

Turn in your Bibles to Matthew, chapter 6.

This morning, we are going to be begin a 4-part series entitled: "Money and Worry."



Today's message will be an introductory message. This series will take us to the end of Matthew chapter 6. And what is interesting...is that I see a direct correlation with what we'll talk about today, just like last week as we saw how "Prayer and Fasting" went together, we will see today that it's not a coincidence that Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, talks about money and worry.

You see church family, I'm here to tell you it's no coincidence that Jesus is going to move to the area of money and follow that up with principles about how not to worry. Why? Because, even though it shouldn't be the case for us as Christians, it's often painfully true, that with the thought of money comes the thought of worry immediately thereafter. Unfortunately, we must admit that money and worry seem to be joined together at the hip like two Siamese twins.

Yet, what I hope we'll see today and in the three weeks following is the fact that Jesus doesn't want us to occupy our lives with worry and fear about money. In fact, He, much like a doctor, is going to give us a prescription on what we might do so that we WON'T worry about money. In fact, today, we're going to see where He's going to give us a proper understanding about money as He instructs us where we might place our hope and trust regarding our treasures.

The title of today's message is: "Where Is Your Treasure?" **Follow along with me picking up in Matthew 6, verse 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.

Now the question that arises out of this text is a very simple one. Where is your heart? Because where your heart is REVEALS where your treasure is. Now understand this morning, when I ask, "Where is your heart," I don't expect you to start feeling around somewhere in the middle of your chest, because I'm not talking about physiology. No! I'm talking about the investment of your life, and what drives your motives, and your attitudes, and your thought patterns.

I could ask it this way: "What makes you tick?" "What motivates you?" "What do you spend most of your time thinking about and planning?" "Where do you devote the most of your time and energy and effort when you aren't working or your aren't in school?"

Chances are, if you think about it very long and if you're like most people the answer is most often

some “thing,” like your bank account, your house, your 401-k, your career, or job. It could even be something as simple as a car, or video games or getting a promotion or raise. But, most of the time, what motivates most people and what preoccupies a lot of their time has something to do with the pursuit of money or holding on to the money they’ve got.

I read this week in my study time an analysis called: “Things.” Take a listen and don’t be surprised if it sounds a lot like a Dr. Seuss analysis.

Mr. and Mrs. Thing are a very pleasant and successful couple. At least that’s the verdict of most people who tend to measure success with a thing-o-meter. When the thing-o-meter is put to work in the life of Mr. and Mrs. Thing the result is startling. There Mr. Thing is sitting down on a luxurious and very expensive thing, almost hidden by a large number of other things: Things to sit on, things to sit at, things to cook on, things to eat from, all shining and new; things, things, things.

Things to clean with, and things to wash with, and things to clean, and things to wash, and things to amuse, and things to give pleasure, and things to watch, and things to play, things for the long hot summer, and things for the cold winter, things for the house in which they live, and things for the garden in which they plant, and things for the deck and things for the porch, and things for the kitchen, and things for the bedroom. Things...things on four wheels, and things on two wheels, and things to put on top of the four wheels, and things to pull behind the four wheels, and things to add to the interior of the thing on the four wheels. Things, things, things.

And there in the middle are Mr. and Mrs. Thing, smiling and “pleased pink” with all their things, thinking of more things to add to their things, secure in their house of things.

Well Mr. Thing was told there’s some bad news for you. Mr. Thing responded: “I can’t hear you because all my things are too loud and in the way?” Mr. Thing was then told by shout: “Well, Mr. Thing, I just want you to know that your things can’t last. They’re going to pass. There’s going to be an end to your accumulation of things.” Mr. Thing was then instructed, “Yes Mr. Thing...your things will come to an end one day and this might happen simply because of an error in your judgment, or perhaps because of a temporary loss of your concentration, or maybe you’ll simply just pass them off to the second-hand, thing dealer. Or maybe they’ll wind up a mass of mangled metal being towed off to the thing-yard. But, until then, Mr. Thing, you better make sure you lock the door of your house and hope some “thing” taker doesn’t come and take all your things.

Sounds a lot like our lives, doesn’t it? And you know what? It’s true! One day, just as Mr. Thing was told, all the accumulation of things will stop and come to an abrupt end **at our death**. And we all know that unless Jesus returns, we’re all going to die and as the old saying goes, “I’ve never seen a hearse pulling a U-Haul,” so we’re taking nothing with us.

