

Saturday, March 30, 2024 • Read Matthew 6:19–24

Questions from the Scripture text: What must they not lay up where (v19)? What three things happen there? Where should they lay them up instead (v20)? What doesn't happen there? What will our treasure's location determine (v21)? What body part is this treasuring presented as in v22? How does the eye relate to the rest of the body? In what condition does the eye need to be? With what result? What effect will a bad eye have (v23)? On how much of yourself? What might you think you have in you? But what might it turn out to be instead? What effect does this self-deception on the level of your darkness? Who can slave for two masters (v24)? What two outcomes are suggested for if he tries? Which two potential masters, especially, can't we serve at the same time?

What difference does God's secret and open reward make? Matthew 6:19–24 prepares us for the morning sermon on the Lord's Day. In these six verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **if we learn, by grace, to treasure God in secret (and openly) both now and forever, it will transform our whole self, our whole life.**

To this point, Matthew 6 has been urging us to live for the reward of Him that sees in secret—in that place, the heart, that is still in secret, even when we are out in the open (e.g. v17–18). Now, the evangelist presses home to us the superiority of having God as our reward.

Earthly treasures can't last. In their culture, fine clothing was very costly indeed (cf. Ja 2:3), but the reality is that purple silk is a fine meal for a moth (v19). And NKJ's "rust" translates a word that refers to any sort of corroding or degradation as happens even with wood or stores of grain. What about things that don't corrode? Gold, gemstones, etc., are prime targets for thieves. And even if we happen to get our wealth all the way to the finish line, it immediately abandons us. It is sure that we brought nothing into this world and can take nothing out (cf. 1Tim 6:7). So, too, with other earthly treasure like the admiration of men (cf. v2, 5, 16). All earthly religion, all that is from man or for man, is earthly treasure.

Even worse, our treasure shapes our heart. This is one way that we can trace back from the symptoms of an earthly-obsessed heart to its origin in the disease of failing to treasure God Himself. Many who have accurate doctrine do not see all things from the lens of treasuring God. They do not value, above all other things for themselves, an increasing knowledge of God, increasing capacity to delight in Him, increasing actual delight in Him, increasing holiness that looks forward to the sinlessness of heaven... these are the treasures of heaven (v20). They are not just of a different quality, as if heavenly treasure is fabric that is immune to moths or metal that is immune to rust. Heavenly treasure is of a different kind altogether.

But many who think that they have this heavenly treasure have their heart filled not with these things but with what they can obtain, how they can advance themselves, how they can advance a set of political opinions, what they can accomplish in this world. Surely, a heavenly minded man may end up doing many of the same things. But we must be alarmed if our thoughts and desires and delights and conversations are not full of Him Himself. If our hearts are spiritually sick, we may be in need of a treasure transplant from God the Holy Spirit.

Proper treasure gives true light. What we treasure determines how we see anything and everything. It is the eye, which is the "lamp" of ourself. It is expertly placed in God's design for the self (*soma*/"body," NKJ v22) sitting on its stand (cf. 5:15) where the whole house (of the self) can be full of light. But failing to treasure God Himself is like a lamp without fuel, or with a bad wick, or a dark glass. It fills the life with darkness (v23). When the believer is "full of light," he himself radiates light in whatever place the Lord has put him (cf. 5:15). The only way to be of genuine earthly use is to be heavenly minded (cf. Col 3:1–4)!

The danger of self-deception in treasuring. In talking about the darkness of lacking a "God-entranced vision of all things," v23 warns us against a very serious danger. There are those who think they have light in them, but that light is actually darkness. You may have met someone (or be someone!) who is obsessed with accurate theology, or community service, or political action for biblical morality, or keeping particular parts of the moral law... any or all of whom may say much about a "biblical worldview." And a right view of each of these is part of a biblical worldview.

But a worldview cannot, ultimately, be "biblical," unless it has as its core, its light, God Himself: Him Himself and the sort of having of Him that we will have forever. Many who lack this view of Him, this love of Him, think that they have light. "If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!" Some who have a "biblical" worldview are in even greater darkness than the benighted pagans, due to self-deception in this area of what they treasure.

