

Matthew 6:19–34

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[0 : 0 0] Again, the scripture text is Matthew 6, 19 through 34. Please stand for the reading of God's word. Do not lay up for yourself treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! 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 money. Therefore, I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on.

[1 : 1 4] Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? 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? And which of you, by being anxious, can add a single hour to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing?

Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow. They neither toil nor spin. Yet I tell you, even Solomon in all of his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

Therefore, do not be anxious, saying, What shall we eat? Or, what shall we drink? Or, what shall we wear? For the Gentiles seek after all these things, but your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

[2 : 1 7] But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please be seated. Well, what a joy it is to be here with you in this place, the first corporate worship service ever in this building for Christ Church Chicago, and to have it fall on the week of Thanksgiving. We are so glad that so many of you are here, and grateful for all of you who are at home joining us. A friend once said to me, Dave, I don't know about you, but my journey to heaven has been anything but an elevator ride.

He seems to have wanted me to take the stairs. And it's true, isn't it?

The journey to heaven is long and arduous. I know that one is saved by grace through faith in an instant.

[4 : 1 7] But before arriving, that grace requires all the grit you have. Your faith will demand all the fortitude you can possibly imagine.

And the Sermon on the Mount is our stairway to heaven. It provides in the words of Jesus the path we ascend as Christ Church Chicago, looking for that vision of the celestial city and our safe arrival. And the first step was the beatitudes, that step of ensuring that you are among those to whom the kingdom belongs.

For without that foundational step, the rest is meaningless. But then we took the second step on that passage of salt and light and moved to the work that God has given us to do.

And then ascending together again. The word we are to follow as we looked at Christ saying to us, you have heard it said, but I say unto you.

[5 : 46] And then even last week, a fourth step. The worship we bring must be heart motivated, purely given if it is to be rewarded at all.

And today we arrive at a fifth step still. It feels to me like a step which turns into a landing. It's going to be broad enough and wide enough to require the next two weeks of expounding.

It's a step in the midst of his sermon where he begins to unfold, both in this text and what we will do next week, the walk that will be required.

It will almost be a landing of being able to assess how are we progressing. And this week we'll see you can measure your progress or take evaluation of your walk based upon your wants.

next week, chapter 7, verse 1, your words. Let me settle into the landing.

[7 : 09] Chapter 6, verse 19 to the end of the chapter, where you are storing things. Next week, how you are speaking things.

This week, what are you seeking? Next week, what are you saying? And what the Lord would have us learn is that there is a reordering that's required for our walk toward heaven.

If heart worship alone is rewarded by God, then a reordering of our heart collectively as a church family is required.

And you reorder our collective heart by looking at your wants or your desires. Let me just enter into the fray today.

Jesus' instruction, do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal.

[8 : 23] It's a reordering of our wants. He would have us walk to heaven together, encouraging and strengthening one another to not be living for here, but for there.

And the practical reasons are put forward. I mean, I don't have to tell you how the self-storage industry is doing in our country. It's a \$38 billion business annually at minimum.

One in every 11 of us is paying at least \$91 a month to store our stuff somewhere. And for many of us, there are good and profitable reasons.

You may be moving from one place to another or maybe having closed down a parent's home and knowing what you need to do. But when you take the whole of it, we are storing enough stuff in this country to fill the Hoover Dam over 26 times.

The practical matters here for Jesus, though, go way beyond the accumulation of things. It goes to the depth of what the heart is really trying to do and secure.

[9 : 47] And he says, you don't want to do that, Christ Church Chicago, because everything here gets consumed anyway. That's the word on moth and rust.

Go ahead and buy that \$150 wool sweater to make you look good when you finally got the weight you want. Pull it out four months later, and there it is, a hole, which makes it worthy of nothing but being a rag.

Things get consumed anyway, he says. In other words, it wears out. Or worse, it's going to be ruined. It's going to have to be replaced.

And he goes on, if that's not enough for you, things here not only get consumed anyway, things here get stolen along the way. Tell me. Anyone had anything stolen?

I talked to a member in our church this week. Somebody lifted his bike in some manner. Cars are stolen. Bikes are stolen.

