

Who Do You Say That I Am?

Seeing and Delighting in Jesus through an Expository
Journey through the **Gospel of Matthew**

48- The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Citizens- Part 28
Secret Purity and Public Hypocrisy- Part 11

Church April 16, 2023

Matthew 6:1-24

1 "Beware of practicing your righteousness before men to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.

2 "So when you give to the poor, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be honored by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

3 "But when you give to the poor, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing,

4 so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

5 "When you pray, you are not to be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and on the street corners so that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

6 But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

7 "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.

8 So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

9 "Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who is in heaven, Hallowed be Your name.

10 'Your kingdom come. Your will be done, On earth as it is in heaven.

11 'Give us this day our daily bread.

12 'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]'

14 "For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

15 But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

16 "Whenever you fast, do not put on a gloomy face as the hypocrites do, for they neglect their appearance so that they will be noticed by men when they are fasting. Truly I say to you, they have their reward in full.

17 But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face

18 so that your fasting will not be noticed by men, but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

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!

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.

*To the Glory of God the Father; God the Son;
and God the Holy Spirit. Amen*

Now we are *zeroing in* on the part of this Sermon where Jesus talked about the relationship that God's *true* people have with Wealth. So, let's read verses 19-24 again:

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

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!

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.

... so, this portion of the “*Sermon on the Mount*” deals with Money and Possessions and Wealth and our Relationship to those things. And the *summation* that Jesus gave to us is what we need to be cautious about because in verse 24- the incarnate God warned us,

... You cannot serve God and wealth.

Now *earlier* English translations of the New Testament (ie. King James Version) render the word “*Wealth*” at the end of verse 24 as “*Mammon*”. But the actual Greek word (*mamoonas*; Strong’s #3126) means: *Riches or Wealth*.

The word, “*Mammon*” comes into English from Post-classical Latin (*mammona*) which meant: *Wealth* and was used in the Latin Vulgate Bible (along with the word Tertullian¹ used, “*mammonas*” in his writings). Jerome (originated the Vulgate) used “*Mammon*”. This word was borrowed from Hellenistic Greek (μαμωνᾶς), which was borrowed from the Aramaic (ܡܡܘܢܐ *māmōnā*)- which had to do with “*Wealth*” and “*Profit*”- *especially* financial Gain from *illicit* or *immoral* Activities.

Several scholars think that the Aramaic word came from the Syrian dialect and refers to the Syrian god of riches; and by the 1st Century- this word was used by the Followers of Jesus as a *pejorative* that was used to describe everything from Gluttony; to excessive Materialism, as well as Greed, and unjust worldly Gain.

But it is very hard for those of us who grew up in the United States during the last half of the 20th and the first part of the 21st Centuries to *understand* this Passage in the Way that the Apostle Matthew quotes Jesus speaking it. But it is even *harder* for us to actually *obey* this portion of what we call the “*Sermon on the Mount*”. And that is true, because we have a tendency to think that *our* Experience living in the *greatest*; and the *freest*; and the *strongest*; and the *most prosperous* Nation in the History of the World- is Normal.

But it isn’t Normal- it is very Odd and very Strange and very Rare- in human History. What is Normal- is for Christianity in general and individual Believers in particular to be aggressively *persecuted*; *punished*; *imprisoned*; and even *martyred* because of our Faith in Jesus Christ. But here- in the United States- Christianity has been overtly *favored*- even *promoted*. For example, until recently, it was almost impossible for a Politician to get elected to Office- unless he was a member in good Standing in some Christian Church. For example, it wasn’t until 1973- that Pete Stark, who was a Republican, was elected to the House of Representatives as

¹ Tertullian (Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus 155AD-220AD); Father of Latin Christianity; Founder of Western Theology. Prolific writer from Carthage- the first to use the term, “*trinitas*” (Trinity) when referring to the Godhead.

the first openly Atheist man- who was unashamed of his Unbelief. And Keith Ellison was the *first* Muslim- elected in 2006- as he took his Oath by putting his hand on a copy of the Qur'an rather than the Bible.

