

Who Are You Serving—God or Money?

Matthew 6:22-24; Joshua 24:15

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Many who profess Christ seem to act as though being a Christian is a part-time job; and God is a part-time employer who they serve for an hour or so on Sunday.

There is nothing more destructive to the soul than thinking Jesus only wants a part of your life—you give Him the religious part of your life, and you can control the rest of your life (your marriage, your children, your job, your bank account, your friends, your entertainment, etc.). Dear ones, Jesus wants us to know from our text today that if He is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. Don't call Him Lord if you do not do what He commands or even desire to do what He commands (Luke 6:46). You cannot serve two masters Jesus says. Don't pretend that you can do so. As Joshua said to Israel, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15).

We began this portion of the Sermon on the Mount last Lord's Day by considering Two Kinds of Treasure (Matthew 6:19-21). Today we continue by considering Two Kinds of Eyesight (Matthew 6:22-23) and Two Kinds of Master (Matthew 6:24). Let us consider the following questions as our main points: (1) Is Your Eyesight Good or Bad (Matthew 6:22-23)? (2) Who Are You Serving—God or Money (Matthew 6:24)?

I. Is Your Eyesight Good or Bad (Matthew 6:22-23)?

A. In our text today, the subject of hypocrisy is still very much on the mind of the Lord Jesus.

1. Jesus had identified the Pharisees as hypocrites because they acted out their religious duties in order to be seen by man (in caring for the poor, praying, or fasting, Matthew 6:1-18). Dear ones, we are not hypocrites when we delight in our religious duties because we know God is pleased with them (even if no one else in this world sees and knows).

2. But there are other ways that Jesus identifies hypocrisy in those who claim to be believers.

a. They can claim that heavenly treasure is most important to them, but instead give their heart to laying up treasure on earth. That's hypocrisy.

b. They can say that a believer should see God's glory as their chief end, but when it comes to money rarely think of God's glory in the use of it. That's hypocrisy.

c. They can profess with their mouths that Jesus is Lord, but it is not Jesus and His Word that controls the decisions and choices they make about money; but instead it is the pride of life and the lust of the flesh that rule upon the throne of their lives. That's hypocrisy.

B. How is your eyesight (Matthew 6:22-23)? Is it the glory of God that you see and want to see above all else or is it the friendship, success, and riches of the world that you see and want to see?

1. The eyes are God's gift to enlighten our path before us that we may see where we are going and how to get there. Without sight we will walk in darkness unable to drive, shop, and work most jobs. Jesus uses eyesight as an illustration of what all true Christians should see before them as their chief end and how to get to that end. We should not walk blindly, not knowing where we are going or how to get there.

2. "If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light" Matthew 6:22. What is it to have an eye that is single? It is to have an eye that is healthy and focused in a singular way upon the glory of God in how he uses this world and its treasures. This Greek word in its various forms (translated here as "single") also means in other contexts "generous", "bountiful", or "liberal" in the way that one gives to advance Christ's kingdom (2 Corinthians 8:1-2; James 1:5; 2 Corinthians 9:11).

3. Jesus is addressing how we should see with a single (generous) eye our treasures in

using of them for the glory of God to care for the needy, to support the ministry of the church, and to advance Christ's kingdom (Proverbs 22:9). One with a single (generous) eye is a cheerful giver, not a begrudging giver (an evil eye).

4. Jesus then addresses one with an evil eye (Matthew 6:23). What is an evil eye? If the single eye is one who is generous, then the evil eye is one who is greedy, stingy, or gives grudgingly or for selfish reasons to gain favor in some way (rather than for the glory of God): Deuteronomy 15:9; Proverbs 23:6-7; Matthew 20:15.

5. Those who do not generously and cheerfully give to advance Christ's kingdom out of what God has given to them (are not single eyed, but have an "evil eye" according to Jesus). They are not walking in the light of God's Word (in seeking the glory of God), but are walking in darkness (seeking their own glory). And if that light of God's Word that we profess to have is ignored or rejected, how great is our darkness; for we profess to have the light of God's Word, but are choosing to walk in darkness by having an evil eye (Matthew 6:23).

6. Let us each one examine our own vision. Do we clearly and generously see the glory of God in the way we use our treasures? Or do we darkly and begrudgingly see our own glory in the way we use our treasures?