It’s like the man who was talking to his preacher and discovered that a friend had died... He asked the preacher, “What did he leave?” The preacher replied, “Everything.” And folks, that’s the truth! When you and I leave this earth, **we leave it all!** We take nothing with us! Naked we came into the world and naked we’ll leave it. Yet, we’re SO committed to things! Things, things! Things!

Sadly, the leading religionists of Jesus’ day, the Pharisees, Sadducees, Synagogue Rulers and

Teachers of the Law, had the same problem. They were totally consumed with things. They were greedy and they were covetous and you'll remember, one of the main themes we've seen thus far in the Sermon on the Mount is how Jesus has had to set straight what these religious leaders had perverted in teaching God's word.

Remember what we've seen: the religious leaders were wrong in how they gave to the poor...because they did it to be seen by men. They prayed on the street corners, but they did it to be seen by men. They fasted with sackcloth and ashes on their faces...but, they did it to be seen by men. And now Jesus is going to address their attitude about money to set straight their false understanding and teaching in this area.

For you see, the religious leaders had CHOSEN THE WORLD AS THE PLACE TO RECEIVE THEIR REWARD, NOT HEAVEN. Jesus is going to direct them and US to the proper understanding of money and you must know RIGHT NOW...from the BEGINNING...that He's not trying to deprive us of our treasure, but simply to direct us in the proper choice of where we put our treasure...either or here or in heaven.

The sad truth of what was happening in Jesus' day was the fact that the Jewish religious leaders were using the religious system to get what they wanted from the people. They had invented a system where they took from the people to pad their own pockets. This is why Jesus said back in Matthew 5:20...

Matthew 5:20

20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

You see it's God's standards that must be met in order to enter His kingdom, not mankind's. What is that standard? That we humble ourselves and admit our need for a Savior and yet, the Pharisees and Scribes, by and large, wouldn't do it.

In their pride they were instead, abusing the system by taking what the people brought to the Temple and the synagogues in the way of offerings and used them for themselves. Let me give you an example of this from the Old Testament. **Turn to 1 Samuel, chapter 2 and make your way to verse 12.**

A man named Eli was High Priest of Israel and he had 2 sons named Hophni and (Pin-HOSS) Phinehas, and these two sons were men of great responsibility as sons of the high priest. But they were crooks. They were absolute hypocrites, who were absolutely immoral, evil and vile men, who were eventually struck dead by the Lord. **Now let me tell you why.**

The High Priest and his family were allowed to take a portion of the offering brought to them by the people so that they could live and work in the Temple. Leviticus, chapter 7 instructs that any offering that was brought to the Lord...to the Levites...the priests...see this picture...



...the offering could be boiled and any portion brought up with a 3-pronged fork could go to the High Priest and his family. But Hophni and Phinehas were so crooked, that they took exactly what they wanted.

1 Samuel 2:12-17

12 Now the sons of Eli were worthless men. They did not know the Lord. **13** The custom of the priests with the people was that when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant would come, while the meat was boiling, with a three-pronged fork in his hand, **14** and he would thrust it into the pan or kettle or cauldron or pot. All that the fork brought up the priest would take for himself. This is what they did at Shiloh to all the Israelites who came there. **15** Moreover, before the fat was burned, the priest's servant would come and say to the man who was sacrificing, "Give meat for the priest to roast, for he will not accept boiled meat from you but only raw." **16** And if the man said to him, "Let them burn the fat first, and then take as much as you wish," he would say, "No, you must give it now, and if not, I will take it by force." **17** Thus the sin of the young men was very great in the sight of the Lord, for the men treated the offering of the Lord with contempt.

You see, they were tampering with the offerings that belonged to God, they were laying up treasures for themselves here. And let me tell you Church family, there's nothing more **foul smelling** to our heavenly Father than religious hypocrisy. And these guys represented the worst of that...they were greedy and selfish and they literally paid with their lives.

And so, this is an example of the system that had been built over time among the religious leaders to the point that Jesus would say some really serious things to the Pharisees. Jesus said:

Luke 16:14-15

14 The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard all these things, and they ridiculed him. **15** And he said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

So it's against this backdrop of greed that Jesus speaks, and what He is saying here is that we must have the PROPER view of money, and wealth, and possessions.

Church family, I must admit not much has changed in 2000 years? Aren't we still greedy? Isn't the human heart, by our sinful nature, still greedy and covetous...wanting more and more and more? Don't we still desire comfort and pleasure here on this earth? Don't we still want to have it easy and don't we still desire to have security in our possessions and what we own? Sure we do. Therefore, this message and the three that follow remain forever timely for us.