In this Country- the Christian Church enjoys Tax exempt Status; and those who give are allowed to deduct their giving on their own person tax forms. Until 1973- each school day began with Prayer and ironically, when the Supreme Court ruled that Praying in Public Schools was a violation of the 1st Amendment- those nine black robed Judges began their Deliberations that day with Prayer.

In several Muslim dominated Countries- Christians must either pay a Tax in order to continue to worship the one, true, and living God or they do so- by breaking the Law. But that is what is Normal. During the height of the Soviet Union's Power- Christians were routinely *imprisoned* and *tortured*; and little girls, who loved Jesus, were injected with chemicals that drove them insane. Even now- in China and North Korea and many Countries in Africa- the Christian Church thrives under intense Persecution; and they live under the constant Threat of instant Annihilation. But as I said- that is what is Normal.

Over the 2,000+ year History of Christianity- Persecution not Preference is what is Normal. And it is common for Christians in many Countries in the 21st Century to be hunted down like animals and killed.

But perhaps what is the *most*- Strange about this Country- lies in its *unbelievable* Wealth; and in the ease at which the godless; the Atheistic; and even those deceived by false Doctrine- can become wealthy beyond anyone's imagination. And that has happened- primarily for one Reason- as a Nation- we have *whole-heartedly* embraced "*Capitalism*"- the economic System that has enabled Americans to produce *more* Goods and Services; to *more* people; at a *cheaper* price; than any other System in the History of Man. And the Result is that as of 2021- this Nation is now producing two new billionaires every single week! And that has never been done in any Country- since God created Man in the Garden. Yet those people's Relationship with God is extremely weak at best and usually non-existent.

As American's we can choose between all sorts and styles of shirts; and pants; and shoes; and cars; and houses; and bed linens; as well as seven different styles of green beans. And it is common for Families to have Arguments in the car about *which* restaurant to visit- rather than whether it will be possible to even eat at all.

Northern Mexico has the *same* Climate; the *same* soil composition; and the *same* amount of rainfall as southern Texas. Yet the people of southern Texas thrive and prosper while the people of northern Mexico dream about leaving their Country to come here. And desperate Fathers and Mothers from a host of other Countries are willing to pay members of drug cartels- so they can walk 2500 miles;

or so they get into a row- boats to cross the Atlantic Ocean- just for the chance to get to America. You will see no boats and no long caravans of people trying to get into Iran or North Korea or Russia or China.

Now I'm not bringing all this up to be political or to make anyone feel guilty about all that we have while the overwhelming majority of the peoples of the world go without. That is God's Business. God has chosen to bless the United States *abundantly* and we should be thankful and grateful at what God has done in giving us the abundant Gifts and these useful Blessings.

But at the same time that we rejoice at what God has been Good to give to us- we also need to take Heed. Because Money and Possessions and Wealth are *different* from any other tangible Commodities. Because we are fallen- these Things have a strong, *intoxicating* Effect on us. And if these Gifts and Blessings are not *managed* and *dominated* by a mind and heart and the single eye that is focused solely on Jesus and His Glory- these things WILL deceive us.

And that is *why* the Bible says that the wonderful and useful Blessings of Money and Possessions and Wealth have the Power to, "**choke the Word**" until the inspired, infallible and inerrant Word of the living God no longer has any Effect on us (**Matthew 13:22**). Now that is a lot of Power!

Also, unlike most other Issues- Money acts like a "*Pandora's Box*" where the *more* we have- the *more* of "other things" come with it. And it is those "other things" that we need to be careful about- because the Apostle Paul was "moved" by God the Holy Spirit to write this down that is found in **1 Timothy 6:6-11**:

6 But godliness actually is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

8 If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content.

9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

11 But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.

Now keep in mind that the audience that Paul addressed here were NOT those who were *already* wealthy- but those *who wanted to become* wealthy. Verse 9 says,

... those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

So, it isn't those who are *already* rich- but those, "**who want to get rich**" that Paul is warning. And the beginning of verse 10 warns us against "loving" Money- but then it goes on to say,

... and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

So, the "*other things*" that Money and Possessions and Wealth bring into our Lives are described here by the Apostle Paul as,

- **Temptation** (verse 9)
- **A Snare** (verse 9)
- **Many foolish and harmful Desires** (verse 9)
- **Many Griefs** (verse 10)

... and the Apostle warned us that these "*other things*" that come with Money and Possessions and Wealth have the Power to:

- **"Plunge men into Ruin and Destruction"** (verse 9)
- Cause us to **"wander away from the Faith"** (verse 10)
- And **"pierce us"** with **"many Griefs"** (verse 10)

... after reading all this- could there be any Doubt that Money is dangerous?