II. Who Are You Serving—Christ or Money (Matthew 6:24)?

A. The Lord Jesus has saved the most striking illustration for last.

1. To lay up treasure upon earth rather than in heaven, and to see darkly and begrudgingly in the use of our treasures rather than clearly and generously ultimately comes down to who is our Lord and Master—Jesus or Money? For if we answer that Jesus is our Lord and Master, then the issue is settled that we will lay up treasure in heaven and not merely upon earth. And if Jesus is our Lord and Master, the matter is settled that we will see clearly and generously in giving of our treasures, time, and talents to advance His kingdom to the glory of Christ. But if the world and its financial security are our lord and master, we will be chiefly concerned about laying up treasure upon earth, and we will only see darkly and begrudgingly and our eyes will be stingy in seeing the needs of brethren and in supporting the ministry of the church.

2. Let me be clear that in advancing the kingdom of Christ, our **treasure** will also include our **time and talents** that are employed in caring for the needy and in advancing Christ's kingdom (your time and talents may be employed in fixing a car, or in your labor to repair the a house of a brother, or in babysitting, or using your talent to set up a website, or to help with the Order of Worship that is sent out each week, or in posting sermons on Sermon Audio, or in cleaning and supplying the building where we worship, or in hosting church gatherings, opening your home up for hospitality, etc.). All of these are ways in which we may evidence who is Lord of our life: Jesus and His treasure or the world and its treasure.

B. The words of Jesus (Matthew 6:24) may not hit us the same way as it hit those at the time of Christ, for at that time the ownership of slaves as property was commonly practiced throughout the known world.

1. When we substitute the idea of an employer for a master, it miserably fails to communicate the idea Jesus intended. For today you can have more than one employer and more than one job at the same time. Today you can be employed part-time, and even full-time employment allows you to clock out and have your own time away from your employer and work. None of that was true for a slave at that time. The master owned the slave as property and not simply the slave's labor. The slave could only have one master at a time, and it was a 24 hr. a day job in which the slave was always at the beck and call of the master.

2. Those who heard Jesus use this illustration clearly understood what Jesus was saying. Jesus was/is saying, either God is your Master who owns you or mammon owns you (an Aramaic word for

earthly gain, wealth, money). We show who we love and hate by who we serve—Christ or money. You can't love both Jesus says. And you don't have to be Bill Gates to love and serve money as your master. Coveting it is to make it your master (covetousness is idolatry, Colossians 3:5).

3. How do you know who owns you? Who are you serving in the use of your treasures? God or yourself? You can't serve two masters, and to pretend that you can is to deny the sole ownership of Jesus over you (1 Corinthians 6:20). All that we have as creatures is God's by way of creation and providence. But all that we have as Christians is also God's by way of redemption through the sacrifice of Christ in purchasing us to Himself.

4. Listen closely. We are not giving to the needy or to the church what is ours, but what is His. It is not mine, but His (1 Chronicles 29:14,16). If we think that we are giving of what is ours, it will hurt and be painful, but if we think that we are giving of what is His, it will be a joy and delight.

5. Dear ones, Jesus does not have any part-time servants. Even in the use of our money here upon earth, we are His full-time servants—we are simply His financial managers using what He has entrusted to us for His glory. How often do we spend time praying that we will use His money for His glory in advancing His kingdom and in laying up treasure in heaven? Of course, that includes being responsible in providing for the needs of our family (both now and in the future). But even in doing that do we understand that it is His money we are spending as a gracious gift given to us?

6. Let us not think for a moment that this is a bad or unfair arrangement to be owned by God—for Him to be our Lord. According to Jesus, someone or something is going to be our master—God or mammon. Money is a useful servant in advancing Christ's kingdom, but money is a cruel master who will take everything out of you (sleep, peace, contentment, joy, and life).

7. We have a most blessed and gracious Lord who only and always does what He does for our good and profit. He protects us, provides for us, and delivers us from the guilt, punishment, and bondage to sin. No servants ever were treated better or with such love, kindness, and compassion by a Master. No slaves were ever redeemed from destruction as you have been redeemed by your Lord. In fact, you have a dual relationship to God—slaves as to your duty and heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ as to your privileges. Let us never speak against our servitude to Jesus. Jesus did not become my Savior so that I could become my own lord or so that someone else could become my Lord (minister, president, employer, or father). He became my Savior so that I might freely, willingly, and lovingly serve Him with all my heart.

8. Never forget that because you are the servants of God, and He alone is Lord of the conscience, you must not submit your conscience to any commandment of man that claims equality to or superiority to our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 7:23). To bow the knee to the family, church, or state in commandments that are contrary to God's commandments is to acknowledge that there is a lordship higher than God's lordship. To do so is to worship the creature rather than the Creator or to serve more than one God (Exodus 20:1-3; Acts 5:29). When we suffer for Christ, for His truth, and for His righteousness against those who claim a higher authority than God, Jesus has already taught us in the Sermon on the Mount that we are to rejoice and be exceeding glad because our reward is great in heaven (Matthew 5:12). That is another way that we are laying up treasure in heaven.

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