

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 6.

This morning, we continue in our 4-part series entitled: “Money and Worry.”



The title of today's message is: “You Cannot Serve God and Money.” Without question, the majority of us in this room have thought about and worried about money in the last 24 hours. Money and worry seem to go together like peanut butter and jelly. We know, as Christians, we aren't supposed to worry, but we do...and that's particularly true about money. And I'm convinced Jesus knew we would have the propensity to worry about it, so He talked about it A LOT!

In fact, 348 times in the Gospels...5 times more about money than any other subject He ever discussed. And we learned last week that He instructs us to store up for ourselves treasures in heaven. But, the truth is...we'll only store up treasures in heaven to the degree we actually believe it's there. In other words, to the degree we actually believe Jesus and His Word that there is a heaven, is to the degree that we will make eternal investments there by how we spend our money here.

Now anyone who has been to church much at all in their lives have heard these truths and know them well...but as with anything...it's one thing to know something, it's another thing to actually act on that which we know. It's been said: “Knowledge is impotent unless it's acted upon.” I think I just said that! ☺

So, what do we know? Well, let's look at it again in Matthew 6:19.

Matthew 6:19-21

19 “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.

Remember how we ended last week? We asked: Where is your heart? Is it concerned about things above or things below...here? Do you really believe in heaven? Really? How much?

British pastor and Bible Scholar G. Campbell Morgan, once said:

“You are to remember with the passion burning within you that you are not the child of today, you are not of the earth, you are more than dust, you are the child of tomorrow, you are of the eternities, you are the offspring of deity, the measurement of your life cannot be circumscribed by the point where blue sky touches green earth. All the facts of your life cannot be compassed in the one small sphere upon which you live, because you belong to the infinite. If you make your fortune on the earth, oh poor, sorry, silly soul. You have made

a fortune and stored it in a place where you cannot hold it. Make your fortune, but store it where it will greet you in the dawning of the new morning.” G. Campbell Morgan, British Pastor and Bible Scholar

Are you doing that? How can you tell? Well, as we discussed...it's where you and I spend our time and our money. That's how you tell what you value. But, there's also another couple of indicators about what we value and Jesus gives us these indicators in verses 22-24.

Matthew 6:22-24

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.”

*There's a wonderful little story I read this week about a farmer who bounded joyfully into his kitchen one day and told his wife with a great big grin that their finest cow had just given birth to twins, one black and one brown. He said, “**Dear, I feel the impulse to dedicate one of these cows to the Lord, we'll bring them up together and when they're at a marketable age, we'll sell them and we'll keep the proceeds from one and we'll give the proceeds from the other to the Lord.**”*

*His wife said, “**Well, that sounds great, honey...**” and as wives are prone to do, she went to the heart of the issue and she asked, “**But, which is the Lord's cow...the black one or the brown one?**” He replied, “**Well dear, there's no need to worry about that right now since we'll raise them together...we'll just worry about that later.**”*

*Well, several months passed and the farmer entered the kitchen a little more slowly, looking very sad and somber. His wife asked, “**What's wrong honey...why the long, sad face?**” ...to which the farmer replied, “**I have bad news dear...the Lord's cow died.**”*

I guess we can laugh at that little story because we identify with the farmer's approach, don't we? Why is it always the Lord's cow that dies? Some might even rationalize and say, “Well, the Lord just decided to take **His cow** on home.”

There is a great and massive pull to the stuff of this earth, isn't there? The fact is it's a whole lot easier to lay up treasure on earth...a place we can see...than a place like heaven that we've never seen. It's a matter of faith and trust, isn't it? Do we really believe Jesus' words or don't we? You see, it's not wrong to possess things, but it's wrong for things to possess us.

Indeed...it's usually the Lord's cow that dies and that's why we need MUCH instruction on how to deal with money. The truth is...the Scripture is clear...we are to give to the Lord first.

Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of all your produce; **10** then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting with wine.

Proverbs 3:24

One gives freely, yet grows all the richer; another withholds what he should give, and only suffers want.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. **7** Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. **8** And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

Are you sowing sparingly or are you sowing bountifully to the Lord's work and His kingdom?

Listen, if you sow to the work of the Lord, God has promised that He'd make all grace abound to you so that you'll have what you need. Do you believe that? If you do, then you'll store up treasures in heaven. But, I have a question for you.

Can the treasure Jesus is talking about mean more than money? Remember the Greek word for TREASURE? It means, "where precious things are kept." Well what are precious things? Can it mean more than money? Maybe I can ask it this way. What is the most precious possession you have outside of your salvation? Would you say your wife or husband or children? I bet you would!