But even *worse*- Jesus said in **Matthew 6:23** that Wealth has the Ability to "*darken our eye*"- so that instead of our Body being filled with the Light of God- we are filled with the "*Darkness of the World*"- where the Concept of the "*Darkness of the World*" has to do with buying into the Mentality or the World-view of the lost and pagan World-*System*- that exists and operates in hostile Rebellion to God and His Word (**1John 2:15-17**). And when that happens to the Believer- God's Word says the Love of the Father is NOT in us; and we are now completely "*worldly*"; and can no longer "*see*" or "*understand*" or "*comprehend*" or "*value*" the Beauty and the Importance and the infinite Worth of the Glory of God- in the Person of Jesus Christ.

And when that happens- our minds and hearts are filled with *worldly* Images and Ideas and Jesus is then robbed of our Affections- that belong ONLY to Him. Because Money and Possessions and Wealth have now "*delighted our darkened eyes and deceived us*"- and our Love for God- that flowed out from a clear and

focused Eye- has now been *transferred* over into a Love for Money. Because now we are *enamored* by the false Promise of what Money and Possessions and Wealth can give *to* us; and what these things can do *for* us.

We need to remember that Jesus spoke more about Money than He did about Sex, or Heaven, or even Hell. And that tells us that “*Money*” is a real big Deal to God. And that also tells us there must be something really Dangerous about Money- for the Bible to give us so many Warnings about it. But it also tells us that there is no Way I can give you everything you need to know about Money in a single Sermon.

But there are a couple of things we need to really think about. The first thing is how easy it is for us to *exclude* ourselves from what Jesus teaches about Money. It is almost a *universal* Reaction when the Subject of Money comes up that people respond with, “*But I don’t love Money- so this doesn’t apply to me.*” And rather than argue about it- I simply want to look at a single Statement by Jesus found in **Matthew 19:23&24:**

23 And Jesus said to His disciples, "Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

24 "Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."

Now there are three things that need to be said about this Statement by Jesus. Several years ago, there was a rumor started that had to do with a small door in the Wall around Jerusalem that was called, the “Eye of the Needle”. And a Camel had to get down in his knees in order to crawl through that small door- and that is what Jesus was talking about. The point in saying this- is that it wasn’t *impossible* for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom- it was just *hard*.

Now the best I can find, is that this was a rumor or a myth that began back in the 17th Century- but there is no definitive Proof that this was ever the case. Now it is true that, in the ancient world- where there was a massive Gate into the city- there was usually a much smaller gate next to it or even in the larger gate itself- that was used for all sorts of things. But as far as I can find- there is nothing but this rumor or myth that this smaller gate was called, the “*eye of the Needle*” or even, just the “*Eye*”. But even if it were true- it doesn’t change the gist of what Jesus was talking about.

Secondly, there is something here that Jesus did NOT say. He did NOT say it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man- WHO LOVES MONEY- to enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus did NOT say that. He simply said,

... it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

... so, Jesus was referring to just a rich man. And that means ALL rich people. Jesus was NOT talking about only the rich- *who love their Money*- but ALL rich people!

Thirdly, the usual Statement that is given by Americans in the 21st Century is, “*But I’m not Rich! I struggle all the time to pay my bills.*” And, of course, this Statement is designed to get us “*off the hook*” where Jesus’ Statement doesn’t *apply* to us. But we must understand that Jesus was not talking about what qualifies as being “*Rich*” in the wealthiest Country in the History of the world (America) in the 21st Century. He was talking about what the average 1st Century Jew would have considered to qualify as “*Rich*”. And when calculating this Definition- we have to consider things like:

- Having a reliable source of Income (even though it may not be steady)
- Owning Property- however meager
- Having the expectation of being able to eat (at least once a day)
- Not being a slave
- Having reliable shelter- however meager
- Having a reliable source of water (shared with others)
- Having more clothes than what is currently being worn

... and based on THAT 1st Century Standard- it would be difficult to exclude even the *poorest* among us as NOT being classified as “*Rich*”.