The reality of being mastered by what we treasure. Finally, the evangelist turns to our treasure as a master. We know this by the end of v24, where he uses the word "mammon." Originally meaning that in which one put his confidence, by the time of the New Testament, it especially referred to riches (since that is what most men have their confidence in). A common English idiom helpfully brings these ideas together in a way that helps us understand the word: "what we put our stock in."

The Bible repeatedly warns us about wealth in this regard. Loving money always means hating God, v24b (cf. 1Tim 6:9–10; Ja 4:3–4; 1Jn 2:15–17). And it repeatedly urges us to consider earthly wealth of infinitesimal value compared to God Himself and the godliness that we have in Him and with Him. Being loyal to God always means devaluing earthly wealth, v24c (cf. 1Tim 6:17–19; Ja 1:10, 4:5).

Happily, the Lord has given us wise, generous, blessed commands to worship Him. If we see worshiping Him as being granted to draw near to Him in Christ, to turn our attention from the creation to its Creator Himself, then we will be much helped. Such worship is a sort of "treasure training," an exercise in having the Creator Himself as our treasure above all created things. And as His Spirit gladdens and strengthens us in the knowledge of Him through Christ, God Himself trains our treasuring. May the Lord give you, morning by morning, evening by evening, Lord's Day by Lord's Day, to treasure Him Whom you have in secret—God, and all that is part of having Him as your reward, and with God as your reward in heaven, may He give you to live well on the earth

What are your thoughts and desires and goals and hopes full of? What gives you the most joy in life? What do you tend to obsess about? What does this all tell you about where your heart is and what your treasure is? What has God given to you for the training of your treasuring? How have you been using it? How do you intend to use it?

Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for giving Yourself for us, so that through Christ, we might know You has having given Yourself to us to be our Treasure now and forever. Grant that your Spirit would keep shaping our hearts this way, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP16A "Keep Me, O God" or TPH467 "Cast Down, O God the Idols"

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew chapter 6 verses 19–24. These are God's words. Do not light up, try 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. We're 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 lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore, your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your

eye is bad, your whole body will be full of Darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is Darkness.

How great is that? Darkness. No one can serve two masters. For either, he will hate the one and love the other. Or else he will be loyal to the one. And despise the other. You cannot serve God and So far the reading of God's inspired. And entered. Your children is very important for us that Whether in our family worship times, or in your secret worship times, That those be the times when you are doing, The great thing in your life.

The main thing in your life, the thing that all the other things serve. So that when you come out of your worship time into your work time, it is for the purpose of serving and knowing and pleasing and being sustained by Uh and honoring the God who made you, the God who redeemed, you?

That he would be your Delight in. All of those things that he would be. His glory would be your goal in all of those things. That he would be your strength and your hope in all of those things. We are those who do many things, but you can only really Ultimately treasure one thing.

Uh, we'll see that especially in the last part. Verse 24. Which talks about the two masters and The Mammon. And so forth, but coming out then of the instruction. Uh, about our works of Mercy and praying and fasting. There has been these two possible rewards and now the Lord is reminding us that you can either have one or the other.

You cannot aim at both. You cannot aim to be seen by men and aim. To have God himself as your reward, so that the reward that you have in the secret place. And remember that we've heard throughout that, the secret place is not just the closet, although the closet can be good training.

Uh, for focusing on the secret place, the secret place is the heart, the conversation between your soul, and God, the interaction between you, and your heart, and your soul. And God something that Membership in our family and your interaction with us and you're listening to me and your Your participation externally in the congregational work that none of these.

Are necessarily indicators of. What is going on between your soul and God that you must deal. In your heart, in your soul in that place, where only God has access You must deal between you and God and you must find him your treasure, you must lay up for yourself as it were then.

Treasure in Heaven. Everything else? Uh, everything else. Is going to ultimately be lost. Now, the praise of men is lost very quickly, the admiration of men has lost very quickly. People are fickle. They will turn on you. Uh in quite a moment, they will turn to some new thing and if they don't turn on you, they will just forget you, which you can also end up being very hurtful and very painful if you have put a lot of stock in what they think about you and how they feel about you and their interaction towards you.

