



MATTHEW

THE KINGDOM COME

Kingdom Investment
Matthew 6:19-24

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Introduction

Good morning, Union Church.

My name is Kyle Rodriguez, if we haven't had a chance to meet, I'm one of the pastors here at Union Church.

When I was in fourth grade, I played Pop Warner football for the first time. I had loved football for a long time, watching it, being really interested in it, but I had never played tackle football. And so, my fourth grade year I finally was old enough to play on the local Pop Warner team—the Yuma Scorpions.

Unfortunately, I was a small kid. I was not in aggressive kid. And so, that meant that practice after practice after practice I was just getting beat up, run over. A couple months into the season, I went to my dad on the sideline, during a water break and I said, Dad, I don't want to do this. I want to quit.

My dad looked at me and said, okay, if you want to quit, *you* have to go tell your coach.

Well, I didn't quit. Too scared. But I desperately wanted to. Practice just felt like torture to me and I was very rarely rewarded by getting actual playing time in a game on a Saturday morning, but I didn't quit. And at the end of the season, the Yuma Scorpions were good enough to claim a spot in national Pop Warner championships that were held in Orlando, Florida at the Walt Disney Wide World of Sports complex. Our season was about to end with an all-expenses paid trip to Disney World.

And my dad said to me, are you sure you don't want to quit?

Too often friends. We have misaligned priorities. We are so focused on the short term pain, or the short-term comforts, that we forget about long-term benefits or maybe we just can't even imagine the kind of long-term benefits that may await us. We are a people of short-term priorities, and it's that misalignment of priority that Jesus is getting at, in our passage this morning. He is trying to open our eyes to the beauty of the long-term.

As we explore Jesus's words on proper priorities, investment, and treasure, the primary thing that we are going to see is that **Jesus calls his followers to invest whole-heartedly in eternal, lasting joy.** If you're taking notes, either on paper or in your head, that's kind of our main point, our thesis today.

To do that, we are going to look at three characteristics of that investment that are laid out in the text. So, three characteristics of investing in the Kingdom of Heaven, and then we'll end with some practical ways to do what Christ is commanding.

But before we do that, let's pray.

1. Investing in the Kingdom of Heaven is a wise investment.

The first thing we see in these commands of Christ is that investing in the Kingdom of heaven is a wise investment. There will be good return—or reward—on this investment.

Now, right off the bat we have to notice something: Remember throughout the Sermon on the Mount, which we have spent more than a month in, now, Jesus is laying out the blueprint for what righteousness in the Kingdom of Heaven looks like. It's true righteousness, greater than the righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes, more than merely righteous via external actions, but by internal attitudes, thoughts, and desires.

But, if that's true, then Jesus's continual reference back to rewards can seem a little funky. Right? Like, if God really wants us to be righteous people, to be people who are truly good, who love the good and are good down to the very core of who they are, then why is he trying to motivate us by rewards?

Usually, we wouldn't have a lot of respect for somebody who begrudgingly did something good solely for the reward, right? The other word for that is bribery.

But Jesus doesn't seem to have that perspective, because the Bible constantly uses self-interest, like the promise of future rewards, as the motivation for action. This sermon is full of it! The Beatitudes, at the beginning of the sermon, all use future reward as motivation. In just 18 verses in Chapter 6 preceding our passage today, Jesus uses the word "reward" seven times, and all of them are intended as motivation for people to act in righteous ways. And that's just the tip. The Bible is constantly using future reward (among other things) as motivation for present living.

The Bible assumes that we, as people, are motivated by our own good.

Our problem, Jesus makes clear here today, is not that we care too much about our own good, but that we are too focused on the immediate, short-term good that we can see, taste, and feel, and miss out on the greater, long-term good that the Kingdom of Heaven offers.[\[1\]](#)

Of course, we know, intuitively, that long-term investment is usually more worthwhile. That's why we've gone to great lengths to teach our children about the wonders of compound interest. I can remember the first time I was taught about compound interest. It was in sixth grade, I was in Mr. Olsen's class in Ronald Regan Fundamental School in Yuma, Arizona. He showed us how—writing it all out on the chalkboard—if we started investing a \$10 a month when we were 18, we'd have over \$20,000 by the time we were 60. But, then he did the same thing starting at 30, and we'd have less than \$10,000. And if we started at 40, less than \$5,000. And guess who opened a mutual fund on the day he turned 18? Not me!

And you know why I didn't? Because I really needed to save for my first year of college. Or, because I wanted an Xbox. I don't remember which.

But that's how it is for many of us, right? Even though we intuitively know that the long-term investment is better than short-term pleasures, the short-term always seems urgent. The tyranny of the right now overshadows the long-term.

Now, some of you may be better at investing in the long-term. More disciplined at making short-term sacrifices for the sake of long-term gain. My wife is one of those people—the Lord has been gracious to cover my weaknesses.

