

All right. If you want to get out your Bibles, make your way to Matthew chapter 6. And we're going to cover verses 19 through 34. This is our fourth installment as we study through the sermon on the Mount. So if you want to be caught up to speed, we mentioned as we began this sermon that chapters five through seven of Matthew are commonly called the sermon on the Mount. The greatest teaching ever given. And they're on the western bank of the Sea of Galilee. Jesus began the sermon with the Beatitudes, or eight beautiful attitudes and actions that characterize the citizen of the Kingdom of heaven. And these attitudes and actions reorientate one to the way that God intended us to live, instead of the way of this world. And having used that section of Beatitudes as a springboard, then the rest of the sermon actually flows from Matthew chapter five, verse 20, where Jesus says, for I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. And so we talked about how the Pharisees were rule keepers. They looked at the Bible, specifically the law, as a checklist, and they followed the list, and they checked it twice. And outwardly they looked perfect. But in the sermon on the Mount, Jesus redefines righteousness, and he shifts the focus from external legalistic rule keeping to internal, heart driven, Christ centered living. And so that's kind of a macro view of the sermon that leads us to chapter 6, and the verse that we pick up in is 19, and Jesus says there, do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. So if you've read through the New Testament or you attended Sunday school, this is probably pretty familiar territory. Jesus famously at this point says, do not lay or store up for yourselves treasures on earth. And the reason is earthly treasures are temporary and vulnerable, as he says here, to decay and theft. And so he says, in light of that, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Invest in spiritual growth, acts of kindness as Jesus did, spreading the gospel. And it's not so much that earthly treasures are bad. It's more that whatever God gives you as far as resources or concerned, it's about how you use them. So use whatever resources, small or little, God has stewarded you over and used them to bless others and to build God's kingdom. And so, you know, everything that we'll study from this point on in this chapter flows from this idea that you shouldn't lay up treasures on earth, but you should instead lay up treasures in heaven. For he says, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Now, in biblical terminology, the heart represents more than just the ticker that keeps us going. It's the center of one's being. It includes the emotions, the desires, and the will. It's the very heart of who a person is, the center of who a person is, and of course, Proverbs chapter 4, speaking of this, says in verse 23, with all that in mind, keep your heart with all diligence, for

out of it springs the issues of life from the heart flows everything that drives us and shapes us. Jesus says, my affections and my priorities are inevitably linked to what I value. And so a lifestyle of contentment and simplicity. It reflects a heart that trusts in God's sufficiency. And that's what he's urging people towards. So signs that my treasure is on earth. If where my treasure is, my heart will be also, then what are some signs? My treasures on earth? I'd say first accumulation. And unfortunately, in America, most of us, no matter how little we have, may fall into the trap of accumulation. I prioritize storing up possessions, anxiety. I fear losing whatever wealth I have and my possessions. And then, of course, focus my thoughts, my energy, my conversations where I spend my time. Those things revolve around earthly success, possessions and material security. And then often that leads to an inability to part with wealth. It's difficult to use my resources, for things that don't provide personal gain or benefit. So those are signs that my treasure is probably on Earth. But then against that, here's some signs that my treasure is actually in heaven, that I'm generous. I consistently give my money, my resources to support God's kingdom and help the needy. It's strewn throughout the Bible, the urging of us to help the needy. Eternal perspective where I invest my life in things that last forever again, like Jesus, good works, showing compassion, spreading the gospel. but then freedom from materialism. My stuff doesn't own me. I'm not controlled by the possessions that God has given me, and I'm willing to sacrifice comfort for the spiritual development of myself, my family, or even those around me. And so might run your life through the grid of those signs. Where's my treasure on earth or in heaven? Jesus says with. That is the starting point for this whole section. Then in verse 22, the lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness? Jesus says, the lamp of the body is the eye. A phrase that you might have heard that is associated with this often, I think, contributed to Shakespeare, but who knows where it originated is the eye is the window of the soul, the eye is the gateway to the heart, to the mind. And so what Jesus is saying is what is allowed through the eyes determines whether the inner life is filled with either light, which is goodness, or in this case, darkness, which again in this case is evil. And so in its original context, although there's plenty of ways to make application of this in our life in context, situated in this teaching, a good eye refers to a generous, focused person, a person focused on the kingdom, while a bad eye implies stinginess and spiritual darkness. A person focused on earth. In this earthly kingdom, and so Jesus says in verse 24, no one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon, so you can't serve two masters. Of course, in first century Israel, servitude was commonplace and a servant or a slave

