

# Do you see lasting treasure and a good Father?

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[ 0 : 01 ] Matthew 6, 19. Do not lay up for yourselves 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 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? Look at the birds of the air. They neither sow nor reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them.

[ 1 : 15 ] 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 his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

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?

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

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.

[ 2 : 14 ] Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Amen. Well, good morning, everyone.

It's great to see Esther. You're here somewhere. Hi, Esther. Hi, Esther. There you are. Great to see you again. Why don't we pray as we come to God's word?

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, I pray that you would help us see yourself and the world we live in more and more in terms of what's actually true.

Help us to discern the lies of our world that we live in. So I pray that you would open our eyes just that bit more today through your word.

In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Well, if you get a pay rise or a bonus or you earn a significant profit on an investment or you receive a large inheritance or you somehow win the lottery even though you didn't buy a ticket, did you?

[ 3 : 45 ] Would you see that windfall of getting money as only a good thing? It's good.

Do you struggle with greed? Or is that only a problem for people who have more than you?

If we assume that coming into money is only a good thing, I'm not sure how you answered that question in your mind, but if you're like me and we kind of assume that coming into money is only a good thing and we ourselves don't have a problem with money except that we would like a little bit more of it, something's not adding up.

Excuse the pun. Don't excuse it because I said it on purpose, but because Jesus taught on money, Jesus taught on money more than sex, heaven and hell combined.

Why? Like he doesn't need it. He owns heaven and earth. What else does scripture say about you cannot serve God and your boss?

[ 5 : 15 ] You can't serve God and money. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a doubting man to enter, a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

The love of is the root of all kinds of evil. Some have wandered away from the faith. Judas preferring 30 pieces of silver and eternal shame rather than eternal life with Jesus. It's a big topic in scripture. Big. Today we're starting a four week series on money. Let me just tell you where we're headed.

So we're obviously in Matthew 6 today and we're going to see how we're set free from worry. Isn't that good news? Set free from worry.

[ 6 : 28 ] Next week we're going to look at 1 Timothy 6 and we need to take the warnings of why the false promises of money really are the root of all kinds of evils.

Not all evils but all kinds of evils. Then we're going to go to 2 Corinthians 8 and 9 and we're going to see how freedom in Jesus looks like cheerful generosity even when we're in hardship ourselves.

And I'm aware that I'm probably pretty comfortable whereas some people listening may be choosing to skip some meals to pay rent.

I'm not in that situation. but in 2 Corinthians 8 the people we see there there's something strangely cheerful about them even in their hardship.

And then we're going to go to Luke 16 and one of the strangest of Jesus' parables of the dishonest manager but we're going to see we're called to reckless stewardship.

[ 7 : 35 ] So that's where we're headed in the series but I'm going to be honest with you I don't enjoy this topic as much as I did last week speaking on Abraham and the unconditional promises of salvation.

there's something about this series I just don't enjoy it as much as topics like that. So why are we doing this series?

Obviously I'm involved in the decision making. We've chosen this series as elders. Why? And why now? Well what's prompted it is over many many months sustained falling short of budget.

we're trying to analyse why and we realise we haven't taught on money for a very long time and that's strange given how I've started this sermon when scripture speaks on money so much.

It's a really important area of discipleship. Now why now? Well we're facing some pretty big decisions coming up as a congregation because if we're looking to add more staff and we're not meeting budget we're going to have to make a call there what we're going to do.

[ 9 : 00 ] Our facilities we're currently really just kicking the maintenance down the road for future generations. We're going to have to make some hard calls soon.

and why now? It's July and every year we raise for our mission partners in August so this is a great time to think about this topic.

That's what's prompted this series. But look whatever regardless of the elders motives regardless of how pure our motives are you can be sure of God's goal in this series.

remember Jesus he praises the woman who gives two small copper coins saying she gave more than all the others who gave in their surplus.

He cares about our heart. This series is about our heart. As we go through this series I'd like us to have a really broad definition of generosity.