But here's the thing, no matter how good you are at investing in the long-term here on earth, Jesus is making the point here that anything long-term here is short-term compared to eternity. Anything rich and savory here on earth is bland and tasteless compared to the joys of the kingdom of heaven. Anything that is durable here on earth is cheap and flimsy compared to eternity.

And again, we know this! We know how temporary and flimsy the things we pursue here and now are. That's why the insurance industry nets over a TRILLION dollars a year.

And it's not just the material.

Relationships will break down. Your reputation could be sullied—you may not like the “cancel culture” that is so prevalent right now, but one good thing that has come out of it is that it reminds us that even the most carefully cultivated reputations and legacies can be torn down in an instant. Vacations end. Memories fade.

And ultimately, even if you manage to put together the most well-to-do life, with a marriage sustained, and a legacy that endures, even if your children remember you fondly and you have the money to maintain your home and toys, death comes for us all.

And how well does Livingston County know this reality, friends. A county with the highest average income in the state, but also the highest rate of alcoholism. Oh, how we know that the wealth of this world is temporary.

But what Jesus is saying here is that while every treasure, material or immaterial, here on Earth is bordered by some kind of limitation, some kind of inevitable decay, or risk of loss, the treasures of

heaven are unlimited, deep pools of joy that never run dry. They can never be taken from you, they will never run dry; no stock market crash, no global pandemic can destroy the riches of heaven.

These are riches that are worth saving for.

2. Investing in the Kingdom of Heaven is a whole-life commitment.

The second thing that this text shows us is that investing in the Kingdom of Heaven is a whole-life commitment. Or, to put it in the words of Jesus, “You cannot serve both God and money.”

Jesus uses two different analogies here. The first example is a little difficult to understand in English, because Jesus is using some ancient illustrations that have double meanings that aren’t apparent in English. He first says: If your eye is healthy... your body will be full of light. That is, you’ll be able to see! You’ll be able to perceive the light around you and see!

But the word that Jesus uses here is more literally: “whole” or “sincere.” If your eye is whole and focused, without things clouding your vision or “splitting” your vision, you’ll be able to see. And in contrast, Jesus says if your eye is “bad” you’ll be filled with darkness. That word there is literally “evil”—if you have an “evil eye.” And in the ancient world, the phrase “evil eye” was short hand for someone who was stingy and greedy. So, this is a bit of a messy metaphor in English, but in it’s context, his hearers would have understood Jesus to be contrasting a single-mindedness toward the kingdom of heaven—which results in lavish generosity here on earth—with evil and greed.

And his next metaphor makes it even clearer: You cannot serve two masters! You cannot say you serve the God of eternity out of one side of your mouth, but in reality make money the God of your present.

Now, we like to think that we can do both. We like to think that we can split the difference and get the best of both worlds.

I remember taking a bowling class in college—yes, it was worth it. And my goal, my passion, was to be able to knock down a 7-10 split. But I could never do it! And more often than not, my attempt to hit the edge of the right pin at just the right angle led to me missing both.

God is not interested in sharing the throne of your heart! He’s not interested in divided people, but in whole disciples. And this has been the entire message of the Sermon on the Mount! He’s not interested in people who externally never murder, but internally harbor hate toward their brothers and sisters. He’s not interested in having a kingdom full of people who never commit adultery, but internally are leering at each other with lust. He’s not interested in people who do the religious actions of prayer and fasting and attending church for the sake of reputation and being well-respected, but have no heart change toward loving their heavenly Father.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is not merely a part of the disciple’s life. It’s not just what you do on Sundays, it’s not just the prayer you pray before meals. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is meant to work

in us to produce disciples who are permeated with the love of God, with the holiness of God, with the righteousness of God. To attempt, instead, to serve two masters is to tell a lie to ourselves and the world about who God is: It's to say God isn't enough! I need more! I need protection, I need security, I need pleasures of someone else! Yeah, I need my heavenly Father for eternity, but right now, I need the house. Right now, I need the boat. Right now, I need the Roth IRA.

We can't split the difference. We cannot store up treasures here on earth ***AND*** in heaven. We cannot serve both God and money.

And Jesus is shining a particular light on money and material goods here, but we could substitute other things into this verse:

"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 **social media clout that you crave.**

You cannot serve God and **content you need to consume.**

I cannot serve God and **my books that I love to own.**

You cannot serve God and your **favorite sports or team.**

You cannot serve God and **your family.**

That one is tough, isn't it? Does it seem a little too harsh? Take it up with Jesus, who said: **"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple."**

That "hate" word, of course, is the same word that Jesus uses here to describe what happens when you serve two masters: You will hate one and love the other.