[11 : 02] Livelihoods are stolen. So what Jesus is saying is, if you're going to be on the landing to evaluate how you're doing, there's got to be a reordering of your wants, as he would say, in contrast to where things are consumed and where things are stolen, why not put them where they endure and they're always secure?

That's what he says. When you do it in heaven, it endures. Whatever's there is never going to wear out. Even this old body.

Whatever clothes I have, I won't need any others. And it will be secure. Nobody will ever be able to get the deposits you lay up there and utilize them through an identity of your theft and put them somewhere.

And he says, that's the reordering of wants. And what he really says is, you'll know it by way of contrast.

Look how he illustrates it. If that's his instruction, he reaches to the eye as a lamp by way of illustration. The eye is the lamp of the body.

[12 : 23] If the eye's healthy, your body's full of light. But if your eye's bad, your whole body's full of darkness. Just look to the things that your eye wants and it will be a reflection of what your heart feels it needs.

And if your heart is actually needing all the things that are here, then how dark is the darkness? And then he hammers it home, doesn't he, in verse 24, with this proverbial-like interpretation.

It's almost like, let me give you something you can go home with. Let me give you a coin you can put in your pocket. Let me give you something that will be so memorable that you'll take the instruction that I gave you and the illustration on the eye and this is what you'll walk away with. No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and money. And that's his word about the walk that is required of us.

The application is fascinating. I encourage you, given the sake of time this morning, to look at the therefore of verse 25 as the implication of the instruction.

[13 : 45] And I find the application interesting. If the diagnosis is our heart must be right for the walk that's required, we should not be bringing everything along with us here that we're not going to take with us there.

Therefore, I would expect him to give you a list. Therefore, buy this kind of car. Therefore, shop at these kind of stores.

Therefore, make sure that your external things don't exceed this amount of money. No, he doesn't do that. He penetrates right to the very heart and to the root of what caused you to go do all those things anyway.

He says, therefore, therefore, do not be anxious. He says it again in verse 30 or 28.

Why are you anxious? Verse 27, which of you by being anxious? Verse 31, therefore, do not be anxious.

[14 : 52] Verse 34, therefore, do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself sufficient, for the day is its own trouble. One preacher said, anxiety does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows.

It only empties today of its strength. Don't be anxious, he says. There's a lot of reason to be anxious.

Yes. If you're going to make the walk that's required toward heaven, it's going to mean an utter dependence on a heavenly father to get you through.

But there's reasons, church family, that Jesus would tell us not to be anxious as we walk with one another. Just as there were reasons we shouldn't be storing everything up here.

The reasons are clear. In one sense, he wants you to know that it's useless to be worried about all the things here because you can't do much about most of it anyway.

[16 : 16] And haven't we learned that over these months? Which of you, by being anxious, can add even one day to the length of your life?

The Christian church ought to be a church that walks with confidence in the midst of COVID.

Shoulders erect, facing the future with a sense of peace, comfort, knowledge, awareness.

I cannot add a day through my anxiety. And so it's not profitable for me to be anxious. Not only is it useless to be anxious, Jesus actually says it's unbecoming of you to be anxious.

He says, look at the, look at the birds. Look at the lilies. And then he has that little phrase there, oh you of little faith.

What he's really saying is it's unbecoming of the Christian to live in anxiety and to seek things that are here given what you know of him as your father.

[17 : 35] Charles Spurgeon, 19th century preacher put it this way, to think that the Lord who clothes the lilies will leave his own children naked is shameful.

Oh little faith, he says, learn better manners. That's, that's his take. Learn better manners. You have a father in heaven.

And he's going to take care of you. And he's going to take care of your children beyond you. Should I pass before the day is done?

My five children, six grandchildren, my wife, they are secure as though I were here.

for they have a heavenly father who hears and who provides. This is the wonderful truth of our passage.

[18 : 42] The work that is required of us is a work that will challenge our wants.

the Lord Jesus Christ would have this church reorder its heart to make that journey together.

On this week of Thanksgiving, when we have heard these words from our congregants, should we have any doubt that the Lord knows how to take care of his own.

Our Heavenly Father, we have joined in this space to lift our voices to you in gratitude. Make us the most cheerful of people.

The most generous of Christians. the most gracious, the most confident, the most content, anything less is unworthy of your unmatched glory who will give us all these things if we would but first seek your kingdom.

[20 : 18] in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.