And so this truly they have the reward, truly they have the reward, truly they have the reward. Has been. About a reward that is not very good at all. And even if you happen to be one of those Ultra rare cases who are esteemed throughout your Earthly life, you are quickly forgotten As soon as you pass, Uh, from this world.

But there are all sorts of things that we are tempted to invest our lives in to spend Our time and trying to attain and planning. How to obtain first, we spend our thoughts and obsess about in our thoughts, and in our hearts, And that we desire and we think that uh that we will really feel fulfilled in life if we attain to that thing and Um, even in the pursuit of those things you attain to it, and Um, it's not so satisfying as you thought it would be, which of course is by Design.

You weren't created for any Earthly things, you were created for the Creator. And so you Those who go after that, which this world, which can be obtained in the creation, find themselves, continually unsatisfied, and even that, which you have is taken from you while you live. So that, you know, that which was Uh, very rare in their days, you know, there was not Uh it was very difficult to obtain very fine clothing and yet God had so designed his creation that the larva of tiny creatures.

And and insects moths, would eat up the finest clothes in the world. They didn't care if it was purple silk. In fact, maybe they thought purple silk was a special dainty. And so moths would eat some of the most valuable things they had. Um, and then there's the rust, and the word here is for any kind of corrosion or degradation, and not just of metals that are being oxidized.

Um, and of course, much more than just iron, which could be oxidized. Uh, but any sort of degradation wood that decays over time even stores of grain That go stale or mold or Any sort of thing that a man might store up. Um, that corrodes or that a man might build that corrodes over time.

And then if he has something that does not corrode. Especially, of course, you know, the precious metals that do not oxidize like gold Uh, in particular. Uh, or jewels that are not Metals. But of course, they don't corrode gemstones. Those things become the special targets of the, of the last.

Thing, mentioned in the illustration in verse 20, the thieves. That's what the thieves are coming after. Um, and so it all may be taken from you. Uh, Uh, in just the Providence of this life and it will all be taken from you at the conclusion to this life. So, first Timothy 6 says, you brought, it is sure that you brought nothing into this world and you will bring nothing.

Out of it. And so there's this this Dreadful Folly. And having our hearts and Minds consumed with Earthly things. But I think, Um, When we ask ourselves, what do I spend my thoughts on, what, uh, what am I Desiring? What am I aiming at in life? What, what are the things that?

Um, thrill me to think about obtaining and Grieve me to think about failing to obtain or losing. Um, we must humiliate ourselves before God. And admit, that there is way too much of this laying up for ourselves, Treasures on Earth, and not nearly enough. Of laying up for ourselves Treasures in Heaven.

Um, We can even think about the things. That our thoughts are spent on and the things that come out of our mouths. If we are not speaking much of Christ and much of the Lord and much of his goodness, And his power and his Mercy, his salvation, his Justice, his truth.

But if we speak much of our own If our our speech to others, Um, Much concerned with advancing particular, political opinions, rather than advancing the knowledge of God in Christ. The the spread of the Gospel, the sanctification of Believers in the building up of Believers into him. Which building up may form particular political opinions, but there's a difference.

Isn't there? Uh, which one is the main thing? In our thoughts. Which one is the main thing in our interactions? Um, And so there's this great difference between the treasure that is on Earth and the treasure that is in heaven. Now, we've seen already in the first half or so of this chapter that the the treasure that is in heaven, the reward.

Uh, that is in heaven is God himself. Uh here's the reward that we have in secret and the amazing thing is that someone who is on the earth can have a reward in secret that has actually kept in heaven. And so we can have Delight in God himself and we can have increasing knowledge of him, increasing desire of him fellowship with him, we can have increasing Conformity to him.

All of these things you will have in glory. These are the things that are promised to us. Uh, when we enter Heaven, when we When a Believer departs from this life, that he would be made perfect in Holiness and that he would enjoy this new sinless, estate that he would be increased, uh, Uh, to this.

