

## RADICAL

### Radical Living

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Matthew 6:19-24

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## Introduction

Good morning Church. You may be new here this morning so seeing the word “radical” may seem like a strange word. Our Senior Pastor, told us that the root meaning of ‘radical’, means “root”! It is what makes up the foundational distinctives of something or someone. In our case, someone. Authentic change means fundamental change at the root of who someone is before God.

The newly established Christian Community that Jesus was addressing, starting with the 12 disciples in Matthew 5-7, had been saturated with the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, a scholarly group of self righteous men, who placed several protective ‘walls’ around God’s Word. It seems that these “walls” were to retain the holiness and authority of the Old Testament. Actually, these “protective walls” were the way they controlled their hypocritical pursuit, under a cloak of oral traditions, which they changed to suit their agenda, which they hid under another cloak of covetousness.

This is why Jesus saw the Pharisees were a destructive group. And could see right into them. Jesus “himself knew what was in man”. (Jn 2:25). Jesus knew their toxic venomous teaching and lifestyle. Matthew records John the Baptist calling the Pharisees “a brood of vipers” (Matthew 3:7). Jesus final summary of the Pharisees in Matthew 23:33, he calls them a ‘brood of Vipers’ in Matthew 23:33. Scholars agree that

“This phrase serves as a rhetorical marker, and the pages between the two occurrences of “brood of vipers” *tell of a slowly building conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees over God’s requirements for righteousness (Mt 5:20)*” Cohick, L. (2013). Pharisees. In J. B. Green, J. K. Brown, & N. Perrin (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Second Edition (p. 674).

Jesus often referred to the Pharisees as “hypocrites” which can mean ‘to wear the mask’ but in the context of the Pharisees describes also came to mean ‘*one who turns aside from following God, **oppresses the poor and ensnares the people.***’ Cohick, L. (2013). Pharisees. In J. B. Green, J. K. Brown, & N. Perrin (Eds.), *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*, Second Edition (p. 674).

One of the major areas that the Pharisees ensnared people is their pursuit to be seen, admired and praised by others. They loved the places of honor and sought public position and praise at all costs.

It was true then, and it is true today: the NUMBER ONE PURSUIT, throughout ALL of HISTORY is the pursuit of position, status and standing. Prestige and position were the focus of the Pharisees. They manipulated God's WORD into self-serving traditions that cloaked a pretentious lifestyle.

The reality is all of us can fall into this trap. We can all be Pharisees who build our individualistic world's separate from one another.

Good news! There is a radical, root and core way to live that will give us ultimate value, purpose and meaning. However, in order to be equipped with such an ultimate value we must expose and eradicate "tear up by the roots" whatever is hindering us from developing a life of ultimate value.

To this end let us read God-inspired, valuable and infallible Word in Matthew 6:19-24 that force us to make some critical choices if we are to live a radical life that results in ultimate value.

19 "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."

*This is the WORD of the LORD. Thanks be to God.*

What 4 choices does Matthew 6:19-24 describe if we are to live a radical life that results in ultimate Value?

1. We must choose between two ultimate investments (Matthew 6:19-20)
2. We must choose between two ultimate directions of our heart (Matthew 6:21)
3. We must choose between two ultimate focuses (Matthew 6:22-23)
4. We must choose between two ultimate Masters (Matthew 6:24)

## 1. Firstly, we must choose between two ultimate investments (Matthew 6:19-20)

“19 “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.” (Matthew 6:19-20)

*What are you investing in? Jesus teaches us here that we will do one of two things: We will accumulate treasures on earth, or we will accumulate treasures in heaven.*

### ***Storing treasure on earth***

What does that look like? It begins with failing to think about the life beyond this earthly life. We fail to think about what Job thought about in Job 1:21, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return....”

We fail to heed the warning of 1 Timothy 6:6-10

“6 But **godliness with contentment** is great gain, 7 for **we brought nothing into the world**, and we **cannot take anything out of the world**. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. 9 But those *who desire to be rich* fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the **love** of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.”

Listen to the strong language in this text. Paul is warning against the desire – the craving – to be rich. These words convey a sense of deep longing and passion. This man is CONSUMED by a desire for MORE. And his end is ruin.”

Is this us? Are we constantly wrestling with discontentment? Are we always feeling like we don’t have enough? We would be wise to heed Jesus’ warning in Luke 12:15:

“Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, **for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**”

He then gives the example of the rich self-sufficient Foolish Farmer. (A fool in the Bible is not idiot...but selfishly sure, arrogantly convincing themselves that nothing negative will happen to them). This Foolish Farmer said,

“And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”<sup>20</sup> But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’<sup>21</sup> **So is the one** who *lays up treasure for himself* and is not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:19-21)

Be careful to think that the word for “treasure” is limited to money or wealth. It is an all-inclusive term which describes an accumulation that has ultimate value. Therefore, “treasure” which is focused on the earth is a temporary, shallow, accumulation or stockpile that will never give us ultimate value, but we accumulate it anyway.

