

Laying Up Treasure in Heaven

Matthew 6:19-24

King of Kings! (Gospel of Matthew Series)


Prepared by: Matthew S. Black

Sunday, August 11, 2013, 10:30am at Living Hope Church of Roselle, Illinois

“There are no U-Hauls behind hearses.”¹

JOHN PIPER

1. WELCOME VISITORS
2. ANNOUNCE FATHER-SON CAMPOUT FOR LABOR DAY WEEKEND SEPT 1
3. LADIES FELLOWSHIP 7PM FRI., **AUG. 23**, AT THE REID RESIDENCE

 Open your Bible to **Matthew 6:19-24**. We are continuing in a series entitled: “King of kings.” This morning we are looking into the first part of a message entitled “Laying Up Treasure in Heaven.” We continue in our study of the Sermon on the Mount.

The Lord’s Cow Died

Martyn Lloyd-Jones tells the story of a farmer. The farmer bounded joyfully into his kitchen one day and confronting his wife with a great big grin on his face he announced to her that their finest cow had just given birth to twins, one brown and one white. He said, I feel the impulse to dedicate one of these cows to the Lord, we'll bring them up together and when they are at a marketable age we'll sell them and we'll keep the proceeds from one and we'll give the proceeds from the other to the Lord. His wife went right to the issue as wives are prone to do and said, which is the Lord's cow? The white one or the brown one? He replied, well there's no need to worry about that dear, or to decide that now since we'll raise them together.

Some months later he entered the same kitchen a little more slowly, looking very sad. His wife asked why he was so sullen, to which he replied, I have bad news, the Lord's cow died.

Why is it always the Lord's cow, that dies? I guess we laugh at that because we identify with that kind of approach. We could even say, the Lord took His cow home. I guess the fact is we all tend to lay up treasure on earth. The pull of the sin that is in us drags us down to the earth, it is like a magnet, it is like a gravity, and we want to be rich towards self and poor toward God. So it's usually God's cow that dies. It reveals that we are quite earthly minded.

We Are Going to Paradise

The passage we are reading today brings a truth to mind that we need to remind ourselves again and again and again. This world is not our home. We are going to the place where God dwells, and one day, God will come to us in a new heaven and earth. We are on our way to God’s Restored Paradise.

¹ John Piper. *Desiring God* (Multnomah), from chapter 7.

God's restored paradise is the realm of where the Holy Spirit is ever undisturbed. He is never grieved in the New Creation. We are not going to live on this earth forever! So why do we hoard treasures as if this sin-cursed world was our eternal home?

The question is, are we going to enjoy the peace of the un-grieved Holy Spirit here on earth below, and are we one day going to receive the rewards of heaven above? Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 5:12 – if you are stripped of everything because of Jesus, don't fret, because "GREAT is your reward in heaven...."

Reading of Holy Scripture

Matthew 6:19–24, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

22 "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, 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 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 the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money."

Outline

This morning three things in this text that grab our attention. We're going to see:

1. Our treasure reveals our **heart**.
2. Our treasure reveals our **vision** – an uncluttered / generous vision reveals a godly heart.
3. Our treasure reveals our **master** – allegiance, mastery, slavery

I. Our Treasure reveals our **Heart** (6:19-21).

Matthew 6:19–21, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Stop "Treasuring Up"

Lay up (*thēsauroizō*) is the word for *thesaurus*, and it means positively – "to treasure"² or negatively – "to hoard." The Greek also carries the connotation of "stacking or laying out horizontally, as one stacks coins."³ Don't treasure up things on this earth. It has the idea of **hoarding** or **stockpiling** of wealth that is not being used. Is our heart aimed toward heaven or towards earth? Jesus says stop treasuring up things on earth.

Set Your Affections on Things Above

Colossians 3:1–3, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your affections on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

² Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G. (1990–). *Exegetical dictionary of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans.

³ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (p. 409). Chicago: Moody Press.

