

10-12-2025, COTR Texarkana

Title: The Sermon on the Mount, pt-10

Purpose: Provoke people to practice Biblical fasting and love God more than money or material things.

Truth for Today: As Christians, we should practice Biblical fasting and love God more than money or material things.

Text: Matthew 6:16-24

Topic: Fasting Pharisees, Money, Hypocrisy, Materialism, Heart

Series Title: 100% Jesus...pure, undiluted truth.

Series Purpose: Provoke people to embrace the spiritual reality that true, lasting happiness is found by following Jesus Christ and obeying His words.

The Sermon on the Mount, pt-10

I. Introduction

- A. Review: Series: '100% Jesus, pure, undiluted truth'. This is a verse-by-verse study from the words of Jesus, called the Sermon on the Mount, Mt. ch. 5-7.
- B. The last 2 weeks we saw a bold side of Jesus as he rebuked the religious hypocrisy of the Pharisees for helping the poor and praying to be seen by other people. We also learned how Jesus said we should pray. How did it go praying the pattern of the Lord's prayer last week? Start or keep it up.
- C. Today, we'll explore a 3rd rebuke to the Pharisees about fasting and then see how godly people insure they love the Lord more than possessions or money.
- D. Title: The Sermon on the Mount, pt-10

II. Jesus encouraged His followers to regularly practice fasting

- A. [Matthew 6:16–18 (NLT)] “And **when you fast, don’t make it obvious**, as the hypocrites do, for **they try to look miserable...so people will admire them for their fasting**. I tell you the truth, that is the only reward they will ever get. ¹⁷ But **when you fast**, comb your hair and wash your face. ¹⁸ Then **no one will notice that you are fasting, except your Father, who knows what you do in private**. And your Father, who sees everything, will **reward you**.]
- B. Def. fasting: Abstaining from food and/or drink to worship God in a special way,⁴ e.g., skip lunch and go pray about a big decision.
- C. Reasons for fasting: (1) To express remorse for sin, Ninevites, (2) To mourn a loss, Israel annually after the temple's destruction, (3) To intensely petition God in a crisis, Jehosaphat,³ (4) As a spiritual discipline to help us focus on spiritual matters, i.e. to make our soulish appetites submit and not control us. We can also fast from social media, hobby, TV, phone, etc. The reason I don't want to fast from food or pleasure is simple; I don't want to tell myself no. That's precisely why we need to do it.
 - 1. Life App #1: Two of the most important reasons we fast are to spend extra time with God in prayer and to discipline our flesh.
- D. Fasting is also a time to realign our lives with God's ways, [Is. 58:1–12 (NLT)] ⁶... **this is the kind of fasting I want: Free those who are wrongly imprisoned; lighten the burden of those who work for you...⁷ Share your food with the hungry, and**

give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. ⁹... Stop ...spreading vicious rumors! ¹⁰...help those in trouble...] Fasting is more than not eating. It is aligning ourselves with the way God wants us to live.

III. Money, possessions and our heart

- A. [Mt. 6:19–24 (NLT)] “**Don’t store up** (*Msg hoard*) **treasures here on**, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ **Store your treasures in heaven**, where **moths** and **rust** cannot destroy, and **thieves** do not break in and steal. ²¹ **Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.**] (Context: more pharisaical hypocrisy. [Vs 24=Lu 16:14] **The Pharisees, who dearly loved their money**...scoffed at him. ¹⁵ Then he said to them, “You like to **appear righteous** in public, but **God knows your hearts.**”]
- B. [Vs. 19] “*Don’t store up (MSG hoard) treasures here on earth ...Store your treasures in heaven*] What does this mean? **E.g.** Biblical balance: Money and possessions aren’t evil; the issue is do I love money and possessions more than God. There are rich people in the Bible, and many verses about prosperity. The challenge: can God trust me with wealth or will the love of money control me, **e.g.**, Judas. Life App #2: Let Jesus be Lord of how we manage our money; If He is Lord, I won’t spend all I have on myself, but I’ll meet my needs, have some fun, help others and invest in the KOG.
- C. [Vs 21] *For where your treasure is—that which ye value most. there will your heart be also.*] Martin Luther, a catalyst for the Protestant Reformation in the middle ages, said, “What a man loves is his God.” Love for God is more than a feeling or belief, it’s action. We can love work, hobbies, pleasure, people, possessions more than God. It’s called idolatry, def. idol: anything that takes God’s place in our life. Whatever is 1st place in our heart, whatever we think about night and day, whatever consumes our thinking and our money is what we love most. Somehow, we must guard our heart, so nothing takes God’s place in our life. The Pharisees failed, we won’t.
- D. [Vs 24] “No one can serve two **masters**...you will be **devoted to one** and (NCV **refuse to follow**) the other. **You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.**] **E.g.** remodel my house or missionary. ‘Money’ is the translation of the Aramaic word ‘mammon’ meaning wealth, property, money, literally all of our material resources.^{1,2}
 1. *Master* suggests a slaveowner who required total allegiance. **Master is a metaphor for who or what is 1st in our life, God, or getting more money and possessions.** Jesus warns against a divided heart: it is impossible for both God and possessions to be our masters. The heart can be devoted to one master only.¹⁰
- E. Our challenge is balance, i.e., how to acquire and enjoy what God gives us but love, serve, and be committed to Jesus more. If I’m more committed to Jesus, I must be willing to give up or give away something I want. [Luke 12:21 (NLT)] “**Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.**”]
 1. The greatest danger to Western Christianity is not Marxism, Islam, the New Age movement or humanism but rather the 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.¹