[ 10 : 14 ] Yes that includes donations. It includes giving to missionaries as a church. But it might also include supporting that compassion child, giving to Fred Hollows, cancer council, I don't know.

There's so many ways we can relieve suffering in the world. God's God's food. It's that spontaneous eating a meal with a homeless person on the street.

It's the cost of making a meal for someone in the church. That costs money. It costs money to drive it to them. It costs your time. Giving people lifts to appointments to church, the cost of hospitality, people in your home, they're using your electricity.

Do you charge them when they leave? No. Generosity is huge. Choosing to forego shifts at work so that you can give your time to whatever God is calling you to.

Providing for your family's needs, aging parents, whatever. I just have a broad view of generosity as we go through this series. Well, in the Christmas holidays, before we decided to do this series, I read this book for myself, for my own heart and mind, Beyond Greed.

[ 11 : 53 ] The author actually didn't even like the title. The publishers made him change it. He wanted to say how to get really rich. for some reason they wouldn't let him call it that. Now, I was at another Christian family's home and I was reading their bookshelf.

I'm like, what am I going to read in this holiday period? What my thoughts were fixated on was whether we needed to buy a new car as a family because I was getting all these notifications on my

phone of all these car crashes in the holidays.

That was terrifying me. Is that right, English? I think it is. I was afraid. I was researching, like, our car is 10 years old, has safety features changed?

And so as I went through all the titles on their bookshelf, I thought, well, I want to know if my motives are pure as I'm weighing up this decision. Not that my motives are ever pure, but anyway. So that's why I read it. And let me, here's one thing Brian Rosner says. Imagine the response of disbelief in the local church.

[13:06] If it were revealed that the vast majority of its members were secretly worshipping other gods. money is right, the unthinkable may not be so far from the truth.

The section in this book that loosened my grip on just the need to upgrade our car, to actually just look at the objective facts for their own merits.

The truth that this book really helped me in that holiday period was the obvious. I was fearing for my family's safety. I was afraid for my family's tomorrow.

I wanted security. But who do I put my confidence in for my family's tomorrow? Because if I trust in what money can buy for my family's security, it's idolatry.

It's an attack on God's exclusive rights to our trust and our confidence as our creator and our sustainer.

[14:37] Here in Matthew 6, we're shown where true security is found. Where we can sleep easy at night.

So let's get into Matthew 6. Like the rest of the Sermon on the Mount, that's where we are. We're in the Sermon on the Mount. And like the rest of the sermon, this area of discipleship, it exposes our attitudes and how desperately we need Jesus to change us.

He's already made the staggering promise at the start of the sermon. Blessed are the meek. Not the economically strong.

Blessed are the meek, the gentle, the servant-hearted. For they shall inherit the earth. Like if you believe that, if you believe you're inheriting the earth one day, you believe you're filthy rich.

So, church, let's start thinking about raising money in August for our mission partners. Let's start putting aside what can we give to support our mission partners.

[16:10] I suspect, given the crunch of the cost of living, if we get anywhere near previous totals, that's going to be a greater display of giving this year.

Now, as I issue that challenge, let's start thinking about that. What comes into your mind? What comes into my mind is, what will my family live on next month?

I'm saving for, this isn't me, this might be you, I'm saving for a house deposit. That's taking money out of retirement savings.

I don't have income coming in. Even though we want to support our missionaries, we care about that.

Worry and anxiety can have a vice-like grip on us. Because the worries of tomorrow fill our mind. If you think Jesus' main message here is give more money, give more away, you've missed it.

[17:22] It's not what he's saying. Jesus wants to transform how we look at the world. Can I repeat that? He is not saying give more away.

He's aiming for something much deeper. He wants us to change how we see the world. We see that in verses 19 to 24, if you've got your Bibles open.

He presents a mutually exclusive choice. Here's our choice. You can either have treasure on earth or in heaven. Your eyes will be filled with darkness or light.