Perfectly accurate and yet ever increasing knowledge of God and enjoyment of God, that we would have this ever increasing capacity for enjoying it. So that even though we enjoy him fully we will enjoy him increasingly because we're still finite and our capacity can be increased. And those of course who who start with a greater capacity will have an ever increasing capacity, that is greater than the Than the ever increasing capacity that they might otherwise have had.

So, there's actual difference in reward, there are those who, in glory whose rewards are greater than than others. And so there really is, a laying up of treasure. That is in heaven as you As you spend time, understanding God and growing in your walking with him and enjoying him and loving him, as you're putting sin to death and enjoying and and increasing absence of sin and overcoming of the evil one.

Like we heard in first John 2 with uh that was uh which youths should count as precious and valuable. In first, John 2 12-14, yesterday, all of these things are Treasures, which belong to the reward that we have and God himself the reward that we will have in heaven.

And the amazing thing is that we can already begin enjoying that reward now, Because our communion with God, our adoption by the father, our Union with the son are being indwelt by the spirit means that treasure. That is in heaven does not mean treasure. That is Exclusively future. Because we have in Jesus Christ.

The Triune God himself already. And so, we're already investing in the heaven Market as it were, and You know that for your future care and hopefully your children's children's future care and so forth. We're careful with how we Invest, even the Earthly things that God has given us, which Are not bad will be useful for their service, their service of the Lord, your service of the Lord.

Uh, ability. To walk with him in in different ways, as things must not be an end. To themselves, but we're very careful of what we invest in. Could you imagine? If there was like a ETF an electronically traded fund, where you could invest in heaven, Uh, it would be a no-brainer where we invested.

Our time and our energy, our thoughts, our affections, our desires. And so forth. So lay up your treasure in heaven and as you do so you'll find that your heart uh follows. That that at which you aim is going to direct how you think and how you feel, how you process things?

How you decide what to do. Now, along the way. Uh, like Someone who is in a sort of wooded area that you could easily. Get lost in. But it's not too thick and there's a building in the distance or a mountain in the distance, even better. That is very, very tall.

And the way that Uh the way that you know, that you will uh that you will keep going in the right direction is not by watching your feet and looking around in the woods which very, you know, could be very confusing and And you would have this Wiggly and Wayward and maybe even Going around in circles and ending up in the same place again and getting lost.

But if you had that great thing that you were going to toward Then it would keep your your mind and your heart, your life moving towards that thing. And you would make this direct progress towards it. Well, where your treasure is There will your heart be. God actually uses.

Um, this prioritizing of him and of what we have just been describing as heavily Heavenly treasure, as that, which rightly orders all of the thoughts and all of the feelings and all of the desires along the way in your life. So that the way not to live a confusing spinning, your wheels going around in circles life Keep your eye, keep the direction of your heart on him himself.

For which purpose he is blessed us, especially with this instruction, for the morning, and the evening worship, and the Lord's day and the public worship on the Lord's day. Uh, the morning and evening, secret and family worship. That these are ways by which we keep returning our Focus. We Um, we have, we come back to that, which is the great treasure.

Even though we have very imperfectly, treasured him and all that is connected. With him, but we keep coming back. So that where our treasure is there will our heart be. Your treasure shapes your heart. We sometimes think that our heart shapes, our treasure. Praise God. That Not true, because Then our remaining, uh, sinfulness are remaining fleshliness.

Would be a deal breaker for us. We would just be stuck. Treasuring Earthly things because our corrupted Hearts. Would keep shaping. Um, our treasure, but it's not your heart that shapes your treasure, it's your treasure. That shapes your heart. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And so God continually uses his worship to direct our attention to him and he uses then his worship as a means of Grace. This is one of the many passages that teaches us and reminds us To use. The means of God's grace that he has provided for us that God in his grace, is the one who changes our hearts that there is strength and life in God, especially in Christ and our Union with him, especially in the work of the Holy Spirit and applying Christ to us.

For the formation, the shaping, the growing, the purifying the healing, the strengthening of our hearts towards God. And here he says. The great thing or one of the great things that he is doing by the spirit's use of the means of Grace, one of the things that we should be aiming at.

As we tend attend upon the means of Grace and walking with the Lord, Is that he would continue to form our hearts in shape. Our hearts. This treasuring God. As then described as the, I says, the lamp of the body is the eye. And so he's describing very much.