- F. Jesus isn't saying He wants us to be poor. So much blessing can come for us and others from money. E.g. He wants to warn us of the potential of loving money more than God. [1 Timothy 6:10 (NLT)] For the **love of money** is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, **craving money**, have **wandered from the true faith** and pierced themselves with **many sorrows**.] E.g., Don't forget Judas. He loved money more than Jesus and betrayed Him for money. We won't!

IV. Conclusion: The most balanced view of money in the NT

- A. [1 Timothy 6:17–19 (NLT)] Teach those who are **rich in this world** not to be **proud** and **not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable**. **Their trust should be in God**, who richly gives us all we need for our **enjoyment**.¹⁸ Tell them to **use their money to do good**. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need...¹⁹ By doing this they will be **storing up their treasure** as a good foundation for the **future** (NKJV) that they may lay hold on **eternal life**.

V. Response

- A. Prayer: Lord, I want to love you more than my money or possessions. I'm deciding today I want You to be Lord over my money and my possessions.
- B. Souls: **Pic Hearse/ U-haul**. Money and possessions are temporary. Only Jesus offers eternal life.

VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

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VII. Supplemental Material

- A. Def. fasting: abstention from food. In the OT there are two kinds of fasting, public and private. Public fasts were periodically proclaimed (2 Chron. [20:3](#); Ezra [8:21–23](#);

- Neh. [1:4–11](#); Jer. [36:9](#)). The fasts were always accompanied by prayer and supplication and frequently by wearing sackcloth as a sign of penance and mourning (Neh. [9:1](#); Dan. [9:3](#); 1 Macc. [3:47](#))¹
- B. The Pharisees' hypocrisy was they fasted so that others would see them and think they were spiritual.
 - C. Fasting was a third example of Pharisaic "righteousness." The Pharisees loved to fast so that others would see them and think them spiritual. It's ironic that fasting emphasized the denial of the flesh, but the Pharisees were glorifying their flesh by drawing attention to themselves¹
 - D. Isreal had public and private fasts that were always accompanied by prayer.¹
 - E. To *look dismal* can be "to go about looking pitiful (or, sad or, gloomy)." "they deliberately go with dirty faces (or, unkempt appearances)," "they make themselves appear to be suffering," or "they allow themselves to look terrible."⁴
 - F. The only official Jewish day of fasting was the Day of Atonement, when eating, drinking, bathing, and anointing with oil were forbidden. The Jews would also fast in connection with the celebration of days of national disaster, and it was frequently done on a private and individual basis as well. As we said in the discussion of 4:2, *fast* means to deliberately go without food, usually as a way of honoring God or as part of a period of meditation and prayer.⁴
 - G. One's attitude toward wealth is another barometer of righteousness. The Pharisees believed the Lord materially blessed all He loved. They were intent on building great **treasures on earth**.¹
 - H. The challenge: can God trust me with wealth or will the love of money control me, e.g., Judas John 12:4–6 (NLT) But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said,⁵ "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor."⁶ Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.
 - I. The entire section (6:19–34) is concerned with an absolute loyalty to God, a loyalty that prevails over worldly concerns⁴
 - J. Luke 12:33 (NLT) "Sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven! And the purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe; no thief can steal it and no moth can destroy it.
 - K. *Do not lay up* (TEV "*store up*") *for yourself treasures on earth* is a fairly literal translation of the Greek, as are most other translations. *Lay up* can also be "gather for yourself." GeCL translates, "Gather no riches here on earth!" The negative command can be translated in a negative or positive form. "You should not store up (or, save)" and "Do not accumulate" are examples of the negative. "Store up for yourself no riches" is an example of a positive command. *Treasures* has often been rendered

