

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT—PATRICK WALTON

A Journey Into Matthew 4-7 7.3.2022

Week #32 | “You Gotta Serve Somebody”

I. INTRODUCTION (MATTHEW 6:19-24)

- A. Well, happy Fourth of July Weekend, happy Independence Day eve. It’s clear, that even though our nation has challenges, even though our history is checkered, and currently we’re more divided than anytime previously it’s still a beautiful country with amazing people, lots of culture, stunning landscapes, and some of the most influential cities in the world.
- B. On this patriotic weekend where we celebrate our nations independence, our “*declaration of independence*” God also has His own declaration that He’s taught, and commands His followers to keep, it’s called a “*declaration of dependence.*” It’s something different than a life of independence, it’s a life of following Christ where we put all our confidence, all soul, and all our heart into His hands, not our own.
- C. Jesus’ Declaration of Dependence is found in the whole of the Bible, in all the law and the prophets, but IT’S IN A SHORT, super concentrated form in the Sermon on The Mount, and among those 3 chapters in **Matthew 5-7** the heart of Jesus’ declaration dependence might be found in **Matthew 6:19-24**, 6 verses that talk about our relationship with money, wealth and possessions.
- D. Friends, as we approach both this verse today, and the SOTM (*Sermon on The Mount*) as a whole, it’s critical that we keep in mind Jesus is speaking to His family, to those that desire to follow Him, not those who are outside relationship with Him.
- E. These warnings, these commands, these illustrations aren’t given primarily for the outsider, they are for the insider, for the person who’s a part of His family, whose following Him, or wants to follow Him.
- F. I mean how kind, and lowly is Jesus? Is He not God, meaning can He not simply just command us and we would have to obey? But instead, He appeals to us, He speaks to us, He tells us what to do, and then backs it up with reasons why, exclaiming what will happen if we don’t obey, if we choose to go another way.
 - 1. This is Jesus, the uncreated God, stooping so low as to explain how His kingdom works.
- G. In the words of the great poet Bob Dylan, I’ve titled today’s sermon, “*You Gotta Serve Somebody.*”

II. IT’S IMPOSSIBLE TO MULTITASK (MATT. 6:24A)

- 1. **Matthew 6:24a** “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and not despise the other...”
- B. Jesus starts out by saying, “*no one.*” When we read the Word of God, it’s essential that we submit ourselves to it, meaning that we put ourselves underneath the Word of God, as opposed to standing over it, assuming we know better than God.
- C. We must take the scriptures at face value, allowing them to say what they mean, and mean what they say. So, when we look at this passage, you can’t assume that you’re the first exception to Jesus’ teaching. “*Look, I know this didn’t work for other people, I’m different, I can actually do both, unlike the others.*”

- D. The word that Jesus uses for, “...serve...” is the Greek word DOULOS, which translated means SLAVE. And the word that’s used for, “...master...” is the Greek word KURIOS which translated means ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP. So when we put these two words together, this opening statement should actually read, “*Nobody can be a slave to two-masters.*”
- E. Well, to better understand this, we must place ourselves in this time period. We must understand that to be a slave in the eyes of the law, reduced you from being a person, to a thing. You had no rights, whoever ruled over you called the shots in your life.
- F. In the eyes of the owner, slaves were basically a tool, the Romans referred to them as wheelbarrows. But, beyond this, slaves had no time of their own. Every moment of their life was spoken for.
- G. Today, we might work a job for 8 hours, but when we are off, we go and do something that really enjoy, something that brings us life.
1. On Friday night I had my neighbor come over to look at a project I’m considering doing, and I found out he sailed!
 2. But this is common with most people today. We work, but outside work is really where we love to spend our time.
- H. But friends, this is similar to our relationship with Jesus, in that we also have no rights. In Christ, we’ve handed all of that over to Him. We don’t ask, “*what do I wish to do? What will I do with my life, but rather, Christ, what do you have for me to do?*”
- I. The follower of Christ has no time of their “own”, time when they are “*off the clock of discipleship or following Christ.*”
1. **Matthew 6:24a** “*Nobody can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other...*”
- J. Well, the reason this is the case is because whatever we serve, dominates us and drives the motives of our living. This is why Paul is always saying, “*I’m in Christ, and Christ is in me (Gal. 2:20).*” Whatever we serve, eventually ends up serving us.
- K. Jesus is clear, you have to choose between these two competing loyalties, because you can’t do both.
1. Years ago, there was a MythBusters episode where they took on “multitasking.” It was a great episode, tons of laughs, but at the end of the show they came to the conclusion that it’s impossible for humans to multitask.
 2. What we consider “multitasking” is just switching between multiple things quickly. Psychology has proven that humans are only able to do one cognitive task at a time.
 3. Further research shows that “multitasking” raises the production of *cortisol*, which is a stress hormone, and the fight or flight hormone, *adrenaline*.
 4. The increase of these hormones in our body causes our brains to overheat, leaving us with a foggy mind, unable to process things normally. This is why we are worn out, both physically and emotionally at the end of a busy day, doing multiple tasks.

- L. It's crazy to think that Jesus was correct. It's not just hard, or complicated, or even taxing, Jesus said it's impossible to be a slave to two masters.
- M. In Hebraic thought, love and hate were often defined simply by choosing and not choosing. Meaning that when we choose something, we are by way of choice, not choosing something, or rejecting something, which is basically to say that we hate the other thing.
 - 1. Beloved, the freedom that we desire, the loosing of life grips from our hands, the deliverance from things that many of us desperately desire simply comes from SERVING GOD! Our choice to serve God, says that we love Him, and hate everything else.
 - 2. But look, serving God involves us SERVING HIM, something more than words, and internal desires, but with actions, with choices, it's STORING UP OUR TREASURES IN HEAVEN.