was expected to be wholly devoted to a master. You're all in. And he says of a servant, you can't serve two masters. You'll either hate one and love the other, or you'll be loyal to one, and you'll despise the other. Now, you may have noticed that our natural human tendency, whether we're serving or not, is to develop strong preferences or loyalties. Just get on the book of face. In fact, without the imminent danger being punched in the mouth, people are free to express all kinds of preferences and loyalties on the book of face with no fear of repercussion. So you see this. It's more unvarnished than maybe it used to be. But all that said, in this case, in biblical terms, hate and love have less to do with emotion, which in our context we think about hate and love as from the seat of emotions. Whereas in the biblical terminology, hate and love actually deal with choosing and priority and loyalty rather than emotion. And so Jesus says, you, you can't serve two masters. You're going to be loyal to one and disloyal to the other. And so you cannot serve God and mammon. Mammon is the Aramaic word for money. So here's how it works in Jesus day, most Jews living in Israel spoke Aramaic. They brought Aramaic back with them from Babylon. You did most of your business speaking Greek. Greek was what was spoken throughout the world. the Romans had adopted Greek culture. It was a Greco-Roman world. So most people spoke Greek when they did business, and they also typically read the Bible in Greek or the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures. The Greek was called that Bible. The Septuagint. But then for Orthodox Hebrews they would actually read and teach the Old Testament scriptures in Hebrew. So it's a little bit challenging. All that said, they would speak commonly in Aramaic. So Mammon is the Aramaic word for money, by the way, what did one penny say to another? Let's get together and make some sense. Okay, that wasn't that good. Okay, I'll try another one on you. Why do dairy cows have no money? Farmers are always milking them dry. Okay, well, money. Mammon money, by the way, in and of itself is not evil. It's the love of money. That is. And I want to refer you to a scripture that is commonly misquoted in first Timothy chapter 6, verse 10. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. So money is not evil, it's the love of all kinds of money. or it's the love of money which leads to the all kinds of evil. And in all actuality, the problem is money and or Mammon competes for the throne and the mastery of my life always has, always will. It's not that you have to have a lot of money for it to be the Lord of your life. I've seen people that have almost no money have money on the throne of their life because they're always chasing it. And on the other side of things, I've seen people that have always had money. It's on the throne of their life because they want to keep it. So money, it's just how it is. It's not evil, but the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, and it easily competes for the mastery of my life. And Jesus is saying, I've got to regularly

examine where my true devotion lies. And so I can ask myself, are my actions and my decisions driven by the love of God and or his kingdom, or to accumulate wealth or more of what I have, even if I'm not becoming wealthy to have more on this earth. So who's my master? And then the rest of our time will be spent on worry. Verse 25, therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life. What you will eat, or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns. Yet your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you, by worrying, can add one cubit to his stature? So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. And yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore, verse 31, do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink, or what shall we wear? For after all these things the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly father knows that you need all these things, but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore, verse 34, do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. So this section on worry begins with the word. Therefore, in verse 25, and you've probably heard it said, when you see the word therefore, you need to ask yourself, well, what's it there for? It always points you to what you just read. And so this section on worry actually stems from Jesus teaching on money and treasure. Where is your treasure? Because you know that a lot of our worry deals with money. So his teaching actually is divided into three parts. It's a prohibition to worry. He prohibits worry in verses 25 through 30. Then there's an alternative to worry in verses 31 through 33, and then finally in verse 34, there's an application for not worrying. Before we get into that three part section, and that's how we'll cover it, I want to give a disclaimer about worry, and that is this not worrying does not equal a lack, a lack of preparation. A lot of people think, well, I need to worry because I got to prepare. If I'm not worrying, I'm not preparing. I should say that planning and preparation are good. The Bible says much about them. In fact, I'll take you to one of my favorite verses about preparation, and that's chapter 24 of Proverbs. Verse 27. And I had a mentor. He started discipling me in California. The late, great Dan Gordon. He taught me how to teach the Bible. He taught me the ropes of ministry. We had a lot in common when I moved here, until Dan died in 2015. For the first ten years I was in Missouri, he called me every week without fail for ten years, and he was the greater and I was the lesser. So he dictated our conversation. And every week we talked about Duke basketball, his grandkids, his church. And then he asked me

