

## HIDDEN TREASURE

---

### MATTHEW 6:19-24

The Sermon on the Mount is about forgiven people who are growing in their faith and are taking on the nature of God. Today, another lesson from Jesus just for Christians.

Matthew 6:19 - 24 (NIV) 19“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. 23But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24“No one can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money.

This entire section to the end of the chapter is basically about trust. We should trust Him, using everything we have—our money, possessions, our time, gifts and talents, everything—serving Him, to store up for ourselves treasures in heaven.

Instead of living for the things of this world, we Christians should trust Him and store up treasure in heaven.

Take to heart what Jesus says. The enticements of the world are subtle. It’s easy to be bewitched by things to the point we seem to be living for our stuff and going into debt for our stuff. We’re all guilty of it, often without realizing it.

The loudest message of our century is that life consists of things. You see it on a hundred billboards as you drive down the highway.

It’s the message on television. You hear it in jingles on the radio. It is blared at you in four-color ads in the newspapers. It is very seductive.

The message is like a carrot on a stick always just beyond your reach. The carrot promises fulfillment, but it never delivers. The world’s treasures are like that. They simply do not deliver.

Jesus commands us: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth . . .” Well, why not? We like our stuff!

# I. It's Just Good Common Sense

## 1. Earthly treasure does not last

Instinctively we should know this. We should know the stuff of this world is temporary, and it can be destroyed or lost. We should know that we can't take it with us. We came into this world without anything; we leave this world without anything.

Jesus' illustration is how moths and rust destroy. But there is an element of decay in all things. Not only do earthly things not satisfy, they decay and deteriorate.

There's always something wrong with them. Or we think, “If I could just get that, I'd be happy.” Think about computers. The minute you buy a computer there already is a faster, more powerful one, which has more storage, and bells and whistles. And those who love computers begin lusting for the new one. [Car fever]

Bill Hybels tells about a man who suddenly found himself on a hospital bed. The man said, “I came to realize I no longer really cared for what the world chases after, such as how much money you have in the bank and how many cars are parked in the garage. As it says in Ecclesiastes, chasing after these things is like chasing the wind, anyway. Suddenly, the rat race became vanity to me, utter vanity. I felt naked before God. “If I died, I would take none of the stuff with me. All that really mattered ultimately was my relationship with the Lord, my relationship with family and friends. If it weren't for the loss of my health, I could have wasted the rest of my life chasing achievements and acquiring more transitory things.”

He learned a valuable lesson. No one is ultimately satisfied with things—we always want more. This is where the expression, ‘the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence,’ came from. What may have made us happy yesterday is tossed aside today.

And no matter what, everything, no matter what it is, eventually dies, or decays, or rots away. The most beautiful flower begins to die the minute you pluck it. Soon you'll have to throw it away.

Because of sin everything is subject to this process. Things develop holes and become useless. The most perfect body will eventually get old and die. The most beautiful face will lose its beauty to age and wrinkles and environment.

However wonderful and beautiful and glorious things may be, they all perish. They may last your

lifetime, but eventually you have to leave them. And thieves are always a threat to your stuff.

We think we are safe in our house until we come home and find it ransacked. And what about the thieves of disease, or a business loss, or unmet expectations.

It really doesn't matter what we try to hold on to in this world, it will eventually fade or decay or be taken away. Jesus appeals to our common sense and reminds us that worldly treasures never last. On the other hand...

## 2. Heavenly treasure lasts forever (v. 20)

Now Jesus goes from the negative to the positive. "Store treasures in heaven where it is safe." Peter said it this way in 1 Pet. 1:4, ". . . an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade--kept in heaven for you."

In 2 Cor. 4:18, the Apostle Paul said, "For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.". Heavenly things are imperishable and thieves cannot break in and steal and destroy.

Why? Because God protects them in heaven! There are no thieves in heaven. Heavenly treasure is safe because God Himself is the guardian.