You'll be devoted to money or God. He sets these mutually exclusive choices. choice. Quite frankly, I suspect we think we can mix those.

I suspect we think we're quite good at balancing these two things. He's saying you can't. You can't serve both.

[18:30] It's like you're trying to, your operating system is both Android and Apple. You can't. It can't be both.

Now what is this mutually exclusive choice he's presenting? What does laying up treasures in heaven mean? Like, don't you find that a bit abstract?

What is that? Laying up treasures. Like, I know what a new car looks like. What is that? What are you offering? What are you saying?

And then he's got this picture of the eyes, the lamp of the body. What's that doing there? What's it saying? Should we just skip that because it's too hard? What is this choice?

I could spend a bunch of words trying to explain this choice. I'm going to choose to tell, try and illustrate it.

[ 19 : 35 ] Tim grew up in Newcastle. He went to Meriwether High. And soon after finishing high school, he started his own business, a security software.

software. And it was going pretty well. And he met Lucy at church. They've got two young children. And at first, Lucy loved the fact that Tim's software business was going gangbusters.

Like, they could purchase their house outright. She loved it. At first. Because then she grew very tired of how much time Tim was spending on his business.

He was burning the candle at both ends. He was getting to church every other week and every other day, they ate dinner. The family ate dinner without Tim with them.

Now, at 38, Tim had pain in his chest, went to ED. Cardiologist warns him, you've got to slow down.

[ 20 : 37 ] And he did. For a little while. But then he had this opportunity to expand his business overseas. And Lucy, he's just telling Lucy, look, six more months.

We'll expand the business. We'll have the rest of our lives to slow down. More time with the kids. And then, again, Lucy goes to bed on her own and Tim is downstairs in the office.

She got up and Tim's not next to her. She went downstairs and finds Tim cold lying on the floor. Where your treasure is, there your heart is also.

A major promise of money is safety for your future. Tim's that you can control your uncontrollable world. You can pay for health care.

You can give your kids the best childhood. You can put away for a rainy day. But Tim wasn't in control. This false promise had made him sacrifice his family, his health, his life on the altar of always needing more.

[ 22 : 04 ] His eyes were focused on what money could provide for his future. That's what his eyes were locked onto. Even when Lucy's begging him, even though a cardiologist is telling him, you've got to sleep.

His eyes are focused on that. Where you set your eyes is a moral choice. Your eyes, they indicate your attention, right?

After church, when you're talking to someone, you're having a conversation and their eyes are just wandering off. How do you feel? Not valued. Because they indicate where your attention is, your goal.

It's a moral choice where you set your eyes. eyes. The word healthy in the Greek has a double meaning.

If your eyes are healthy, the double meaning is if they're singular, if they're focused on one goal and they're generous towards that. If someone is just, you're in a conversation and their eyes are locked on you, not in a creepy way, but in a very active, I'm listening to you, I'm generously giving all of myself to you.

[ 23 : 24 ] That's the meaning here. It's singular focus. Jesus is saying, if your eye has a singular focus on heavenly treasure, you're letting light in.

You're seeing where you're going. If not, he's warning us, you're blind. You don't know where you're going.

There's a cartoon where an elderly man is on his deathbed and he's holding his elderly wife's hand and he's staring in her eyes and the caption reads, I wish I accumulated more stuff.

And no one ever says that. No one gets to the end of their life and says that. Which is why whoever made that cartoon made it.

And yet how many of us live with that goal? It's darkness. It's not seeing life and reality for what it is.

[ 24 : 42 ] The false promise of money has the power to waste our entire lives. Jesus is saying we have a mutually exclusive choice.

Will you put your confidence in money for your security for tomorrow? If you do, it will fill you with worry. Worry that you can't provide three meals on the table.

Worry you can't break into the housing market. Worry that you can't afford mortgage repayments.

Worry that you won't have enough for retirement. There will never be enough.

And that's why, look how much time Jesus spends on setting us free from that. Verses 25 to 34. He understands us. He knows where we live.