Of course, Jesus also told a young man that he must "Honor his father and mother!" So, Jesus isn't saying, hating and deserting your parents is the key to discipleship. He's saying that they can't be your master! Your devotion to God, your single-mindedness toward investing in the kingdom of heaven is to be so singular that you are not ruled by the thousands of other things (including good things!) that your heart may be inclined to.

So yes, you have a responsibility to care for your family (1 Tim. 5:8), you have a responsibility to work (2 Thess. 3:10), a responsibility to steward your money wisely (Proverbs says), but all of those responsibilities are subservient to the overarching responsibility to serve God, the overarching responsibility to invest in the Kingdom of Heaven! In a similar way, a professional football player has a responsibility to lift weights, but it's subservient to the greater responsibility to play football well!

We serve our families, we work our jobs, we steward our money well, out of a heart-level desire to serve the Lord and invest in his kingdom!

So, brothers and sisters, we are called to ask a diagnostic question: Where is your heart? Jesus says: Where your treasure is, there your heart will be. So, where does your heart—your innermost desires and attitudes and thoughts—where does your heart reside? What gives you the most joy? What gives you the most anxiety? Where do your thoughts run to in silence? Where do your fingers instinctually go to?

Where is your heart? For there is your treasure.

3. Investing in the Kingdom of Heaven results in a life free from anxiety.

Now, friends, this can be hard, challenging truth. Asking these questions of ourselves, vulnerably looking in the face of ways that we have fallen short.

But there is good news here too, friends. Look at what Jesus says next: Investing in the Kingdom of Heaven is not merely a wise investment for the future, even in the midst of hard, difficult sacrifice here and now, it results in a life free from anxiety. That's the third thing: Investing in the Kingdom of Heaven results in a life free from anxiety.

“Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious 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? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? ³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

Now, I don't know about you, but when I have struggled with anxiety and depression in the past, it did not help me for someone to simply tell me: Stop being anxious! Stop worrying! Those aren't necessarily things that I could just turn on and off. And that would be a rather callous instruction to give someone in the midst of anxiety. And I think, taken in the context of all of what we've read today, it would be a rather callous reading of Jesus's commands here.

I think Jesus is connecting this worry-free life, this life without anxiety, to people who have prioritized investing in the Kingdom of Heaven. To people who have sought out the Holy Spirit's aid in serving God alone. Again, throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is laying out a holistic blueprint of

what citizens of the kingdom of heaven look like. So here, Jesus is saying: People who have cultivated hearts that are laser-focused on laying up treasures in heaven, people who seek to serve God alone, people who have cultivated generous hearts: they are the people who will naturally be free from anxiety!

It's hard to be anxious about tomorrow when your eyes are focused on eternity.

But what's really interesting here is that Jesus doesn't merely point people to focusing on eternity to quell their anxiety, but on God himself. You see what Jesus has done throughout the flow of this whole passage? He started by saying: turn your eyes from this temporary life to the long-term, to eternity and heaven. Then he said: Turn your eyes away from your duty to your bank account, your duty to your house, even your duty to your family, and direct them to your responsibility to God.

But here he gives the real, ultimate source: Turn your eyes not merely to the context of heaven, turn your eyes not merely to the commitment you owe to God, but turn your eyes to the character of God! He is a Father who loves you! This is the reason why you should look forward to heaven, the reason why you should be eager to serve him: Because he is a Father who loves you!

We have to get this, friends! We have to get that he is a Father who loves us, or why would we want to invest in spending eternity with him? Why would we want to serve him whole-heartedly? Why would we trust that he will care for us today and tomorrow and the next day?

But maybe you're sitting here and you're saying: I don't know if I can trust that! There have been times when I haven't had a roof over my head, there have been times when food has been tight. I wanted him to save my loved one from cancer or COVID, and they're gone. I know tragedy occurs, I know it doesn't always work out. How can I know that this Father will come through?

Maybe you're sitting here and you're saying: I don't know if I've done enough for my Father to love me like that. I know how much I fall short of serving God whole-heartedly. I do serve money, I do serve my comfort, I do serve my reputation, I do serve myself. How should I trust the Father to care for me when I don't serve him the way I ought?

To you, friends, the Father not merely turns your eyes to his character, but to his Son.

Because the ultimate proof that the Father loves you, brother or sister, resides in the cross, where he sent this same Jesus, his only son, to die on your behalf—in order to cover up all your sins and failings, in order to purchase for you a ticket into the Kingdom of Heaven where there will be no more pain and no more tears, but unlimited joy for eternity.

Here how the Apostle Paul puts it in Romans 8:

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us.

³⁵Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all the day long;

we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Are you looking for proof of God’s enduring love for you today, friend? Look to Jesus. You are worth more than the birds of the air or the lilies of the field. Though you may be broken, weary, and stained with sin, to him, you are worth his very Son.