Church family, I've thought about it and I had this thought... I know what would have made this whole thing a whole lot easier for us? It would have been much easier if the Lord had given us an amount we had to pay off, like a mortgage and then once we paid it off, we wouldn't have to worry about it any more. Now wouldn't that have been a whole lot easier? Just pay a certain amount or sum and once it's paid...you could say, "Hey, I'm done!" It would be cut and dried that way, right?

Well...the problem with that is: we'd never get to the real issue. What is that? The heart and the heart attitude.

Listen, God doesn't want to get something from you and me that's given because we're afraid of Him or bound by some legalistic code. NO! He wants us to give to Him because we love Him. He wants us to give out of love, not legalistic obligation. And that's why the Lord doesn't give us some kind of absolute, legalistic standard here. Instead, He gives us a principle that touches our hearts and our attitudes and ultimately our relationship with Him. And isn't that what we've seen throughout the entire "Sermon on the Mount?" It's all about our relationship with our Heavenly Father, our Papa.

You see, what we do with money has probably a greater correlation with what we really value than anything else we possess. Perhaps, a close second would be our time. Because, listen, where you and I spend our time and our money reveals what we really value and hold dear in lives.

And Jesus knew this. And that's why He talked so much about it. He mentioned money:

- **109 times in Matthew**
- **57 times in Mark**
- **94 times Luke**
- **88 times John**

That's 348 times...almost once for every day of the year. In fact, Jesus talked about money 5 times more than He talked about any other subject in the Gospels. So, I'm confident He knew we'd need to hear about how to handle money a lot! You see, what Jesus is teaching here in the Sermon on the Mount is that we have a choice and it's a very simple but hard choice: Are we going to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven or treasures on earth? Look at it again...

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.

Jesus is saying there are two treasuries: one on earth and one in heaven and we've got a choice into which one we're going to store our abundance. And I use the word abundance, because that's what He's talking about. The Greek word "treasury" means: "where precious things are kept." It's the things we put in our safes and in storage or cover under sheets to protect them.

Understand what Jesus **isn't** talking about. He's not talking about the money in your bank account that you need to pay bills and live. He's not talking about life insurance or health insurance. We've got to have those things to live. He's not saying that we've all got to sell our houses and live homeless under a bridge like a hobo. No! Jesus isn't condemning possessions. Instead He's talking about the attitude we have toward them.

Listen. It's right and okay to provide for our families. It's right to plan for the future. It's right to make wise investments. But, it's wrong to take more than you need like Hophni and (Pin-HOSS) Phinehas and be greedy. It's wrong to be covetous. It's wrong to build bigger barns and stockpile stuff for my kingdom to hoard what I've got just to amass it so I can indulge myself.

Because do you now what's going to happen to this earthly stuff?



Moths and



Rust destroy and Thieves break in and steal...

Folks, do you remember what the preacher told the man when asked, "What'd he leave?" EVERYTHING!

Listen, since we're going to leave everything, the question is...How much is enough? How much do we need to actually live? Jesus said, "It's okay...do what you need to do to live...but, that which is above and beyond what is necessary...that then is your treasure...so store it up in heaven... Don't invest in stuff that's just going to be eaten with moths and destroyed by rust or stolen by thieves."

Peter said to Jesus in Luke 18 these words...

Luke 18:28-30

28 "See, we have left our homes and followed you." **29** And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, **30** who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life."

You see, one day we're going to leave this world and we're going to heaven if you are born again and know Jesus. The question is: Do you believe in heaven? You say, "Sure I do!" Okay, how much do you believe that?

I'll tell you how much...**what you believe about heaven will determine how much you store there**. Do you really believe in Heaven? Do you really believe it's there? If you do...you'll store treasures...but, if you don't and you're afraid of running out of money down here...then you'll store it here. You'll stockpile it here. You'll find your security in your stuff instead of your Heavenly Father. And folks that's misery!

Where is your heart today? What makes you tick? What motivates you? What do you think about most? Whatever that is...that's where you are going to store your treasure. Is that here or in heaven? Oh, it's so easy to be like **Mr. and Mrs. Thing, smiling and "pleased pink" with all their things, thinking of more things to add to their things, secure in their house of things.**

Oh...may we not be deceived by THINGS ...but may we seek to store up for ourselves treasures in heaven and seek to hear the words of Jesus when one day He'll say: (**SEE THE SCREENS**)

Matthew 25:21b

21 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.'

Where is Your Treasure?