Now, about all I can do in this single Sermon is to expose you to various Passages in the Prayer that you will then take it upon yourself to explore this Subject in more depth. So, in addition to what I’m saying today- I will probably do a Bible Study in the Future on EVERYTHING God has revealed in His Word about “*Money*”; “*Possessions*”; and “*Wealth*” along with all of its Particulars such as:

- How may we *earn* Money in a Way that glorifies God? (Not all Income is godly)
- How may we *handle* Money in a Way that glorifies God? (The Fruit of Self-control)
- How should we *spend* Money in a Way that pleases God? (Not all Spending is godly)
- Developing a “*War-time*” Mentality about Money (live in such a Way that Giving is a Priority)

- How being Rich Affects us (Being vigilant about the Warnings of Jesus)
- What Giving (and not Giving) reveals about our Relationship with God

... because there are Ways to *earn* Money that *displeases* God. And there are Ways to *handle* Money and *spend* Money that does NOT bring God any Glory. And since our entire Economy is based on Consumer Spending- we need to develop a “*War-time Mentality*” about Money and what to do with it. And finally, we should honestly examine whether the People of the Covenant of Peace Church are a People who PLAN to be a People who are “rich toward God”; or a People who plan to simply “build bigger Barns”. Let’s look at how Jesus warned us about this in **Luke 12:15-21**:

15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

16 And He told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man was very productive.

17 "And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops?'

18 "Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.

19 'And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.'"

20 "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?'

21 "So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

... once again, Jesus began this Passage with a very serious Warning:

Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed...

... and that tells us several things such as:

- There are different “forms” of Greed
- All of them are Sin- None of them are Good
- This Passage was NOT written to the Lost- but to those who had already experienced the Miracle of the New Birth
- Saved people can be greedy- but they shouldn’t

- The Actions of this man are NOT strange or odd- they are very common, logical, and normal
- Everything this man had- God gave him
- His Actions- in response to what God had given him- prove that He was NOT Right with God
- This man was NOT “rich toward God” and was condemned by God

And this Passage shows us again how “Greed” and the various Issues associated with “Money”; “Possessions”; and “Wealth” are of great Concern to God; and should be of great Concern to us too.

Also, please notice, that Jesus called the Man, who built bigger barns, “*Fool!*” and this Man’s Soul was *required* of him that very Night! So, this is real serious Stuff!

Now after just reading some of the Passages in the Bible about “Money” and “Wealth”- and seeing how many times Jesus and the Apostles warned us about the *insidious* Effects that Wealth has on our souls- I have no Idea how any human being can sit underneath a steady diet of what the “*Health, Wealth, and Prosperity*” Preachers dish out- and hope to avoid *really* loving Money and of *really* being Covetous.

I honestly believe that these people have become so indoctrinated about Wealth and Possessions that they just mentally *exclude* themselves from every Warning that Jesus gave us in the Bible. O, Lord Christ- please don’t let us exclude ourselves from these Warnings- but please give us the Gift of being able to truthfully see ourselves as we really are!

“*So, what do you want us to do, Brother Blair- give the Church all our Money and just live in Poverty?*” Well, first of all, I don’t want you to do *anything*. I didn’t *write* this. And I’m not the one who *warned* us about Wealth- Jesus is. And I have to live in Obedience to these Truths just like you do. But we need to always remember that Jesus wants us to escape the Damnation that is coming on the whole earth. So, these Warnings are an example of the Love of God. And that’s why Jesus wants all of us to be “*rich toward God!*” And Jesus doesn’t want us to avoid the Conviction that comes from Passages like this. He wants us to look at these Warnings truthfully and honestly and genuinely judge whether any of this applies to ourselves. And if it does- then Jesus wants us to repent and become “*rich toward God!*”

And my Question is: “*What does it mean for us to ‘lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven rather than Treasures here on earth?’*” And does that make it Wrong to save Money? Is it sinful to have a Savings Account? Is God *dishonored* when we build barns? Let’s see if we can get some Help from Jesus.