Stop hoarding your earthly treasure if you have it. Later in this chapter he's going to say "stop worrying about not having treasure" if you don't have it.

Garments, Grain and Gold

Why do we need to make this choice to STOP hoarding? Because earth is the place, Jesus says, "where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal" (vs. 19b). Jesus uses three words that describe the earthly treasures in his day: "moths" eat **garments**, "rust" or literally "the eating" or feasting of rodents on your food and **grain**, and "thieves" who steal our **gold**. So we have three commodities that people used to trade with in the ancient times of Jesus day and before. You had **garments, grain, and gold**.

Garments

"where **moth** and rust destroy" (vs. 19b)

Gehazi's Greed (2 Kings 5:15-27). Gehazi the servant of Elisha wished to make some forbidden profit out of Naaman's cured leprosy, and so he asked for a talent of silver and **two changes of garments** because that was substantial wealth.

Achan's Greed (Joshua 7). You remember Achan. He coveted gold and a Babylonian garment. Again, this was a sign of wealth.

Benjamin's Garments (Gen. 45:22). In a positive way, remember Joseph wanted to show affection to his brother Benjamin by his mother Rachel, and he gave him **five extra changes of garments**. More wealth!

Samson's Riddle (Judges 14:12). Samson said, if you can answer the riddle within 7 days, and "find it out, then I will give you **thirty linen garments** and **thirty changes of clothes**." This was fantastic wealth!

So garments were a sign of wealth and prosperity. But remember, Jesus says, moths eat clothing! But moth's only eat clothing you are collecting. Any clothing you are wearing does not get eaten by moths!

Grain

"where **moth** and **rust** destroy" (vs. 19b)

The word "rust" is translated this way **only here** in the New Testament. Everywhere else it is translated in regard to eating or food.⁴ In light of this, the NIV (2011) gives a much better translation: "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where **moths** and **vermin** destroy ..." So the idea of "rust" is really rodents or vermin. Rodents and roaches destroy your food!

The Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21). Do you remember the rich fool said, "I will tear down my barns and build..." what? "Bigger barns," to hold more of my wealth. And this rich man's wealth was in grain (Luke 12:18).

The Problem with Grain

You know what the problem with grain is? Mice, rats, worms, vermin, they eat it. 50% of all of the stored grain of India is eaten by rats and mice, even today.⁵

⁴ *Brōsis* (**rust**) literally means "an eating," and is translated with that meaning everywhere in the New Testament but here (see Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 8:4, "eating"; 2 Cor. 9:10, "food"; and Heb. 12:16, "meal").

⁵ "India's Poor Urged to Eat Rats." Published by BBC News at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/7557107.stm>, Wednesday, 13 August 2008.

Roaches in Louisiana

I used to live in Louisiana. We had lots of strange critters down there. We had alligators and crawfish. You all call them “crayfish”. I love Louisiana – where else can you have red beans and rice, jambalaya, and gumbo? I’ll tell you what though – there’s nothing worse than roaches or bugs in your food. That’s what Jesus is saying. Food, or grain was an important commodity in Jesus’ day.

Gold

“where moth and rust destroy and where **thieves break in and steal**” (vs. 19b).

Digging Through a Wall or Field

The third commodity Jesus speaks of is gold or really any treasure you could bury or stockpile. The phrase “break in” is literally “dig through” or “dig up;” and could refer to **digging through** the mud walls of a house or **digging up** the dirt in a field.⁶ Almost any kind of wealth, of course, is subject to **thieves**, which is why many people buried their nonperishable valuables in the ground away from the house, often in a field (see Matt. 13:44).

Gold is something you can stockpile, but it may be stolen, and one day, you’re going to have to give it all up!

