 And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. 19 And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. 20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? 21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Notice, those who lay up for themselves treasure upon the earth, are not rich towards God. Meaning, they're not really rich, they're only PRETENDING to be rich! Jesus goes on to call such a person a “fool.” The reason he's called a fool is because the treasure he has laid up for himself will one day require his soul!

Therefore, unless we lay up our treasure in heaven (give it away), our soul will one day be demanded from us!

Mark 8:36

³⁶ For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

If we want to gain (hold on to) our soul, we must give up the world. In fact, what we gain in this world is to be given in *exchange* for our soul.

Proverbs 13:8

⁸ The ransom of a man's life are his riches...

A “ransom” is the price you pay to redeem someone. According to this verse, riches are the ransom used to redeem our soul.

Someone might ask, “I thought we were ALREADY redeemed by Christ’s blood?”

Colossians 1:13, 14

¹³ Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: ¹⁴ In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:

“If we’ve been redeemed (set free) by Christ’s blood, why do we still need to *redeem* our soul?”

Well, to answer this question, we must look back at the story of the Israelites. If you recall, Israel was initially redeemed by the blood of the lamb (Passover). Yet, after being redeemed from Egypt, they needed to *redeem* their firstborn!

Numbers 3:13

¹³ Because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord.

Apparently, when God spared their firstborn in Egypt He did it with the idea that all the firstborn males would belong to Him (i.e. be His servants)!

Numbers 3:12

¹² And I, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that openeth the matrix among the children of Israel: therefore the Levites shall be mine;

Notice, rather than take all the firstborn males, God chose to take only the tribe of Levi. Still, the Israelites had to REDEEM (or buy back) their firstborn to free them from a life of service to God! (The value of this redemption was set by the priests and was usually around 5 *shekels* of silver.)

Now, we should point out that there was a *penalty* for going back on their promise and not giving to God their firstborn (or their *firstfruits*). Probably the most famous example of this is found in the book of Joshua.

Joshua 7:1, 11, 24, 25

¹ But the children of Israel committed a trespass in the accursed thing: for Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerah, of the tribe of Judah, took of the accursed thing: and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the children of Israel. ¹¹ Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant which I commanded them: for they have even taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. ²⁴ And Joshua, and all Israel with him, took Achan the son of Zerah, and the silver, and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons, and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had: and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. ²⁵ And Joshua said, Why hast thou troubled us? the Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire...

So, the penalty for not giving God the “firstfruits” was stoning and being burned with fire. Jesus warns us of a similar penalty in the book of Matthew.

Matthew 25:14, 24–27

¹⁴ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. ²⁴ Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: ²⁵ And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. ²⁶ His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: ²⁷ Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

In this parable, the *exchangers* are the priests who were in charge of *changing* their money (goods) into a ‘shekel’ or something that could be used in service to God. Therefore, if we’re not going to be active in service, then we should at least give your money to those who will. If we don’t, we could lose our soul!

Matthew 25:28, 30

²⁸ Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. ³⁰ And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Understand that we are NOT talking about earning our way into heaven. Instead, this is about *proving* or showing ourselves WORTHY of the kingdom of God!

1 Thessalonians 2:12

12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.

Even Abraham, who was already reckoned righteous *by faith*, was commanded to receive circumcision as a “sign” (proof) that he was worthy to be called righteous.

Romans 4:11

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

Also, God commanded Abraham, after he had received the promise, to sacrifice his son Isaac upon the altar. Why would God give Abraham a son, and turn right around and ask Abraham to give his son back? God did it to test (prove) whether Abraham still believed salvation comes from Him or from the blessing (his son)!

Sometimes God will require you to give back what He's given you to see if your confidence is in Him or in the thing He's given you. Unfortunately, many people fail this test because they don't realize that God's testing them to see if they believe in the promise or in the PROMISER!