- “riches.” It refers to expensive things, wealth, or valuable things that people can own, and it can be translated by any one of these terms.⁴
- L. “rust” eats away metal, while “worms” eat away cloth. This sentence also mentions the *moth*, which is an insect that destroys cloth and similar material⁴ Inflation eats away value; uncertainty causes stock to drops.
- M. *thieves*. However, there are languages that make distinctions between people who steal in different ways. That is, they use one word for people who steal by using weapons or force, and another for those who break into a house, perhaps still another for someone who uses guile, and so on. Obviously, in this verse translators should use the word that would be appropriate for people who break into houses to steal.⁴
- N. Spiritual treasure should be defined as broadly as possible—as everything that believers can take with them beyond the grave—e.g., holiness of character, obedience to all of God’s commandments, souls won for Christ, and disciples nurtured in the faith. In this context, however, storing up treasures focuses particularly on the compassionate use of material resources to meet others’ physical and spiritual needs, in keeping with the priorities of God’s kingdom¹
- O. Against the potential objection that material prosperity has no effect on one’s spiritual condition, v. 21 adds that one’s affections are inherently drawn to one’s treasure. This does not imply that rich people cannot be Christians, although the first centuries of Christianity knew only a small number of them. It does imply that riches bring grave dangers, not least of which is the extra anxiety of having to protect one’s possessions. To avoid those dangers, rich Christians must be characterized by generosity in giving and meticulous stewardship in using money for the Lord’s work. ⁵
- P. Vs. 19 Jesus draws attention to what people prize above all else. Some put their emphasis on *treasures* here and now to the exclusion of eternal values; Jesus points out that that means putting all one’s emphasis on what may well be lost. He instructs his followers not to lay up their treasures on this earth because treasures located here are liable to loss. He is not, of course, saying that they must not go about their daily work with due care, or that they must not run their businesses profitably. It is worldly-mindedness to which he is objecting, the concentration on prosperity in this world to the neglect of all else. Jesus is saying that his followers must have a right sense of values and not see earthly success, however that be understood, as the aim of all their labor⁶
- Q. Vs 20 there are riches that cannot be lost in such ways⁶
- R. Vs 21 **For where your treasure is**—that which ye value most. **there will your heart be also**—“Thy treasure—thy heart” is probably the true reading here: “your,” in Lu 12:34, from which it seems to have come in here. Obvious though this maxim be, by what multitudes who profess to bow to the teaching of Christ is it practically disregarded! “What a man loves,” says Luther, quoted by Tholuck, “that is his God. For he carries it in his heart, he goes about with it night and day, he sleeps and wakes with it; be it what it may—wealth or self, pleasure or renown.” But because “laying up” is not in itself sinful, nay, in some cases enjoined (2 Co 12:14), and honest industry and sagacious enterprise are usually rewarded with prosperity, many flatter

- themselves that all is right between them and God, while their closest attention, anxiety, zeal, and time are exhausted upon these earthly pursuits¹
- S. Luke 16:19–26 (NLT) Jesus said, “There was a certain rich man who was splendidly clothed in purple and fine linen and who lived each day in luxury. ²⁰ At his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus who was covered with sores. ²¹ As Lazarus lay there longing for scraps from the rich man’s table, the dogs would come and lick his open sores. ²² “Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ “The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’ ²⁵ “But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.’
- T. Vs 20 Jesus was summarizing why the kingdom servant is motivated to practice righteous acts. It is not for temporary honor among men on earth, but for eternal reward before the Father in heaven. ⁹
- U. Last verse Bible Revelation 22:12 (NCV) “Listen! I am coming soon! I will bring my reward with me, and **I will repay each one of you for what you have done.**
- V. *** This concept of storing up heavenly treasure by doing good works was common in rabbinic tradition, and so it would have been easily understood by Jesus’ audience and Matthew’s readers⁹
- W. Proverbs 10:22 (NCV) The Lord’s blessing brings wealth, and no sorrow comes with it.
- X. Our attitude toward money and possessions is another barometer of righteousness; *Luke 16:13–15 (NLT)* “No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and be enslaved to money.”] Which is more important, using my money to do what I want or what God wants? I.e., meeting my needs, having some fun, helping others and investing in the KOG?
- Y. Spiritual treasure is everything that believers can take with them beyond the grave—e.g., holiness of character, obedience to all of God’s commandments, souls won for Christ, and disciples nurtured in the faith. In this context, however, storing up treasures focuses particularly on the use of material resources for the priorities of God’s kingdom¹. We’ve got to decide am I willing to enjoy everything in this life or am I willing to live for the life to come?
- Z. How do I gather ‘treasures in heaven?’ by Christian character like kindness, by spiritual fellowship with God, by self-denial, by giving, by serving in short, by a surrender to our Father who is in heaven.⁸ There is no permanence in this world. You cannot take your treasure with you into the next world, but you can send it on ahead through kingdom-oriented stewardship. The point of this life is preparation for the world to come.⁹

AA. Money is the translation of the Aramaic word for “wealth or property,” *mamōna* (“mammon,” KJV²)

BB. Vs 22 “Your eye is like a lamp that provides light for your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is filled with light. ²³ But when your eye is unhealthy, your whole body is filled with darkness. And if the light you think you have is actually darkness, how deep that darkness is!

1. The Pharisees had this problem because their spiritual **eyes** were diseased. With their **eyes** they were coveting money and possessions. They were in spiritual **darkness**. They were slaves to the master of greed, and their desire for money was so great they were failing in their service to their true Master, **God**.
2. Good and bad eyes probably parallel a good and bad heart and thus refer, respectively, to storing up treasures in heaven versus storing them up on earth. Verses 22–23 therefore restate the truth of the previous paragraph, that the way people handle their finances affects every other part of their lives, either for good or for bad⁵

CC. Summary: Am I stingy or generous; do I spend all I have on myself or use some for God’s purposes?

DD. [Mark 12:28–30 (NLT)... “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹ Jesus replied...³⁰...you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’]