

Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

July 07, 2024

I. Introduction

- A. Just for the purpose of reminding you how the Sermon on the Mount is tied together, Jesus begins with the Beatitudes – which form the foundation for the rest of the sermon. He moves from the Beatitudes to a call to live in a way that brings glory to God, and to pursue a righteousness that surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees. The next section deals with valuing relationships so that we treat everyone as we want to be treated. Next, Jesus talks about the proper use of religious practices in relation to our relationship with God. It is in this section that Jesus addresses our propensity to treat the praise and admiration of people as more rewarding than the praise and blessings of God. This brings us to **Matthew 6:19**, which begins the portion we will look at today.
- B. **Matthew 6:19–25**, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. [20] But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; [21] for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. [22] The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. [23] But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! [24] No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. [25] For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”
- C. Whatever may come from today’s teaching, there is one thing I hope will come, and that is clear, honest thinking about what you treasure the most and who you love the most. In this life, there are many things to treasure and many people to love, but only one can be treasured or loved the most. Seeing the truth about yourself in this regard is vital if you are to treasure and love the most what is worth treasuring and loving the most. But you will not see the truth about yourself in this regard without clear, honest thinking – thinking that assesses and exposes what your choices and behavior say about what is in your heart.
- D. Pray

II. What you treasure/love significantly influences how you live

A. [19] Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where **moth** (*slowly eats away*) and **rust** (*slowly corrodes*) **destroy** (*through a slow process of destruction which is easily overlooked until it is too late*), and where thieves break in and steal (*a much quicker and easily noticeable form of loss*). [20] But **store up** for yourselves treasures in heaven (*continue to put it away so that the amount continues to grow*), where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; [21] for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

1. What you treasure and love the most has the most influence on how you live, that is, how you think, speak, and behave. You have heard this truth before, though in recent years I have spoken of it in terms of values, beliefs, fears, and desires.

a. And as you have heard me say, if you want to know what you value, believe, fear, and hope, or – in light of today’s teaching – if you want to know what you treasure and love the most, examine your daily, repetitive choices and behavior – for they reveal what your heart holds to be most important.

b. We know from the fact that God uses this method in judging us that it is worthy method to use.

(1) For example, God says, “Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and slanders” (**Matthew 15:19**), yet He judges us according to our deeds: **2 Corinthians 5:10**, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

(2) If who we are comes from our heart, why does God judge us according to our deeds? Because what is in our heart is verified by our deeds.

c. Therefore, if you want to know – as much as it is humanly possible to know – what you treasure and love the most, examine what you do, day in and day out. And to do this well, I recommend three things:

(1) **First**, follow David’s example in asking God for help. We read about this in **Psalms 26:2**, “Examine me, O LORD, and try me; test my mind and my heart,” and in **Psalms 139:23-24**, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; [24] and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way.”

- (2) **Second**, carefully examine what you do and what you say on a repetitive basis, or as a way of life to see what you do says about what you treasure and who you love. This is where clear, honest thinking, coupled with David's prayers, are required.
 - (3) **Third**, if you don't seem to be making meaningful progress in your quest, seek help from a believer who has learned to think clearly and honestly about him or herself.
- d. So why all this effort? Because, what you treasure or love the most has the most influence on how you live.
- (1) For example, if you love yourself more than God, you will love yourself more than those around you, including your spouse if you are married. Then, when your love of self is threatened in ways you are unwilling to endure, you will act selfishly in order to get what you want or protect yourself from unwanted loss.
 - (2) Or, if you treasure something more than God and the good of those around you, such as praise and admiration, power and control, a possession or some possessions, sports, ease of life, financial security, or some form of pleasure and personal happiness, you will choose unloving and ungodly means to gratify your selfishness – and you will do that at the expense of God's glory and the good of those effected by your choices and behavior.
2. So once again, what you treasure or love the most has the most influence on how you live. This is why Jesus said, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and foremost commandment. [39] The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" (**Matthew 22:36-39**).
- a. Is God so egotistical or so needy or so irrational that He would use His power to make us love Him? Is God like a selfish, prideful husband who uses his power to press his wife into doing what he wants her to do? **NO!**
 - b. God commands us to love Him – first and foremost, and to love those around us as ourselves **because** who we love and what we treasure the most has the most influence on how we live.
 - (1) And how we live – including when being tested by trials and tribulation – determines where we are storing our treasures.
 - (2) And where we store our treasures determines how God blesses us – in this life and throughout eternity.

