

Matthew 6:19-21

¹⁹ “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.”

Two Treasures and Your Heart (Matthew 6:19-21) - Sermon by Kelly Larsen

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Read Matthew 6:19-21. This passage is a continuation of Christ’s Sermon on the Mount teachings which have the two-fold purpose of “pulling the rug out” from under the self-righteous (those who thought they could become righteous by obedience to the law) and helping his hearers to see the true nature of the law and what it means to be in relationship with God. In this scripture, Jesus shows us the difference in durability between earthly and heavenly treasures, teaches us to be wise by storing up lasting riches, and helps us to see the relationship between what we treasure and the affections of our hearts.

1. Treasures on Earth (Verse 19):

- What might lead us to believe clothes, precious metals, and other valuable items are in view in Jesus’s warning not to store up earthly treasures? How can choices, comforts, security, or control also become “earthly treasures”?
- What indications are there in this verse that these earthly riches are fragile and vulnerable? What does the fact that every material thing we hold dear today will likely be in a landfill in one-hundred years say about the durability of the things we treasure?
- How might our desire for earthly treasures get in the way of following God’s will for us when God calls us to suffer or make sacrifices for His kingdom?
- Read Hebrews 11:24-26. What kinds of treasures would have been available to Moses in Pharaoh’s home? Apart from the material value, what kinds of deeper desires would these earthly treasures seem to satisfy? What does the text say that Moses chose instead?

- Read Proverbs 6:6-8. From this proverb, it is clear that preparing for future anticipated needs by storing up provisions is wise:
 - Does this conflict with Jesus's teaching? If "no", what might be some proper motives for setting aside provisions for future needs? (ref. 1 Timothy 5:8)
 - What does Jesus mean by the phrase "for yourselves" (v 19)? How does this help to distinguish between wise preparation and hoarding for self-gratification?
- Our earthly treasures break down, need constant maintenance and care, are subject to thievery, and can be completely wiped out by economic crashes, inflation, natural disasters or changes in government policy. What other devastating circumstance shows that the treasures of this world do not last and are not secure against loss? (ref. Luke 12:13-21)

2. Treasures in Heaven (Verse 20):

- What distorted views of "heavenly treasures" are common in the world? In the church?
- According to Ephesians 1:3 and Colossians 2:2-3, what are some heavenly treasures which are stored up for those in Christ?
- Read Proverbs 2:1-3. What verbs in these verses show us that storing up treasures in heaven involves an act of the will; an attitude of willingness to work toward, devote time to, and discipline ourselves for this effort, rather than something passive that just happens to us?
- According to Proverbs 2:4-5, what is the reward (heavenly treasure) of our diligent labor and searching?
- According to Matthew 6:20 and 1 Peter 1:3-5, what benefits are there in storing up heavenly treasures as opposed to earthly ones?

3. Treasures and Your Heart (Verse 21):

- Read verse 21. It was said that there is a reciprocal relationship between what you treasure and what you love. This principal of reciprocity can work *against* us when our treasures are earthly, but it can also work *for* us if our treasure is Jesus. When we treasure Christ above all, our love and affections will follow.
 - What does it mean to say, “What you treasure, you will love”?
 - What does it mean to say, “What you love, you will treasure”?
- The power of your affections is such that what we love moves us to action. Where does Colossians 3:2-3 say the focus of our hearts/minds should be? In what or in Whom should our greatest identity be found?

Personal Reflection:

Contrasting “storing up for yourselves treasures on earth” with merely planning wisely for the future: what might be a God-pleasing motive for saving for retirement? What motives might be displeasing to God?

Name some material earthly treasures God has given you. What choices, comforts, security, or control do these treasures afford you that might tempt you to seek to accumulate more?

When you picture heaven, do you picture Christ in His glory and the joy we have in Him, or do you picture a Christ-less heaven with crowns, jewels, streets of gold, and mansions? Which view of eternal life reflects someone focused on true heavenly treasures? (ref. John 17:3)

What are you finding most valuable or upon what have you set your affections? If you aren’t valuing Christ alone, and your earthly treasures begin to fail you, what disordered emotions result in your life (anxiety, fear, depression, etc.)?