The Problem: We Worship Earthly Things

The human heart cannot help but to treasure and to worship something! “When Christians commit sin, they do not cease worshiping. Rather, their worship is directed away from the Creator and toward created things.”⁷

The Heart: An Idol Making Factory

Because of that, John Calvin said, that “the human heart is an idol making factory.”⁸ The heart worships it’s way into addictions that it was not made for. We were not made to be slaves of money or materialism, but many of us are. How do we get out? How do we stop the treasuring up of stuff?

By laying up treasure in heaven! Vs. 20, “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven”. Moths and rodents don’t eat your clothes and spoil your food!

The Secret to Laying Up Treasure in Heaven :The Heart

Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” If you want your treasure to change, you have to change your heart. Ezekiel 36:26 speaks of how this can take place. God says, “I will give you a new heart, and a new Spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.” We must come to God in total surrender and humility.

⁶ MacArthur, 411.

⁷ Quote from Mars Hill ministries blog article, “How Does Worship Transform Us?”

⁸ John Calvin. *Institutes of the Christian Religion, Volume 1* (London: T. & T. Clark, 1863), 53 (paraphrased).

The Explosive Power of a New Affection

The Puritan preacher Thomas Chalmers, in his sermon “*The Expulsive Power of a New Affection*,” said that desires for God and desires for sin cannot coexist in the human heart. They are two opposing “affections”—one will always push out the other. So, he said, “the only way to dispossess [the heart] of an old affection, is by the explosive power of a new one” (see Gal. 5:16-17).⁹ You can’t just “stop it,” because it is always more than behavior. It is always rooted in your affections, in what you love—what you worship. Chalmers points the way forward: we worshiped our way into this mess, and by God’s grace, we’ll worship our way out.”¹⁰

We worshipped our way into materialism because we wanted stuff more than anything else. We must worship our way out.

How Do We Lay Up Treasure in Heaven?

Selling Extra Possessions for Your Forever Family: In the book of Acts, we see that the people “had all things in common” (Acts 2:41-45). They sold the extra possessions they had. That’s what Luke records in **Acts 2:45**, “they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”

When thousands of people, mostly Jews, were won to Christ during and soon after Pentecost, the Jerusalem church was flooded with many converts who had come from distant lands and who decided to stay on in the city. Many of them no doubt were poor, and many others probably left most of their wealth and possessions in their homelands. To meet the great financial burden suddenly placed on the church, local believers “began selling their property and possessions, and were sharing them with all, as anyone might have need” (Acts 2:45).

The Diocletian Persecution

Many years later, during one of the many Roman persecutions (the Diocletian persecution), soldiers broke into a certain church to confiscate its presumed treasures. An elder is said to have pointed to a group of widows and orphans who were being fed and said, “There are the treasures of the church.”¹¹

Serving Other Christians: Paul said in **2 Corinthians 12:15**, “I will most gladly spend and be spent for your souls.” **Rom. 12:13**, Paul simply says, “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.”

Evangelize: Jesus tells us how to spend our lives in Matthew 28:18–20, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Time and Fellowship: In Acts 2:41-45 we have how the people spent their time: with each other. Be at every service. Be at each others’ homes. We ought to know each other, spend time together. Not every service is for you, but come and support your brother and sisters. Don’t treat Christ’s Bride with disdain. Come and enjoy the fellowship with Christ’s bride.

⁹ Thomas Chalmers. *The Expulsive Power of a New Affection* (Curiosmith, 2012). Also available on Amazon Kindle.

¹⁰ Mike Wilkerson. *Redemption* (Crossway: Wheaton, 2011), 38.

¹¹ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (pp. 412–413). Chicago: Moody Press.

What Did Jesus Say?

Randy Alcorn reckons that “15 percent of everything Christ said relates to this topic – more than his teachings on heaven and hell combined.”¹²

Rich Young Ruler: "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me" (Mark 10:21).

Woe to the Rich: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven . . . Woe to you rich, for you have received your consolation" (Luke 6:20).

Renounce Everything: "Whoever does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:33).

