

Do Not Store Up Earthly Treasure (6:19-21)

^{6:19} “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ^{6:20} But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; ^{6:21} for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Treasures on Earth

- Compare 6:19 to 6:2,5,16.
- James 5:2-3 seems to be based on Jesus’ teaching here.

Treasures in Heaven

- Compare 6:20 to 6:1,4,6,18.
- “*Treasures in heaven*,” for a people still living on earth, speaks to an ethic of how we live on earth and the ultimate purpose and goal of our existence. If our lives are limited to this existence on earth for a few decades alone, then our ethic will prioritize earthly abundance and our hope will be in acquiring and enjoying as much as possible while here. If our lives are unending and the goal is heaven in eternal blissful fellowship with the Triune God, then our lives will be focused on spiritual values (“*treasures*”) and we will live in joy for eternal hope, not in momentary happiness built on earthly circumstances.
- Notice that Jesus doesn’t specifically tell us how to “*store up...treasures in heaven*.” However, from the rest of the “Sermon on the Mount,” we can make some basic conclusions:

The Sermon on the Mount is for Jesus’ “disciples” (5:1-2). These are not steps on how to be saved and go to heaven.

- Those who live kingdom character are promised to receive “*the kingdom of heaven*” in 5:3,10-12.
- “...*whoever keep and teaches*” the “*commandments*” of the “*Law*” of God will be “*called great in the kingdom of heaven*” (5:17-20). Along with this is doing “*the will of [our] Father Who is in heaven*” (7:21).

- This list describes a believer’s heaven-focused life; it is the fruit of saving faith in Jesus alone!
- Those who love and pray for their enemies p (5:44-45). Along with this is freely forgiving others (6:14-15).
 - Those who pursue spiritual disciplines (giving to the poor, praying, fasting) to draw closer to the Father (6:1,3-4,6,17-18). Praying occurs both in 6:6,9-13 and 7:7-11.
 - Finally, those whose focus on heaven is not outward, but inward (compare 6:21 and 6:33). The inward will show in the outward life.¹

Right View of Earthly Treasure (6:22-23)

^{6:22} “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. ^{6:23} 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!”

- Compare Genesis 3:6 to 1 John 2:16. See also Proverbs 27:20; Ecclesiastes 1:8.
- The condition of a person’s inward life will determine how they evaluate the world around them:
 - If the interior is “spiritual light,” or the heart is focused on heavenly “*treasure*,” the things of this world are seen in how they can help others to the glory of God.
 - If the interior is “spiritual darkness,” and the heart is set on earthly “*treasures*,” then the things of this earth are coveted and desired selfishly. The “evil,” “bad,” or “dark” eye is one that is ungriving to a fellow believer (Deuteronomy 15:9; Proverbs 28:22).
- “...*clear*” (6:22) is variously translated “healthy” (CSB, ESV, NIV, NLT), “single” (KJV), and “good” (NKJV). Another

¹ Jesus repeatedly teaches on the “*heart*,” or the inward life and how it affects our outward behavior (5:28; 12:34-35; 13:15; 15:8,18-19; 18:35; 22:37). We are to be “pure in heart” (5:8).

possibility is “generous.”² “Generous” is the best way of understanding this idea, since “*treasure in heaven*” is connected with selling property to support the poor in Matthew 19:21 (see parallels in Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33; 18:22).³

John
8:12

- “*Light*,” in the Gospel of Matthew, originates with Jesus and His preaching of repentance and the Kingdom of heaven (4:12-17). When our lives are committed to that foundation, we are light (5:14) and do all that we do for that purpose (5:16).

Earthly Treasure Is Not a Disciple’s Lord (6:24)

^{6:24} “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 [μαμωνᾶ, from μαμωνᾶς, “Mammon”].”

- Compare with Paul in Romans 6:16.
- God deserves and demands absolute allegiance with no challengers. “*Hate*” and “*love*,” as used here, do not describe emotions as much as faithfulness, allegiance, and service (this should help us understand Matthew 10:37//Luke 14:26).

1 Tim.
6:6-10,
17-19

Do Not Worry Over Earthly Treasure (6:25-34)

^{6:25} “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? ^{6:26} Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds

² “*Clear*” is the adjective ἀπλοῦς; the noun form, ἀπλότης, is translated “generosity” (Romans 12:8; 2 Corinthians 8:2; 9:11,13). The Easy-to-Read Version (© 2006, Bible League International) helpfully renders it this way: “If you look at people and want to help them, you will be full of light.”

³ “...is your eye envious because I am generous?” (20:15). The “bad” or “evil” eye is greedy and resents generosity.

them. Are you not worth much more than they? ^{6:27} And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life? ^{6:28} And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, ^{6:29} yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these. ^{6:30} But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith! ^{6:31} Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ ^{6:32} For the Gentiles [τὰ ἔθνη, from ἔθνος, “nations”] eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ^{6:33} But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. ^{6:34} So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

- Jesus’ examples of clothing, food, and drink tell us that the idolatrous threat of “*wealth*” is not limited to wealthy people.⁴
- Jesus no doubt assumes His disciples are seeking “*daily bread*” from the Father in prayer, as He instructed (6:11). This spiritual discipline of daily requesting provision from the Father (along with thanking Him for it) is an antidote to worry over provision. However, it must be a constant part of a disciple’s life for it to be effective. READ Philippians 4:4-13.
- **Seeking the Kingdom starts with seeking the King.**

⁴ “No matter what one’s economic state, anxiety is near to hand. The natural human tendency to worry about money is shared by rich and poor alike. This is a sure indicator that money in itself cannot cast out anxiety. Thus in order to escape fretfulness one must look elsewhere; and according to Mt 6.25-34, the elsewhere is upwards – towards the heavenly Father. It is faith that has the power to exorcize anxiety. And just as one must serve either God or mammon, so must one either be sustained by anxiety or by faith.” W.D. Davies and Dale C. Allison, Jr., *The Gospel According to Saint Matthew* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1988), pg. 647.