He sets us free from the false promise of security that money can give us. It just can't. It can't give us security for tomorrow.

[ 25 : 51 ] Now he sets us free not by laying down a law going, be more generous. He sets us free by going, look, look, fill your eyes with light.

Look where your real security is. Look who's really in control.

Is not life more than food? And the body more than clothing? Like if we buy into our consumerism culture, it actually shrinks our view of what makes life precious.

It shrinks our souls when we're made to be captivated by greater things. We're going to share a meal after church and I'm sure you brought wonderful things to share but quite frankly it's a pretty simple meal.

But isn't the meal much more than the food? To share it as the people of God in peace and fellowship with God and one another, the community, the worshipping community, doesn't that fill your soul?

[ 27 : 10 ] Jesus, if you focus on earthly treasure, it actually shrinks our idea of what's precious in life. And then verse 26, a fat magpie gets another worm from your garden and what does it do?

It says to itself, what shall I do? I know I'll tear down my nest and I'll build a bigger nest to store all these worms for tomorrow. No, it gobbles it down. In the next morning, our heavenly father gives it another one to feed its young.

Jesus sees this world, he's just taking for granted that our father is involved, even with birds and a worm. This world is not just material ingredients.

It's not this closed environment where God is far off. Our creator is in complete control. He is intimately involved, even insignificant details like birds will never see.

Child of God, aren't you much more valuable than a magpie in your father's eyes? You are, if you are.

[ 28 : 43 ] And the glory that fashion claims to clothe us with, it can't even compare to flowers, the beauty of flowers, the same flowers that God sovereignly gives to those flowers that we put in the green bin when they're done.

Child of God, don't you know that you are eternal? The day before a wedding I conducted, my dry cleaners lost my suit.

And the worry that flooded me, it just consumed my attention the rest of that afternoon and evening when I should have been focused on the ceremony and going over the sermon again.

I could have trusted as I walked into my house and saw the gardens, my front garden, I could have seen those flowers and just trusted God will, he knows I need a suit.

He knows I can't turn up in board shorts. I could have accepted the fact that I already had one. It just didn't fit me quite as well. But instead, I spent hours worrying about it.

[ 30 : 10 ] Oh, you of little faith. My worry is acting like someone who doesn't believe in God, as if he's not sovereign, as if he's not involved, as if he's not good, as if he's not my heavenly father.

Jesus understands how powerful this worry for tomorrow is.

If you look at verse 34, he personifies tomorrow. Tomorrow will be anxious for itself. I've always been troubled, not troubled, but confused what that means.

But someone helped me this week. It's saying tomorrow doesn't want to be relieved. It wants to keep worrying. It is this powerful force that wants you to keep focusing on tomorrow.

You can throw reason after reason at it. It doesn't want to be relieved. It's powerful. He knows where we live. He knows, he's lived in this fallen and cursed world.

[ 31 : 34 ] Like, each day has enough trouble of its own. We shouldn't expect ease and comfort. Not yet. It's coming. Just not yet. But how do you face those troubles?

You've got the option of, I'm just going to think about all the possibilities of tomorrow and it will crush me. Some possibilities are kind of real.

Others we just, our imagination creates these worries and it crushes me. And I look to money to secure, to meet those needs for tomorrow and I never have enough.

Or I can just look at reality and see everything around me that God is involved, he's sovereign, he's good, he's my father.

He's going to give me all I need for today. Where's my security for tomorrow? I know he will be there tomorrow. He will be just as involved tomorrow.

[ 32 : 47 ] He'll be just as sovereign tomorrow. He'll be just as good. He'll still be my father tomorrow. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. We've got to think that way. Every morning.

I'm relying on my father today. I'll wake up tomorrow and I'll ask him for help again. Great is your faithfulness.

The Lord is my portion, says my soul. Therefore, I will hope in him. Jesus died for our idolatry. Remember what idolatry is. It's something good and putting our faith in a created thing. Rather than in our creator.