Aren't people a TREASURE? Sure they are! Here are my treasures: First...my family...



and you, my family



Listen, are you investing your time and resources into people? You see, that's storing up treasures in heaven. Because if you can lead people to Jesus, then you'll see them again in heaven... They will be a treasure for you for all eternity.

Can you imagine, one day, walking the streets of gold and seeing the people you had a part in leading to Christ. They will greet you and thank you and hug your neck for helping them to know Christ and reach heaven's shore. What a fabulous thought and what incredible anticipation that creates for heaven! And that's point Jesus is seeking to make in this sermon. We are to be looking to build God's kingdom and that kingdom is built through people. Are you investing in seeing lives changed and souls saved?

Listen, here's the principle: Whatever you keep here you lose, but whatever you send ahead by investment into the lives and the souls of those in your circle of influence in bringing them to Jesus, well... you get that forever. It's your choice...HERE or HEAVEN.

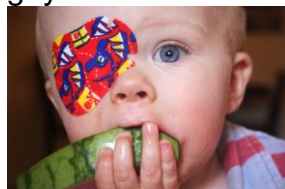
And that's what Jesus is teaching to the people on this mountainside. He wants them to understand that there are two treasuries...one here and one in heaven and the only one that lasts is in heaven.

And now he goes further, with yet another analogy. This time with the eye...

Matthew 6:22-23

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!

Have you ever had eye problems? As I was researching this message, I came across this little guy...



What a difficult situation for that little toddler. He's had to get used to that eye patch and I'm sure that's not been easy.

But, I want you to think about what Jesus is saying: “The eye is the lamp of the body.” You see, to the Jew, the eye was considered a lamp or a window that reveals the quality of a person's inner life. So, a healthy eye connoted clear vision and suggested loyalty to God, while a bad eye, connoted impaired vision, and suggested immorality and moral corruption.

But Jesus goes one step further... He's not just saying that the darkness is coming from the outside...but, from the inside...

Matthew 6:23

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!

The Jews understood that the eye was another indication about the person's heart. If your heart is toward God, it lights your entire spiritual being for good, but if your heart is toward the world and material things, then the blinds will come down on your spiritual perception and you'll become blind.

There's a tremendous principle here. Jesus is saying the eye is like a window, in that it's a way to see into a person's soul. You've heard this haven't you? “The eye's are the window to the soul.”



We know that when someone says to us about another person: “They're shady...they're pulling the blinds down...they're hiding something...” All of these things denote evil or sin. Perhaps a picture can describe what we're saying ...



Listen, here's what I believe Jesus is saying to us: If your treasure is on

this earth you're going to see nothing because the blinds have been pulled down over your spiritual eyes, revealing the darkness of your greedy and covetous heart and you'll see nothing. You'll be blind to the spiritual things...the important things of life.

I want you to turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter 16 and as you do, I want to be brutally honest with you this morning. You see, I have to admit church family, I believe there are people who come in and out of our churches all across this county and all across this country every Sunday and they don't ever seem to change. They stay the same.

They never grow and they never seem to develop a love for the Word of God or the work of the kingdom of God. They just stay the same. They never get involved...they're not active...they float in and out...they're always on the periphery. And I tell ya... I wonder to myself if it isn't because they're so focused on the stuff of this earth, which makes them so earthbound because their eyes are focused on amassing treasures here and that pursuit blinds them and they have no spiritual perception at all. Their desire for the stuff of this world just pulls the blinds right down over their lives. And they never grow...they stay the same.

Do you know people like that? Are you like that? Is it the Lord's cow that died in your life AGAIN?

You see, listen to me...until you have a proper view of money, like Jesus is describing...which means you see money in the light of eternity and not the here and now...you will walk around in darkness to the spiritual realities around...you will be blinded by the stuff this world...materialism, physical comfort, security and wealth and you'll never grow spiritually. And you see there's a whole lot of spiritual babes walking around, who've never grown and I'm here to tell you...I don't want to be like that! I want to keep the spiritual blinds up in my life and allow what resources that have been blessed to have to be used by God for His kingdom.

Do you want to know what happens to a person who uses their resources for God's kingdom? Watch. Luke 16, verse 10.

Luke 16:10-13

10 "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. **11** If then you have not been faithful in the unrighteous wealth, who will entrust to you the true riches? **12** And if you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? **13** No servant 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."

And that's what Jesus said in Matthew's gospel as well. Look at it with me. **Back to Matthew 6:24. Matthew 6:24-25**

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."