III. ENTRUSTED WITH SOMETHING, OR TRUSTING IN SOMETHING (MATT. 6:24B)

- 1. **Matthew 6:24b** "...You cannot serve God and mammon."
- B. Some translations use the word money here, but it's the word mammon. Mammon comes from a Hebrew verb that means to entrust, or to place something in someone's keeping. The verb was used for the wealth that another person gave to someone for safekeeping.
- C. During this time the phrase didn't have anything negative connected to it. If people used this word in a negative way, it would be said, "*unrighteous mammon.*" The Rabbis would often say, "*Let the mammon of thy neighbor be as dear to thee as thine own.*" This means that we see other people's stuff as too valuable to be interfered with, so that we leave it alone, both physically, and emotionally. It's something we don't touch with our hands or our hearts.
- D. Mammon was something that was entrusted to a banker for safe keeping. Mammon was the wealth that person entrusted to someone to keep safe for them.
- E. But over the years, here's the shift that took place, mammon became something that wasn't ENTRUSTED to someone else for safe keeping. It became the thing that we were TRUSTING IN. Entrusting something to someone and trusting in something are very different.
 - 1. Recently my family and I were ridding some rollercoasters. I was able to eventually talk Anna into ridding one of them, to which she instantly regretted the second it started moving.
 - 2. But the same thing happens on the airplane. When there's turbulence we grab the armrest, holding on for dear life, as if we can change the outcome of a plane flying at 500+ mph, at nearly 32K in elevation.
 - 3. Beloved, the same thing happens when the stock market dips, when our jobs dip, when our work notifies us about unknown months ahead. We also grab the arm rests, we lay hold of what which keeps us safe, which aren't things that can keep us safe at all.
 - 4. Look, when we put our trust in material things, material things have become, not our SUPPORT, but our god! They have become our redeemer, our deliverer, our healer, our counselor, they have become our ticket out of the proverbial pit into the palace.
- F. I think many among God's family assume that we are serving God with our wealth, with our resources, that we are entrusting it to Him, but in turn, we are actually serving our wealth, making it our god.

1. *“One day a farmer came walking into the kitchen to share with his wife that their cow had given birth to two very healthy twin calves, one red and one white. The man suddenly had an impulse, and sense of reverence to the Lord and said, we are going to dedicate one of these calves to the Lord. We will bring them up together, and one day, when the times comes, we will sell one and the keep the proceeds, but with the other one, we will sell it and give the money to the Lord’s work. So the wife asked him, which one he was going to dedicate to the Lord?”*
 2. *The husband replied, there’s no need to bother about that now, we will treat them both in the same way, and when the times comes, we will do as I have said. A few months later the husband came walking into the kitchen, looking very miserable and unhappy. When the wife asked him what was wrong, he said, I’m afraid I have very bad news. The Lord’s calf has died. But she said, honey, you had not decided which was to be the Lord’s calf. Oh yes he said, I had always decided it was to be the white one, and the white one is the one that has died.” –James Montgomery Boice, The Gospel of Matthew Pt. 1, Pg. 105-106*
- G. How much of our lives are like this? It’s always the “Lord’s calf” that dies, isn’t it? Whatever one is going to give us the greatest loss, whatever one will allow us to give less, or walk away from the deal altogether. This is what it means to trust in our possessions, as opposed to entrusting our possessions with God for safe keeping.
1. *“Many perceptive observers have sensed that the greatest danger to western Christianity is not, as is sometimes alleged, prevailing ideologies such as Marxism, Islam the new age movement or humanism but rather the all-pervasive materialism of our affluent culture. We try so hard to create heaven on earth and to throw in Christianity when convenient as another small addition to the so-called good life. Jesus proclaims that unless we are willing to serve him wholeheartedly in every area of life, but particularly with our material resources, we cannot claim to be serving him at all (Matt. 8:18-22).” –Craig L. Blomberg, New American Commentary, Matthew Vol. 22, Pg. 124*
 2. G. Campbell Morgan rightly said, *“No (person) can become the slave of (their) treasure, and worship it, without thereby proving himself traitor to God.” –G. Campbell Morgan, The Gospels, Pg. 66*

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. So, how do we combat this natural impulse to trust in our wealth, as opposed to entrusting it to God:
1. We Remember In Mind That All Things Belong To Go—This is super clear throughout the whole of the Word of God. *He owns all the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10-11). If God were hunger, He’d never tell us (Ps. 50:10,12). Jesus taught that the Master gives us all things (Matt. 25:15).*
 - a. At the end of the day, man can rearrange things, move things, buy things, sell things, grow things, but he’s unable to create anything. He can’t make anything from nothing, only God can do this. This means that humanity can’t say anything in this life belongs to him. Abraham Kuyper rightly says, *“There is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign overall, does not cry, MINE!”*

2. We Remember That People Are Always More Important Than Things—If our resources are reached, if our wealth is gained on the backs of others, then our gain of riches is wrong. We can always know we are on a bad path, if whatever we are gaining is hurting others. When we stop entrusting our resources with God, and start trusting in them, we can always know things will be more important than people.
3. We Remember That Wealth Is Always To Be Subordinate To God—God’s word doesn’t tell us that money is the root of all evil, it says that the LOVE of money is the root of all evil (**1st Tim. 6:10**). If we are not vigilant, we will end up serving money, and money will no longer be serving us. If this has happened, Jesus is clear, money has become our functional god, not our good.