how I was doing, and we would talk for one hour. Then we would pray. And this is his life. Verse. Proverbs 24:27, prepare your outside work. Make it fit for yourself in the field, and afterward build your house. So Dan would always say, you prepare and you work out your plan and God will take care of everything on the inside. If you do your part on the outside. And so planning and preparation can be good and are good, but overconfidence in planning is not good. I'll take you to Proverbs chapter 27, verse 1, where the same writer that we just read says, do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring forth. James he's the wisdom book of the Old Testament, or his book that he wrote is the wisdom Book of the Old Testament. And in chapter 4, verse 13, he picks up on this theme and says, come now, you who say, today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city and spend a year there, and buy and sell and make a profit, whereas you don't know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life, and is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, if the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that. But now you boast in your arrogance, and all such boasting is evil. Boy, I've learned time and again that I make plans, and I prepare, and lots of times, God, he opens the door and lets me complete those plans in some form or fashion. And then lots of times he just upsets my apple cart. He dumps the whole thing up out, you know, of the wheelbarrow and spilled all over the ground. So if the Lord wills, that's the way we're supposed to live. Having said all that, then here's the thing about worry and anxiety. Worry and anxiety are often disguised themselves or masquerade as responsibility. Oftentimes, the people who actually worry the most, they'll say, well, I have to worry because you responsible people, you irresponsible people. Don't worry. Some of us got to be responsible in this deal, right? And so there's all kinds of ways to justify worry and yet worry and anxiety. They parade as responsibility. And they're frequently linked to control issues. And if you don't know this yet, you might jot this down. Control is largely a myth. It leads to anxiety and worry. That's what control does. And it's impossible. No matter how much you plan or prepare or worry to dictate external outcomes, other people's actions and unforeseen events, you just can't. And so on top of all that, the Bible tells us, look, my times and my days are in God's hands. I can, as Jesus said, add another cubit to my height. No matter what I do, and although the Bible has a lot of scripture about us doing certain things to safeguard our lives, and in doing so typically get a certain positive outcome, the reality is that until God is done with me, I'm completely invincible. And when he's done with me, there's not one thing I can do to add one more day to my life. The psalmist said in chapter 31, verse 15, just that he said, my times are in your hand. Deliver me from the hand of my enemies and from those who persecute me. And he wrote in Psalm 139, verse 16, and he said, you're, that's God's eyes saw my substance being yet unformed. And in your book they are all written. That is the days fashioned for

me, when as yet there were none of them. And so worry doesn't do us any good, because our times and days are in God's hands. So with that disclaimer out of the way, then here's a prohibition Jesus gives of worry. The command is actually, do not worry. It's not a suggestion. He doesn't say, well, if you're just prone to worry, you go ahead and worry. Or if you're just more responsible than your spouse, you worry. Or if you're the only person that sees what needs to be done. You worry. It's actually not a suggestion, it's a command. Do not worry. Do not worry about what the basic needs of life, food, what you're going to put in your body and clothing, what you're going to put on your body. And I'll refer you to First Timothy chapter six one more time. We just read from verse 10, but what I want to do is start at the top of this section in verse 6 of first Timothy six and read down to verse 10 to give you everything that is contained in that passage. And I remember years ago when I first started studying the Bible exposition, I had moved to Maranatha in San Diego, was going to an evening Bible study at that church, and the assistant pastor was teaching on this section, and I was floored by verse 8. And when we get there, you might be floored too, because this is how it reads. First Timothy chapter 6, verse 6. Now godliness with contentment is great gain, for we brought nothing into this world, and it's certain we can carry nothing out. And here it is. And having food and clothing with these we shall be content. And I say.

Haggai.

He stopped there and he said, God doesn't say that. Our needs even include a roof over our head, which means that pretty much everybody sitting in here has everything we actually need from God's perspective, Jesus didn't have a roof over his head. The foxes have holes and the birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head. So you and I have more than Jesus. If we've got a roof over our head. Well, verse nine, but those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For here we go again. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. And so. The Lord says, don't worry, and here's his argument. Jesus says, is more than food, and the body is more than clothing. Disciples say to Jesus, hey, let's go get something to eat. He goes, I got food, you know, not of like, what? What's going on? Jesus understood life is more than just food that you put in your belly and more than just clothing. And he was living for the spiritual. And so here he gives an illustration, and it's from nature. He said, the birds are fed by God. The flowers are clothed by him, and they're more beautiful than Solomon in all his glory. And humans are way more valuable than birds or flowers. So don't worry. And in fact, then he ends with the rebuke, and