Possessions Don't Define Who You Really Are: "A person's life does not consist in the possessions that he has" (Luke 12:15).

Seek First the Kingdom: Jesus has the perfect summary of this point later in the chapter: "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

This is no where near all that Jesus said. This is just a small treatment. The idea is not that wealth is wrong, but that it should be invested into the kingdom.

Perhaps you say, I have mine in the bank or stock market – it's safe. We all know that moth and vermin corrupt it and thieves break through and steal! Nothing is safe unless it is laid up in heaven.

John Wesley and Six Silver Spoons

Leonard Ravenhill speaks of the legacy of John Wesley. Wesley was saved at 35, preached for 53 years. What did he leave when he died? He left a handful of books, a faded Geneva gown that he preached in all over England, six silver spoons somebody gave him, six pound notes, “give one to each of the poor men that carry me to my grave.”

He could have died as rich as your famous TV preacher Sunday. He made a tremendous amount of money, and he built orphanages. He made money, and he printed bibles. He compiled, with Charles, the Methodist hymnbook. And he died worth about thirty dollars.

He printed Bibles. He printed hymnbooks. He financed missionaries to go across the earth. That's the way to use your money. You think of the reward. Why do you think it says don't lay up treasure on earth? Lay up treasure in heaven.

Is your heart Kingdom focused? What about your vision?

II. Our Treasure reveals our **Vision** (6:22-23).

Matthew 6:22-23, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, 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 in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!"

The principle is simple and sobering: the way we look at and use our money is a sure barometer of our spiritual condition. The reality is that people are blind and don't see the need and stockpile treasures on earth because of their blindness.

The heart is the eye of the soul, through which the illumination of every spiritual experience shines. It is through our hearts that God's truth, love, peace, and every other spiritual blessing

¹² *The Treasure Principle*, Multnomah, 2001, p. 8).

comes to us. When our hearts, our spiritual **eyes**, are **clear**, then our **whole body will be full of light**.¹³

Haplous (**clear**) can also mean single, as it is translated in the King James Version. An **eye** that is **clear** represents a heart that has single-minded devotion.

Bishop John Charles Ryle said, “Singleness of purpose is one great secret of spiritual prosperity.”¹⁴

An Evil or Bad Eye

Loving Earthly Treasures will CLUTTER our spiritual eye sight. Earthly wealth is not bad, but if our hearts love it, then our hearts are cluttered.

If our **eye is bad**, however, if it is diseased or damaged, no light can enter, and the **whole body will be full of darkness**. If our hearts are encumbered with material concerns they become “blind” and insensitive to spiritual concerns. The eye is like a window which, when **clear**, allows light to shine through, but, when dirty, or **bad**, prevents light from entering.

Ponēros (**bad**) usually means evil, as it is translated here in the King James Version. In the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament) it is often used in translating the Hebrew expression “evil eye,” a Jewish colloquialism that means grudging, or stingy (see Deut. 15:9, “hostile”; Prov. 23:6, “selfish”). “A man with an evil eye,” for example, is one who “hastens after wealth” (Prov. 28:22).¹⁵

Selfish Indulgence

The **eye** that is **bad** is the heart that is selfishly indulgent. The person who is materialistic and greedy is spiritually blind. Because he has no way of recognizing true light, he thinks he has light when he does not. What is thought to be **light** is therefore really **darkness**, and because of the self-deception, **how great is the darkness!**¹⁶

The principle is simple and sobering: the way we look at and use our money is a sure barometer of our spiritual condition.

Clear Vision: Lift Up Your Eyes!

Haplous (**clear**) can also mean single. We need a clear and single vision of Christ.

What you look at your will follow. You will always become what you worship. Remember what Paul said: “Demas has forsaken me having loved this present world.”