3. Do you know with a reasonable measure of certainty what you treasure the most, and who you love the most?

B. At the beginning of today's teaching, I said that you will not see the truth about yourself without clear, honest thinking – thinking that assesses and exposes what your choices and behavior reveal about what is in your heart. And later I added the wisdom of following David's example of asking God for help in seeing the truth about yourself.

1. I believe these two parts are needed to clearly and honestly assess your choices and behavior, because this is what it took for me to see and face up to what I treasured most and who I loved most.

a. For example, it wasn't until I began asking God to show me, **and** analyzing my choices and behavior, that I saw that I treasured fame and fortune more than God and godliness. And that I loved myself more than God, Barb, or anyone else in my life.

b. What was most revealing was the way in which I used such things as anger, sarcasm, verbal digs, control, relentless pressure, perfectionism, and the belief that I knew the right way to do things and that it was my duty to correct others when they were not doing something right. I even came to see that I was using God and the work of God to feed my pride and gratify my desire for recognition.

c. Sadly, I did these things for far too long before facing up to what I was doing. But it was not for the lack of ability to see it. It was because I wasn't looking.

(1) I was too busy pursuing what I treasured the most and pleasing who I loved the most to give any thought to clearly and honestly thinking about these things.

(2) And in those days, it never entered my mind to ask God for help – mostly because I did not think I needed such help.

2. Therefore, it is my personal experience that motivates me to urge you, today, to slow down, take the time, and ask God's help – if you haven't already – to examine your own choices and behavior to see what they say about what you treasure the most and who you love the most.

3. Of course, you may, like most of us, be mixed-motivated, or as the scripture says, double-minded.

a. What this means is that you treasure the things and ways of God in some areas and treasure the things and ways of the world in one or more other areas.

b. And it means that you live as if you love God the most in some areas, yet love yourself the most in one or more other areas.

- c. And if you are double-minded, then it is probable you are looking only at the good while ignoring the bad. This one-sided view also keeps you blinded to the truth.
 4. Truly, my goal here is not to criticize or condemn, but to urge prayerful, careful, honest reflection. This teaching about what we treasure and where we are storing our treasures is an important truth for those who want to live a godly life – because, what you treasure and love the most has the most influence on how you live.
- C. Jesus concludes His teaching about treasures with [21] “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
 1. Now you may be thinking, what does storing up treasure on earth or in heaven have to do with my heart?
 2. As you may recall, Jesus said that who we are, that is, how we think, speak, and behave, comes from what is in our heart (**Matthew 15:19**).
 - a. And as I have said, our heart is where we find our beliefs, values, fears, and desires.
 - b. Therefore, our treasure and heart go hand-in-hand. In other words, you will treasure what your heart holds dear, and what your heart holds dear, you will treasure.
 3. Now, if evil can come from our heart, then good can come from it as well. The wonderful truth is, we are not trapped by any evil that may be in our heart – at this moment. Though we may live in selfish and sinful ways, we are not stuck in sinful and selfish ways.
 - a. We can change. We can, by the help of the Holy Spirit, put to death our old selfish and sinful ways, and put on a new, Christ-like, divine nature. We can die to the importance and rule of self, and come alive to the importance and rule of Jesus Christ. We can be transformed. We can become new creatures. We can grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.
 - b. We can learn to treasure what is worth treasuring and love whom we ought to love so that we go from treasuring and loving what is of little or no value to treasuring and loving what is of the greatest value.
 - c. In other words, if what is in your heart ought not to be there, you can, by the grace and empowerment of God, drive it out and replace it with what ought to be there – and in so doing, begin storing up treasure in heaven.
 - d. But **first**, you must come to terms with what is in your heart. To do this, you must **want to know** what you treasure the most and

who you love the most. **Then** you must want to do something about.

- D. As I said at the beginning, whatever may come from today's teaching, there is one thing I hope will come, and that is clear, honest thinking about what you treasure the most and who you love the most.

III. Conclusion

- A. **Matthew 16:25-27**, "Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for [Jesus'] sake will find it. [26] For what will it profit us if we gain the whole world and forfeit our soul? Or what will we give in exchange for our soul? [27] For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and will then repay every one of us according to our deeds."