don't we all love a good rebuke? Just give me one Jesus, he says, well, here's the deal. Worry is actually a sign of faithlessness. He says, O you of little faith. Verse 30. And so he commands us not to worry. And then he says, worry is actually a sign of faithlessness. That leads us to an alternative, to worry. He starts with in verse 31, a distinction. And he says, actually, worry and anxiety is emblematic of the Gentiles or unbelievers, not those of us whose father is in heaven says, your father is in heaven. And as such our father promises to meet our practical needs. Our Heavenly Father knows our needs. And then we looked at last week, Philippians 4:19, which says, and he promises to provide your every need so he knows our needs. He promises to provide them. And so here's the alternative. change your priority. Or you might say, change your perspective. If you're always looking here, then now look up. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things. All what things? All the material things you're worried about will be added or provided. And yet, I want to point out to you that we must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. A lot of us seek first the kingdom of God, but there's no righteousness. Some of us struggle for some kind of righteousness, but aren't really seeking the kingdom of God. And so here he says, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. And if you do those two things, then God promises to add everything that you need. And David said, I'm young, and now I'm old, and I've never seen the righteous begging for bread. He said, God will do whatever you need. So that's an alternative to worry. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and then finally, in verse 34, there's an application for not worrying. Notice here he says, therefore do not worry about today or excuse me about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. And so what Jesus says is, here's a here's an application for how not to worry. Live for today. And years ago, many of you were here, and I've told this story to others of you 12 years ago. As a matter of fact, my physical health collapsed. My my mental health shattered. I was insane in my membrane, got no brain going insane, and I could keep it together pretty good during the day. But, due to worry and stress and anxiety, my life was actually in jeopardy. I developed Barrett's esophagus that was headed towards esophageal cancer. I'd be pretty good during the day. At night, I'd be convulsing and sweating and I couldn't sleep. I was depressed, and so as I was working my way out of this spot, I actually was at the Farmington library and I stumbled across this book I have up here for you, and it's by Dale Carnegie, as it says at the bottom of the image, Dale Carnegie is actually known best for his book, How to Win Friends and Influence People, which I had read at some point. But I picked up the book because the title, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living. I open the book up and I was immediately drawn to it for two reasons. The first one is Dale Carnegie is a farm boy from Missouri. He was raised up in Maryville, up north of Kansas City. That

area, and then secondly, the whole book was based around or built around these verses that were reading Matthew six verses 25 through 34. And I read it and it gave me a bit of relief. And I reread it and it gave me some more relief. And I keep a copy with me at almost all times and regularly. I reread that book. And so Jesus says, live for today. And Dale Carnegie calls this living for today. Living in day tight compartments. And he says it's like an ocean liner sealing off sections or bulkheads to prevent sinking. If they strike an iceberg. And so what he says is, how do you live for today? You shut off the past. You don't dwell on regrets and failures. You realize I can't do anything about them. You learn to think about them a little bit, learn from them if you can, and then. And then shut them off and move on, and you'll find that most of us that deal with worry have a lot of regrets that we dwell on. We relive scenes and scenarios in our head, he says. Shut them off. Then what he would also say is, as Jesus said, don't worry about tomorrow. Seal off the future. Stop excessive worrying about what ifs and future problems and what you can do as much as anything is prepare by focusing on today's work and he actually quotes in there. Every day is a new life to a wise man or woman. Every day is a fresh start. And so then the idea is live intensely in the present. You know, that you can be in the present and not be present. I spend a lot of my life actually sitting in rooms where I'm. I'm there physically present, and my mind is not anywhere near that space. I wish it weren't so, but I've raised my kids almost to adulthood, with much of my time spent with them. Physically there, and not emotionally or mentally, or sometimes even spiritually there. I'm in another spot, and so if you focus on today and you shut off the past and you seal off the future, then you can live intensely in the present. And that means I give my full energy and my attention to the task at hand, because Jesus said, sufficient for the day is its own trouble. There's always enough in today to keep me busy today. And what this does then is it reduces stress. It increases productivity, it fosters peace and contentment, and above all else, it's the way Jesus lived. And that's the way I should strive to live. And so what I'd like to do is I close this morning is I'd like to, instead of leaving you with some thoughts or key takeaways from the message, share with you a quote. One of my favorite in the book, How to Stop Worrying and Start Living, and it's somewhat extensive. The first part of it is from Dale Carnegie, and then at the end he quotes Robert Louis Stevenson, but this is my favorite quote in the whole book, so I'd be remiss if I didn't share it with you. He says, you and I are standing this very second at the meeting place of two eternities, the vast past that is endured forever, and the future that is plunging on into the last syllable of recorded time. We can't possibly live in either of those eternities. No, not even for one split second. But by trying to do so, we can wreck both our bodies and our minds. So let's be content to live the only time we can possibly live from now until bedtime. Anyone can carry his burden, however hard, until nightfall. Heavenly father, we

pray that you would. Reorient our hearts and minds our lives to the teachings and the sermon on the Mount. And we pray that you would help us to store up treasures in heaven and not on earth, that we wouldn't be a slave to possessions. Lord, that we would have eternal perspective. And Heavenly Father, that we would stop worrying and start living. And we pray that you would do that supernatural work in our heart by your spirit. As we seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all the rest we need. In Jesus name, Amen. Would you guys stand?