In the Story from **Luke 12**- a Man’s crops have produced much

more than expected. And he said, “*What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?*” (Luke 12:17). And what is his Answer? “*I will tear down my barns and build larger ones*” (Luke 12:18). Now in our Case- we might ask, “*What will I do with all my accumulated Wealth at the end of the year when the stock market is going through the roof? What will I do with all my left- over Money?*”

The Man in Jesus’ Story said, “*Well, Self, let’s relax and eat and be merry- because God has blessed me; and I have goods stored up for years to come. So, I need to build bigger barns to hold all my Excess.*” Notice that the man isn’t going to smoke dope; or molest children; or get drunk; or go gambling; or murder anyone. He doesn’t seem to be angry or overtly Evil. He simply has so many Blessings that he wants to build bigger barns to holds all of the Blessings God has given him. And like I said, that isn’t weird or stupid or wicked or abnormal. It sounds fairly normal and even smart.

But what was God’s Response to this Man’s Plan to build bigger barns? God said to him, “**You fool! This night your soul is required of you!**” (Luke 12:20). And then Jesus gives the crucial Statement in the very next verse:

So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Wow! What in the world does that mean? “*Rich toward God.*” I struggled with that for many years. Surely it does NOT mean to give God lots of Money- because first of all, God doesn’t need any Money- God already owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Psalm 50:10) as well as all the hills too. And secondly, there is NOTHING we can do- to *enrich* God.

No, to be “*rich toward God*” means for us to count God as being our Wealth. NOT the things God gives me- but God Himself must be my Treasure. So, as a Believer, if I desire to be wealthy- I should focus on God- because He is my great Reward! He is my Riches! So, laying up for myself “*Treasures in Heaven*” would be for me to live in such a Way as to *maximize* God as being my Treasure. And so, it also means for me to see all of the Blessings that God has graciously given to me- as a Means to show- to prove that God- and not the Blessings- is my Treasure.

So, God gives me Money and Possessions and Wealth so I can show how that God and NOT the Money; God and NOT the Possessions; and God and NOT the Wealth- is what is valuable to me. And that should become true with EVERYTHING God gives to me. So, for example, God gives me Food- so by valuing Jesus over Food- I can prove that it is God who is the Meat that doesn’t perish.

Anytime what God gives me becomes the Goal or the End- I am already off-base. God gives- but God ONLY gives things that can be used for His Glory. So,

by using what God gives to glorify God- I am testifying that God and NOT the Gifts is what I treasure.

And back in **Matthew 6:24**- what did Jesus mean when He said,

... You cannot serve God and wealth.

... but how does a human being “*serve*” Wealth?

You don’t do what Wealth says, because Wealth can’t talk to you. So, to “*serve*” Wealth means to calculate all of your Behavior; all of your Life; to *maximize* what Wealth can give *to* you; and do *for* you- *always* keeping in mind the Benefits that can come to you from Wealth.

Likewise, “*serving*” God means doing everything you do and calculating all your Behavior to maximize the Pleasures you can get from God- and obtaining all the Benefits you can get from God in Christ.

So, God has set it up so that the Line between the two is crystal clear. You cannot serve both God and Wealth at the same time. They are *mutually* exclusive of each other- so that you **MUST** make a conscious Choice between the two. Either you are struggling to make God your Treasure in everything; or you are struggling to make Wealth your Treasure in everything. So, to lay up for yourselves Treasures in Heaven means to calculate all your Behavior to maximize the Benefits that you get from God- the Benefits you have in God through Jesus Christ.

So, a Question would be, “*Everything I have comes from God- as a free Gift of His Grace. So, why are those Gifts filled with Danger? Why would God give me something I have to be on guard about?*” And the Answer is that **EVERYTHING** God gives to me- is “Good” (**James 1:17**). But I am “fallen.” And Because I am “fallen”- I have the ability to *ruin* and *pervert* **EVERYTHING**- even Good Gifts from God. My Soul has been redeemed – but my Flesh has NOT. And my Flesh *loves* to join in Unity with the pagan world “System” (**1John 2:15-17**) and the Devil to fight against God. And because that is true- I must strengthen my Spirit by availing myself of the various “Means of Grace” and *progressively* and *consistently* “starve” and “kill” the carnal Desires my Flesh has- to rebel and sin against God. And one of the very **BEST** illustrations of God giving a Good Gift and that Gift being perverted and used to dishonor God- is Wealth and Money and Possessions.