*Why do we persist in storing treasures on earth?*

EVERYTHING the Pharisees did was for external praise, honor, status. This gave them Ultimate Value and they had conned the Jewish People, who blindly followed.

“**All their deeds are done for men to see.** .....and they **love the place of honor** at feasts and the **best seats** in the synagogues” (Matthew 23:6)

It is not difficult to be motivated with a need to be seen, praised and admired. We can all fall into that trap.

*What is an alternative to accumulated temporary treasures on this earth?*

### **Storing treasure in Heaven.**

What does that look like? “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.” (Matthew 6:20)

Paul the Apostle encouraged Timothy to challenge those with wealth:

“17 As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, *nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God*, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. 18 They are to do good, to be **rich in good works**, to be **generous** and **ready to share**, 19 *thus storing up treasure*

*for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.*

What does it look like to store treasure up in Heaven. Jesus answer was: “Truly, I say to you, as you did it *to one of the least of these* my brothers, you did it to me.” (Matthew 25:40).

What is an example of the “Least of these my brothers”. According to James 1:27 *authentic religion means investing in the lives of orphans and widows*, not simply by writing a guilt motivate check but “to visit orphans and widows in their affliction.” (James 1:27). This requires *a zoomed in, clear understanding of the plight, affliction and challenge that these orphans find themselves*. Isaiah 58:10 calls for a spending of the soul. Praise God we are doing this as a Church by you supporting Rene and I in the mission in South Africa. We could not go down the well if you were not holding the rope. Therefore, this is NOT Craig and Rene’s ministry but OUR ministry as a church, which God prepared in advance for us to do so we ALL lay up for ourselves treasure in Heaven. That is true of ministry in India and the Dominican Republic.

Every morning when we get up if we are convicted by the LORD’s prayer in Matthew 6: 10, “YOUR Kingdom come. Your will be done in Heaven as it is on earth” it will change EVERYTHING for our day! We will ask ourselves, “Whose Kingdom am I building today? “Whose money am I spending today? It will force us to question our motive. “Why am I buying or building this house? To impress people and further my kingdom? Or so that I can host others and further God’s kingdom? Why am I buying this car, these clothes, or this new toy?” The greatest evidence of Whose kingdom we are building is to look at our bank statement and ask the question: “Who’s kingdom am I seeking to build with my life?” This leads into the second choice that Christ calls us to make:

## **2. We must choose between two ultimate directions of our heart (Matthew 6:21)**

“ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:21

*There are only ONE of TWO directions of the heart. A direction of the heart led by deceit or the direction of the heart directed by devotion.*

## ***The direction of deceit***

Isn't it amazing how there is ALWAYS money and resources for whatever is important to us? The same people who say, "I have no money" will spend what it takes for something that has ultimate value! Where our treasure is so our heart will be there.

Jeremiah 17:9 states "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?". It is a human condition problem. We are ALL deceitful. Isaiah 53:6 defines what the direction of deceit looks like: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—*every one—to his own way...*" Both the word "astray" and "way" are the word for deceit. ***What is deceit? It is lying to ourselves and God that what we own actually defines who we are!*** The word "deceit" in the Greek is "planos" where we get the word planet. It has the idea of a centripetal force which moves all of life towards a center. That center is us. We orbit our world around ourselves.

Our deceitful heart tells us that amassing treasures on earth – that building our own kingdom – will lead to true happiness and satisfaction. But that's simply not true! No amount of wealth or possessions will ever leave you feeling truly satisfied. Until we have identified and spoken truth to that lie which our heart is screaming at us every day, we WILL not change. If we are going to live this radical life that Christ has called us to live, we will need a miraculous change of heart.

How do we know our heart is changing? Because our heart's will have a direction of devotion  
If one direction is deceit

## ***The direction of devotion***

Jesus illustrated this in a parable in Matthew 13:44: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field"

So, "How do I develop a heart of devotion?" Allow Jesus to X-ray our hearts. An example of this is in Revelation 3:17 where Jesus challenged the Laodicean Church

“For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked.” Those are self sufficient in what they own often fail to see their spiritual debt.” (Revelation 3:17)

They deceitfully believe they were Spiritual sound, when in fact they were worldly and self sufficient in what they owned and not Whose they were in Christ. Jesus solution was

*One*, for them to develop a humble devoted heart to allow him to refine them from the inside out.

“buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich” (Revelation 3:18a)

We choose to humbly ask Christ to melt, sift and purify you from the inside out, just like gold. Develop a heart that thinks about ultimate values.

*Second* to allow Christ to authentically “cover” and “clothe” their deceit.