William Barclay writes of these verses: “The idea behind this passage is one of childlike simplicity. The eye is regarded as the window by which the light gets into the whole body. The color and state of a window decide what light gets into a room. If the window is clear, clean, and undistorted, the light will come flooding into the room, and will illuminate every corner of it. If the glass of the window is colored or frosted, distorted, dirty, or obscure, the light will be hindered, and the room will not be lit up.”¹⁷

¹³ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (pp. 413–414). Chicago: Moody Press.

¹⁴ *Expository Thoughts on the Gospels: St. Matthew* [London: James Clarke, 1965], p. 56

¹⁵ MacArthur, 414.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Boice, J. M. (2002). *The Sermon on the Mount: an expositional commentary* (p. 216). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Hidden Treasure

Christ says that those in the Kingdom of Heaven can see treasure others cannot see. Matthew 13:44, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

Simply Gazing at the Beauty of Christ!

Lift up your eyes with child like simplicity to the Savior. Philippians 3:8-10, “Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ⁹ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith—¹⁰ that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.”

Have you counted all things as dung, because you’ve sent the excellent beauty of Christ?

III. Our Treasure reveals our **Master** (6:24).

Matthew 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 the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.”

The third thing our treasure reveals is our allegiance. Who or what is our **masters**? Just as we cannot have our treasures both in earth and in heaven or our bodies both in light and in darkness, we cannot **serve two masters**.

Slave Owners

Kurios (**masters**) is often translated lord, and refers to a slave owner. The idea is not simply that of an employer, of which a person may have several at the same time and work for each of them satisfactorily. Many people today hold two or more jobs. If they work the number of hours they are supposed to and perform their work as expected, they have fulfilled their obligation to their employers, no matter how many they may have. The idea is of **masters** of slaves.

A Slave: Total Allegiance

But by definition, a slave owner has total control of the slave. For a slave there is no such thing as partial or part-time obligation to his master. He owes fulltime time service to a full-time master. He is owned and totally controlled by and obligated to his master. He has nothing left for anyone else. To give anything to anyone else would make his master less than master. It is not simply difficult, but absolutely impossible, to **serve two masters** and fully or faithfully be the obedient slave of each.¹⁸

Slave of Riches: Bernie Madoff

If you want to understand the brutal nature of slavery to riches, consider the story of Bernie Madoff. Bernie Madoff is known as “the greatest con man of all time”. According to his own testimony, since 1991 he stole more than 64 Billion (with a B) dollars from very rich Wall Street investors. A billion is one thousand million dollars. He did that 64 times! He took it, and never

¹⁸ MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1985). *Matthew*. MacArthur New Testament Commentary (pp. 414–415). Chicago: Moody Press.

invested any of it. He deposited it into a Chase Manhattan bank account and paid out huge dividends as if it were invested. He would give these astronomical dividend checks out, and his investors told him to keep it and reinvest because it was so out of this world. It was also all a lie.

When asked what it was like living a lie he said, **“It was a nightmare for me. I wish they caught me... years ago”**. According to him living a lie was a “constant, nagging anxiety”—every day waiting to see if he would get caught.¹⁹

And the shame was so great that his wife cut off all communication with the media saying she was “embarrassed” beyond words. His son committed suicide on the 2nd anniversary of his dad’s imprisonment.

What a nightmare! Sin is slavery! God sent His own Son to give you another benevolent Master!

Bondslave of Jesus

Throughout the NT Paul refers to himself as a bondslave of Jesus. It indicates his total devotion to Christ. James says, “A double minded man is unstable in all his ways”.

Conclusion

What do you treasure? What do you love? Where is your affection? Who or what masters you?

My Love Relationship with Jill

Illustration: My love relationship with Jill. Whenever Jill calls I answer. Whatever she asks of me, I do (most of the time). I love her. I’m devoted to her. How much more should we be devoted to Christ. He deserves all our love, all our affection, all our admiration, and all our time and treasure. He is worthy!

¹⁹ “Bernie Madoff: Free At Last”. New York Magazine. <http://nymag.com/news/crimelaw/66468/> Accessed 26 February 2011.