And that is *why* I have been faithful through the years to condemn the Doctrine of the Health, Wealth and Prosperity Preachers. Now I normally do NOT condemn the individual people involved in this false Teaching- because they are deceived. But I *categorically* condemn the Teaching; and, periodically, I also call the Leaders of this wayward Movement to Repentance. Look, I understand how somebody might get wayward about some false Teachings that has to do with very

specific Doctrines or finer points of Theology. But the “*Health, Wealth, and Prosperity Movement*” is so blatantly unbiblical; so clearly ungodly; and teaches people to disobey or ignore so many clear Passages of Scripture- that it deserves NOTHING but Rebuke and Condemnation.

So, as we read Warning after Warning about Money and Possessions and Wealth- we must agree that the incarnate God is NOT “*glib of tongue*”. And He didn’t put all these Warnings in the Gospel Records just to take up space. No, Jesus was *dead-earnest* about Warning us about this Subject- because, even though the Prosperity Preachers don’t seem to know- but Jesus knew that how we view Money and Wealth will either prove that our Salvation is real; or it will expose the fact that we are deceived about being born again.

Now I want to say something to those of you who believe that once you “*go down front*” or once you “*shake the Preacher’s hand*” or once you “*accept Jesus into your heart*” that you’re finished; and you can just sit back and rejoice in your Salvation- which has made your Obedience to the Bible to be merely “optional”. Let me be the first one to tell you- “*You are deceived! Your understanding of Salvation is wrong. It is false; and your soul is in eternal Jeopardy. Because if you think this Way- you are sinning against God; because you are excluding about 2/3 of the New Testament.*”

The Truth is that the Attributes and Characteristics and Fruit that Jesus reveals in this Sermon (Chapter 5-7) are the Attributes and Characteristics and Fruit that define the *true* people of God; who are the *true* sons of Abraham; and who are the *true* Jews- who will *inherit* the new Kingdom of Heaven.

In other words, we need to remember how Jesus “*laid the gauntlet down*” and cried out to all who were on that Mountain that Day- including the Leaders of Israel- when He said this in **Matthew 5:20b**:

... unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

... so, the Way that Jesus says we are supposed to live our Lives here in this Sermon- IS the Righteousness that *surpasses* the False and Man-made “righteousness” of the Scribes and Pharisees. In other words, genuinely saved people will bear the Fruit that Jesus reveals in this Sermon. And they will bear that Fruit- NOT *perfectly*- but *honestly*.

We must always include the phrase, “KEEP-ON” as it pertains to our Salvation. In other words, those who have believed- will “*keep- on*” believing. Those who have trusted in Jesus- will “*keep-on*” trusting in Jesus. Those who have

prayed- will “*keep-on*” praying. Those who have repented- will “*keep-on*” repenting. Those who have been convicted- will “*keep-on*” being convicted. Those who have walked on the straight and narrow Path- will “*keep-on*” walking on that Path. And those who have loved Jesus- will “*keep-on*” loving Jesus- until He becomes the Treasure of the Universe to us.

I pray that none of us will even attempt at excluding ourselves from this inspired; inerrant; and infallible Warnings that Jesus gave us- but we will take them seriously and apply them to ourselves. So, as we read that it is easier for a Camel to go through the eye of a Needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom- we will NOT exclude ourselves by saying things like, “*Money is NOT Bad and I’m NOT rich.*”

Excuse me? Jesus said that Money was dangerous. And if we have it and depend on it- it will *kill* our Soul. And if we *don’t* have it- but crave it- it will *kill* our Soul. And Money has the Power to kill us, because Money clearly reveals the Condition of our Hearts- better than almost anything else. But thanks be to God- because in Jesus Christ; and BY the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit and to the Glory of God- we can have and handle Money and Possessions and Wealth for the advancement of the Kingdom of Heaven and as a Tool that proves that Jesus is truly the Treasure of the Universe!

Amen. Let’s pray.

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The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen. Be watchful and quicken your pace. Soli Deo Gloria. For the Glory of God alone.