[ 33 : 59 ] He died to set us free from the fear of tomorrow. What a gift that is. He died so that we can know the father is working all his heavenly control.

Having us in his heart. And he rose again to make our future big and sure.

And our present struggles small. Transient. He says we will inherit the earth. Wow. I like John Piper's quote.

Knowing all that God promises to be for us in Christ. Both now and for endless ages to come. With ever increasing joy. Frees us from the compulsion that we must avoid pain.

And maximize comfort in this world. It frees us from that. He died to let us.

[ 35 : 12 ] To enable us. To lay up treasures for ourselves. I love the little detail that. Don't lay up treasure for yourselves on earth. Lay up treasure for yourselves.

In heaven. He wants us to be greedy for things that last. Now I think this whole passage only makes sense if you're seeking this heavenly treasure.

It only makes sense. If you think God is promising here to maintain your idea of a comfortable lifestyle. It just. Our experience knows.

That's not true. It only makes sense. I shudder at the thought of false teachers. Who manipulate people. And give false promises.

That if you give to God. He will give you lots of money now. Like. And they're filling their own pockets. They're using God.

[ 36 : 22 ] To get money from people. I don't want to be them. On the last day. So what does it mean?

That's not what it means to lay up treasures in heaven. What does it mean? I think that's answered by verse 33. Seek first.

Set your eyes on the kingdom of God and his righteousness. If that's the treasure you love.

He says your eyes will be filled with light. We will see our father is involved and provide all we need.

Set your eyes on heavenly treasure. Get rich on what lasts.

God will take care of what you need. I want to give an example of what this looks like. My desire for the gospel to go out to the ends of the earth.

[ 37 : 30 ] It's in me now because of the gospel. Because I love the fact Jesus died and he's worthy to be known. Isn't he? That desire is there now. But to be honest it's weak.

It's not as... It's not as... That desire in me is not as strong as it should be. And it's very inconsistent. Here's what I found.

When I give to missionaries I care about. And I care about the mission field that they're working towards. That monetary investment. It makes me start caring about those missionaries.

When they send a newsletter. I'm invested now. I actually want to read it. And it motivates me then to pray for them.

In other words, it was the act of giving money that is now motivating me to learn to care about the mission field as God cares about it.

[ 38 : 35 ] God's heart for mission. I'm starting bit by bit to share his heart. But it's more than that.

And my soul gets satisfied in a very strange way. Because my concerns don't decrease. They get bigger. I'm now involved in something that's way bigger than my own little world.

And I'm increasingly aware that the missionaries are actually dependent on God. And the more I'm learning that, the more that feeds my soul in depending on God in my life.

I get more lasting treasure though. Because I get stronger friendships with these missionaries. I get stronger friendships across the church.

And then I get more treasure. Because I know that God, with the very funds he gave me in the first place, he uses those to get the reward of people.

[ 39 : 47 ] Everlasting people who are going to stand before that throne on the last day and they're going to join that chorus who are singing the praises of God's grace.

And God used me. In a very small way, he used me. With the funds he gave me in the first place. Treasure after treasure.

Now and when Jesus comes back. You can set your eyes on that. Or you could spend that same money buying a little bit bigger TV, a little bit clearer TV, that will distract you from the worries of tomorrow.

Which treasure do you want? Will you pray with me? Let's pray. Father, thank you for knowing us. That you see the fear that grips us. And thank you that you don't just come down heavy on our fear, but you come and meet us and are sufficient for our fear through Jesus.

[ 41 : 26 ] Knowing now that you are involved and sovereign and good father. Lord, I pray as a church that you would help us to increasingly see you that way and see our world that way.

Lord, I pray this so that you would set us free to invest in things that are going to last.

Lord, forgive us for the times we have wasted. Forgive us more than that for the confidence we place in what we can amass for ourselves.

Thank you for your forgiveness. Lord, I pray that you would help us see you as our involved father more. In Jesus' name.

Amen.