What we do with our Earthly, being our Earthly self here by the Heavenly mindedness or to use something, a little closer to the The organ that's in the illustration. Here, are Heavenly Viewpoint are setting our minds on things above, to use the apostles word from Colossians and he describes now, our Earthly self the word body here is not Uh, precisely the the same as the word for corpse that That we had a couple weeks ago in Romans, 12 to offer our body as living sacrifice, This one does.

Include. Very intentionally the physical but it's the self more generally considered including the body and the soul. Uh but ourself that is especially functioning in and interacting with the Earth and and now he describes the self as a room. Um, and the room has a lamp in it now.

If the if the lamp is not good, if it is not sound, if it is not properly singly serving its purpose. That's the idea behind this word for good, which is not the ordinary word for good. Of functioning properly, according to its design. Is the idea here, and in their case, you know, if the lamp didn't have the right kind of fuel.

If the if the oil in, it was dirty. Or if there wasn't enough or there was something wrong, Um with the wick or perhaps, uh, it was a lamp with a glass over it and the glasses smudged or smoked and And flickering. Uh, that would not be a good lamp.

Good lamp would have everything in order, and it would shed light upon the whole room. And so here, he's uh, he's taking the treasuring of God. The having the whole of our life governed and flowing out of our, our souls conversation with God and interaction with him. Um, and especially Uh, especially here interaction with

him.

That is not figments of our imagination or Primarily a function of rising and falling feelings. But actual interaction with the God who has revealed himself to us in the Bible. Knowing his word as knowing the scriptures as his word to us and interacting with him who has revealed himself in the scriptures, actually crying out to him and lifting up.

Our heart to him in continual prayer and of course, also set times of prayer. And so this, Having. The treasuring of God himself in the secret. And that the, I then being The lamp of the body. As it were your whole body, he says will be full of light.

That in a room where the lamp is and we know he's he's picking up now, from an earlier, illustration where the lamp is on its stand and it's got the mirror behind it and Um, it's been placed for that purpose. It's going to fill your entire body with light, if you get God as your reward and depending upon him and being devoted to him and delighting in him, if you get that correct, it is going to have this.

Pervasive permeating effect on the whole rest of your life. Where you will be filled with light and of course, someone who is filled with light. What do they do? They also shine. Don't they And so he's really now giving us the key to all the way back in in chapter five to shining where God has put you is having God himself as your reward in the secret, place of the heart.

And having your mind set upon him who is in heaven, Which will not only order the whole the whole rest of your life. But it will make you One by whom others. Enjoy the light. Of the Lord or may receive or see the light of the Lord. However, There are those who think.

That they have light. But their Uh, their so-called light is Darkness. So he says, if your eye is bad, your whole body. Will be full of Darkness. Let's say, of course, that's true. You know, all those without the biblical worldview, they are getting everything wrong. Well, many people who speak, that way.

Think that they have light. But the idea of this, Soul conversation with God. And depending upon him and being devoted to him and delighting in him, that all just sounds like Spiritualized rubbish. They'll even say, they'll refer to biblical piety as pietism. Uh and so the same sort of person who would say yes all those people's eye is bad.

They are full of Darkness. They do not have the biblical worldview like I do. They think they have light in them. So he says, if therefore the light that is in you. And, you know, Greek doesn't have air quotes, but you can tell that that's the idea that's indicated here, if they're for the quote unquote light.

That is in, you is Darkness. How great is the darkness? There's someone who thinks he has a Biblical worldview. But he does not have the treasuring God. And treasuring that which is eternal. Way of thinking way of life. And so he is actually in Greater darkness than the one.

Doesn't have light or doesn't think he has liked? Cuz he thinks he has light. But he's wrong. Looks like a blind person hallucinating, an idea of the room. But the room is still full of Darkness. And so, he Concludes, the passage by reminding us. That you can't choose both at once.

You can't choose both at once. You can only be a slave of one master at a time and it is the word for slaving. It's not It's not from the root for service. Um, That we from which we get the word for Deacon or the corresponding verb. It is the word for slave.