The key to understanding these 2 verses is the word, "serve." The Greek word for is: **do-LOU-oh: Douleuō**- to be a slave, serve, do service.

So you understand...Jesus is not talking about a waiter or a waitress. He's not talking about an

employee working 8 to 5. He's talking about a slave. But, it goes a bit deeper than that because the word do-Lou-oh is the root word for the word that means bond slave, or bondservant.

Let me explain. In the first century, under Roman law, a bondservant was considered the owner's personal property and as much as 1/3 of the Roman population were slaves, and another 1/3 had been slaves earlier in their lives. Therefore, it was common for freeborn men and women to work side-by-side with slaves in doing jobs...everything from street sweepers and merchants to doctors, teachers, and even business managers.

Yet, in the Hebrew understanding of a "bondservant," a bondservant could voluntarily choose to stay with their master, even if that master eventually chose to set them free. This is according to:

Exodus 21:5-6

5 But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,'
6 then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever.

Here is an artist's depiction of that...



That's what a bondservant did. They were now the permanent property of their master...and they did it because they wanted to!

Now, we all know Jesus often referred to slaves and owners when He was teaching His parables, because that concept was very common to them. In fact, you might remember Jesus taught that the greatest in God's kingdom would have to become "the servant of all" (Mark 9:35).

Did you know that Paul, Timothy, James, Peter, and Jude all described themselves as "bondservants of Christ?" (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1).

Literally, therefore, throughout the entire New Testament, the word *bondservant*, (Do-LOU-oh) was used to describe someone who was absolutely devoted to Jesus. This makes total sense according to:

1 Corinthians 7:23

23 You were bought with a price; do not become bondservants of men.

That price...was the blood of Jesus...therefore, you and I can choose to become His bondservants. So, are you a bondservant of Jesus or of men? **Want to know how you can tell?**

If you were to place Jesus here and put another man beside of Him, representing the world. Maybe

you'd put a sig on his back that said: WORLD. And those two men...Jesus, the God-Man and that man representing the world...went walking arm and arm, but then they split apart. You can't follow them both...the one you go with...that's where your allegiance is.

Turn with me to Romans, chapter 6.

You know more and more studies that come across my desk show how the commitment level of Christians is waning. According to Barna Research and LifeWay Research, Christians are significantly less committed today than they were even 10 years ago.

The studies indicate that Christians are attending church less and less frequently. And it's not because they've stopped going to church, it's just that they don't attend church as much as they once did. Why? Because there is so much going on now on Sundays. There is such a great competition today for the time of people even on the Lord's day. So, people stay out late on Saturday night and they don't come. People are more affluent and they're gone more...and they don't come. Families have their kids involved in extra curricular activities that now take place on Sundays...and so they don't come.

How committed are you? Who are you following? Did the Lord's cow just die again in your life?

I want to show you some Scripture from Romans chapter 6, which in my opinion is the Mt. Everest of Scripture. And I want you to see it and I want you to listen.

Romans 6:15-23

15 What then? Are we to sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means! **16** Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? **17** But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, **18** and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. **19** I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

20 For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. **21** But what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. **22** But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. **23** For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Who's your master? Which man are you following? Do you have the blinds pulled down on your spiritual life? Oops...sorry Lord, your cow just died!

Some of you may be sitting here today and you've been hoarding your money, and you've been selfish about it and you **haven't** been investing in God's causes and His kingdom, you've been piling it on for yourself, and you almost resent what you're hearing...because it cuts to the quick. Well don't blame me. I write the mail...I just deliver it. And I've been stepped on too! Because so much of my life I spent it chasing the man with the world on his back, instead of my Savior. I've told the Lord way too many times... "Sorry Lord your cow just died!"

So, maybe you're like me today and you want to give your total allegiance to Jesus. You're willing to take an awl in the ear for Him. Because He bought you at price on the cross by taking nails through hands and His feet for you and for me!

NO! We can't serve two masters! Why? Because the orders of these two Masters...Jesus versus the world...the orders of these two masters are diametrically opposed. Jesus commands you to walk by faith and store up treasures in heaven, while the world commands you to walk by sight and get all you can and store up down here.

John Calvin said: "Where riches hold the dominion of the heart, God has lost His authority." Who has the authority in your life?

I close with the words of the old Irish Hymn written in the 8th century: "Be Thou My Vision." Because I believe these words sum up what we've been trying to say today.

***Riches I heed not, nor man's empty praise,
Thou mine Inheritance, now and always:
Thou and Thou only, first in my heart,
High King of Heaven, my Treasure Thou art.***

Invitation Song: "I Have Decided To Follow Jesus"