There is nothing impure in heaven. There isn't anything that can corrupt. There is no sin there. There is nothing to cause decay. Heaven is the home of eternal life and purity.

And nothing that is tainted or polluted by sin can enter there. Heaven is a perfect place, and the treasures of the soul and of the spirit are safe there.

Do you understand this? Look around you, read the paper, watch the news.

The real question is, 'Why are we so concerned about earthly treasures, and not more concerned about heavenly treasures?' It's because...

## 3. Earthly treasures can have a terrible power and grip on us (vv. 21, 24)

"Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (v. 21). Emotionally we get hooked into things. In v. 24 He talks about the mind, "No one can serve two masters"—the intellectual pull.

Notice the words "treasure" and "serve"—expressive words to impress upon us the terrible control that these things can have over us—yes, even Christians get caught up in the world.

If our spending patterns are a measure of where our heart is hot and where it is not, at what level would giving to the Lord's work and to missions register compared to what we spend on soft drinks?

The fact is as long as we don't have a handle on our money and things, God isn't first in our lives. We are not giving Him full allegiance.

Many a professing Christian is a stumbling block because his worship is divided—Sunday is the Lord's day, weekdays there is little or no place for God.

Every one of us can fall into the grip of materialism. Have you ever noticed the subtle change that tends to take place in peoples lives as they succeed and prosper in this world? Often Christ and His church are relegated to second place? [Deacon in El Paso]

Jesus is so anxious to show us the terrible danger of worldliness that He goes into even more detail: spiritual sight and worldly sight.

## 4. We can be blinded by the subtle intrusion of worldliness (vv. 22-23)

There are two ways of looking at things. Healthy spiritual eyes see things as they really are. You understand the lure and danger of earthly treasures.

Unhealthy eyes are clouded by my wants, my have to haves, my can't live withouts, and so on—those eyes don't have the common sense to understand how things really are.

It is amazing how much of our thoughts are based upon worldly things. The world asks, "What does a man own?" Christ asks, "How are you using what I've blessed you with?" Or, in other words, do your things own you, or do you own them? Do you understand you are God's steward of the things He blesses you with?

If a person breaks a window and steals some jewelry, he is a robber. But if I don't report some cash income on my income tax—well, that's not really dishonest.

## 5. It is up to us who's in control (v. 24)

"No one can serve two masters." This should be self-evident. It should be common sense also. Think about it. What Jesus is really saying is the fact that no man is his own master. You may think you are your own master. But someone or something always governs our heart, our will,

and our work. The only question is who or what this will be.

“Well, I’m just looking out for numero uno—myself.” That mindset means you are really a slave to the world, and are controlled by it.

When you serve Christ, He is in control. Who is in control in your life? What we do is determined by where our treasure is. The question is very simple, “Do I care more about the treasures of the world, or about storing spiritual treasures in heaven?”

## II. It’s Your Decision Who or What You Will Serve

### 1. The stuff of this world

Our relationship to God ultimately determines the way in which we look at things. The things of this world want you to serve them. But God wants your entire devotion. You cannot ride the fence on this.

You are not a godly person because you talk about God sometimes, and say you believe in God, and come to church sometime, yet you live your whole life for earthly things. You either serve the stuff of this world, or you serve God.

### 2. Or God

This world is not all there is, though we sometime live like it. We’re simply traveling through on the way to eternal life. Fix your eyes on the prize for which Christ has called us (Phil. 3:13). That should be our goal.

Give Christ your entire devotion. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.” In a sense Jesus says to each of us, “Go, sell all that you have, and come follow me.”

Compromise is impossible. Whom do you serve? That is the question. It is either God or the world.

### Application:

That which dominates our imagination and our thoughts will determine our life and character. Therefore it is important for us to be careful what we are worshiping, for what we are worshiping we are becoming. If the things you value the most are worldly things, then you will not have

much interest in the world beyond this. True hidden treasure—heavenly treasure is found only by believing in and following Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. This is true worship