Application: Three Ways to Invest in the Kingdom of Heaven

Okay, so, to bring us back full circle: Jesus calls his followers to invest whole-heartedly in eternal, lasting joy. It is a better investment than investing in this life. It takes a whole-life commitment. But it leads to freedom from anxiety here and now.

But now, before we go, I want to give you a few categories of how we actually do that: invest in the kingdom of heaven.

And to do that, we need to set the record straight. The Bible doesn’t give us a clear picture of what the “rewards” that we’re storing up look like. Maybe you have in your head a picture of like a pile of gold that’s being stored up for you, or like, if you invest here and now your room in heaven will be bigger than your neighbors.

And while that **could** be the case, I’m inclined to think about the rewards that we’re storing up in a totally different way. Because the joy of heaven is first and foremost the joy of knowing and loving God. He is the fountain of joy and life and our eternal hope is that we get **him**.

And so, when I think about enjoying the rewards of heaven more or less, I don’t really think about God objectively handing out different sized rooms, but about our subjective experience of him, of the place he has prepared for us, our experience of seeing him face to face.

And what’s interesting, is when you think about the rewards of heaven through that lens, it becomes much more clear how our “investing” here and now could naturally pay off in eternity.

So, let me give you three examples.

1. Obedience to Jesus's commands.

Personal obedience to Jesus's commands is the first way we invest in the kingdom of heaven. And here's why: I know we have some huge sports fans in our midst, particularly that of a few specific universities in the state of Michigan.

Now, let's say, hypothetically, that the University of Michigan football team had not thoroughly lost to the University of Georgia in the Orange Bowl. Let's say, for argument's sake, that they won, and went on to beat Alabama in the National Championship game and win their first title in two decades. Let's say that happened.

Now, who is the person who will enjoy that glorious victory more? The casual fan who tuned into a few games and wore his jersey at the National Championship party, or the die-hard who spent every last dime on Michigan tickets, who was there rain, sleet, or snow, who knew all the players kept up on the stats, defended his team against co-workers, and taught his children to do the same?

My money is on the latter.

And by obeying Jesus's commands, by seeking to know him more, by talking about him, by making the gathering of his people in church a priority, by being radically generous with the material possessions and money he's given to us, we are doing something similar. We are building up our capability to enjoy the final victory. We are building anticipation and joy in him now, that will be multiplied a hundred fold when finally, we see him face to face.

2. Encouragement of Jesus's people.

But our storing up treasures in heaven is not merely focused on our individual actions, but our corporate investment. So, the second way to store up treasure in heaven is by encouraging and discipling God's people, our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Again, think about the football analogy. Who is enjoying the victory more: the person who is watching the game with the people who he has had season tickets next to for 30 years, the person who brought their family with them, the person who deeply knows and loves his fellow fans, or the one who is watching the victory alone?

Friends, by encouraging and standing next to one another in the daily life of Christianity, you are storing up treasures for yourself in heaven. Because one day, I'll get to go up to the elder who prayed for me when I was struggling with pornography, I'll get to go up to the pastor who wept with me when I doubted and was ashamed, to the poor, little elderly lady living on Social Security who wrote me a \$200 check to help plant Union Church. And I'll get to say, "Can you believe it!" We made it! Christ has won!

3. Evangelism to the lost.

And finally, friends, we can store up treasures in heaven by sharing the gospel with the lost.

You know what I want to be my treasure in heaven? I want my son to be there with me. I want my brothers and sisters to be there with me. I want my friends who are so blinded by the lies of this world to have seen the light and be there with me.

And while ultimately, God is the only one who controls those people's salvation, he most often chooses to save *through* the work of his people. And that's not only by someone diligently sharing the gospel, but by people who are so marked by love for Christ and love for the lost that they are filled with a radical generosity.

I'm here today because my parents overflowed with generosity and the love of Christ toward me. I'm here because of the youth leader who generously opened his home and his calendar to host me, to come visit me at college every month. I'm here because of a man who paid, out of his own pocket, to take middle schoolers on a Christ-centered adventure trip every year. I'm here today because God worked through his people to show me his radically generous, loving heart.

You might have the gift of evangelism, you might not. I would encourage everybody to join a Go Group, which are places where we, together, regardless of gifting, can learn about ways to share the gospel and can pray for one another in doing so.

But even if you never have the chance to share the gospel with someone outright, all of us can give. We can give to godly organizations who are planting churches in new areas (this is why 10 percent of our budget every year goes toward local and global church planting). We can give to the poor and needy in our area, acting out the heart of God for them. We can open up our homes to the lost to show them the hospitality of our heavenly Father.

There are a million different ways to invest in reaching the lost. And by doing so, friends, we are investing in people, God's image-bearers, who one day we'll stand shoulder-to-shoulder with and say: we made it.

[\[1\]](#) In other words, as Lewis put it in "A Weight of Glory", our desires are not too strong, but too weak.