Actually, it's the corresponding verb to the word for slave. That is in verse 24 twice, no one can slave for two masters. You cannot slave for God and Mammon. And the word Mammon here had come. By this time generally to mean riches. Or wealth. But originally, it means anything that you Uh, place your confidence in or if we may use this helpful word that combines the idea of that confidence and wealth.

And the treasures in verses 19-21 anything that you put the stock of your life in. And so you can only put the stock of your life in God, you can only have God as your wealth, you can only have God as your confidence, you can only have God as your hope.

Because anything else? That you are aiming at with your life and especially that you are hoping in and resting upon. Is going to become a master and you will be its slave and you can only be the slave of one master at a time. Perhaps an employer you could serve multiple employers.

Uh, you're off the clock, at some point. And so, uh, you are when you're in the service of the one, You serve the ones interesting in the service of the other. You serve the other as interest. But a slave always serves as Masters interest. Even if he's loaned out to another, he is serving the other for the sake of his master.

And so that which you put your confidence in in life. Is going to determine. Who your master is, who's slave? You are. And if it's yourself, it can't be God. If it's yourself, then you're deceived. Because you are going to be aiming at and Desiring, something else for yourself, other than God, and that will be your master, no matter how free or independent You think you are?

It says, no one can serve two messes. He was either he will hate the one and love the other. Just as we heard in James chapter 4, the love of the world. Is enmity with God. And so if you live in love with anything, Um, if you live out of love for anything other than God, You ultimately hate God.

You cannot say, I live. You cannot have politics. Be your life or wealth. Be your life or influence. Be your life or the praise of men, be your life or the affection of particular individuals, be your life, if any of those things are your life. Then you will ultimately hate God.

Uh, but if you are loyal to God, then you must Despise everything else. This doesn't mean be hateful towards everything else, but it almost be put in its place you consider of it as of comparably. Um, Uh, infinitesimal value. Because of the infinite value of God himself. And so, you're going to have Uh, decisions in life.

Sometimes it's even big ones. If we were really following this, it would be much more common. For a Christian to have a choice between two jobs. And not have wealth or advancement. Be the primary consideration. The primary consideration would be. Um, Will it be near a faithful church? Will it enable me to minister in my family?

Well, are there opportunities there for serving the lord as the work that is doing that? I would be doing, um, Yeah, how would it be doing lasting and biblical good uh, to others. And maybe even in an Earthly way. But uh but be or the ideas ordered under God.

And yet you, uh, you have people who Uh, choose a job that makes Um, more money than they need and advances them. Uh, so-called in their career. You know, whatever that means. Your title is also going to perish with you when you go to your grave. But men go after things like that, where it's going to have a great cost.

In the sort of church that they can attend and the time that they can spend with their family, Um, In the Heavenly mindedness, that they are able to maintain and the kind of work that they're going to be doing. Uh, and so forth. Um, And so, may Lord give you My dear family.

Bit by bit morning, by morning, evening, by evening, Lord's Day, by Lord's Day. To treasure. Him who sees in secret to treasure. God is your reward. And the things that are then connected with him. Growing in your understanding of scripture. Growing in the accuracy and the richness of your theology.

Your Doctrine Growing in the killing of sin and the enjoyment of Holiness. Growing in your desire for the Lord and your satisfaction in And all of these things that are part of the reward of Heaven. Because God is the Lord of Heaven. And with God as your reward, May he give you to live well, even now Upon the Earth.

Payment spray.

Our gracious. God in our heavenly father, we thank you and praise you. For the Perfection of your word. Thank you for giving us. Your son, our Lord Jesus to be our Prophet. Um, both in all of the words of scripture. Which he has given by his Spirit. Carrying the profits along as they wrote.

And also in these words that he spoke, when preaching, To his disciples. And we know Lord that Just having the words written on the page or sounded in our ears. Cannot give us this changed heart. This treasuring of you. This good. That we have been hearing about what your spirit using these words.

Writing the truths upon our hearts. Making your word to abide in us. He is the one who gives us these things. And so we pray for that Ministry of your spirit. Innocent to us. We ask in Jesus name, amen.