“buy from me...white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen” (Revelation 3:18b).

We choose to humbly allow Christ to remove “put off” shameful clothes of self sufficiency and clothe us and “put on” Christ like attitudes.

*Third* we humbly allow Christ to give us new eyes:

“buy from me... salve to anoint your eyes” (Revelation 3:18c).

How do we know we have “NEW Spiritual EYES that indicates that we our focus is in heaven”?

Thus far we have discussed that to choose to radically live

We must choose between two ultimate investments (vv 19-20) Our Kingdom or God’s Kingdom?

We must choose between two ultimate directions of the heart (v21) Deceit or Devotion?

Thirdly

### **3. *We must choose between two ultimate focuses (Matthew 6:22-23)***

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! (Matthew 6:22-23)

These verses have been a problem for some interpreters. What is the emphasis on the “eye”? The Bible makes many references to “eye” and “eyes” in a variety of contexts. For the sake of this study it is important to note that in ancient times the eye was a metaphor of what reflected the heart and mind. A “good” eye describes the condition of the heart and mind that revealed itself through a generous, gracious service to the needs of others that met practical needs. Thus, a “bad” eye was just the opposite. A “bad eye” or “evil eye” reflected the darkness of the heart which revealed itself in a person being “strategically stingy”. In other words, the Strategically stingy” person saw an actual need but because of the selfish, self absorbed, covetousness was stingy or tight fisted, often justifying this through a critical spirit.

Let us look at a few powerful examples in Scripture. Jesus gives a great example in the form of a story. He tells of a landowner who needed people to in his vineyard. He sees men standing around doing nothing and offers them a job. So, he hires a number of workers at 6am. He and the hired help agree on a Denarius ( a full days wage). He goes out at 9am and hires some more. He does the same at 12 noon, and then at 3pm. Then he hires some workers at 5pm, an hour before quitting time. An hour later at quitting time, he pays proceeds to pay the workers their wage starting with the workers he had hired last. He pays then a FULL DAYS WAGE. The workers who were hired at the beginning of the day were furious. They grumbled, why would you pay them a full days wage when we did the bulk of the work!?! The Owner of the Vineyard responded:

“Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Did you not agree with me for a denarius? 14 Take what belongs to you and go. I choose to give to this last worker as I give to you. 15 Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me?” (Matthew 20:13-15).

Then he cuts to the heart of the matter, the real reason why the upset workers where complaining: v15:

***“Or do you begrudge my generosity?”***

If you look carefully there should be a number next to verse 15 and a footnote in your Bibles. What does it say? **“is your eye bad because I am good?”**

What is Jesus saying? Who is Jesus talking about? The landowner was generous. He used His resources to generously take care of the needs of ALL his workers. (Notice they worked and he was abundantly generous.)



How is our eye sight? Do we have a “good eye” or a “bad eye”? Here is a great test: In Deuteronomy 15:7-10:

7 “If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother, 8 but you shall open your hand to him and lend him sufficient for his need, whatever it may be. 9 Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and **your eye look grudgingly on your poor brother**, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and you be guilty of sin. 10 You shall give to him freely, and **your heart shall not be grudging when you give to him**, because for this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake.”

**The way that we see the needy tells us a great deal about our hearts.** It will demonstrate how we realize that this is NOT my business ....my money...We will echo 1 Corinthians 4:7: For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? IF we believe that everything we have is from God, then we will believe this is God’s money.

So if first response is when someone poor: “She deserves it. She’s obviously made some terrible choices.” It reveals that we think too highly of ourselves! This is why Christians are called to ERR on the side of GENEROSITY! If someone asks for our cloak, we are called to give them our tunic as well! This isn’t because we’re called to be naïve – it’s because the radical grace that we’ve received should change us entirely! It should change our EYES! We should SEE the world differently because of the grace that we’ve received.

Everything in Matthew 6:19-23 is succinctly summarised in Matthew 6:24:

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.

#### **4. We must choose between two ultimate Masters (Matthew 6:24)**

This is the Ultimate Value. With whom choose to hourly, daily, weekly, monthly invest in, surrender our hearts, and give our eye. Either possessions are our master or God is our master.

## ***When Possession are our Master***

The word for “money” actually carries the idea of possession, not just money. The word “mammon” comes from an Aramaic word which means “*that in which one trusts or relies upon, gives oneself to*”. Generationally our possessions might look different

***If you are between the ages of 13-30*** social media could be your Master. How will you know this?

You have a Highlight reel that you rehearse then stage and then record for the world to see. But it does not give an accurate view of the reality of ALL your life.

Your FOMO levels are on constant state of alert. The “Fear of missing out”. You are obsessed with a need to feel included checking up on what is going with you peer group, seeing if you are included.

You need to be “Liked” which literally shapes your self-worth on an hourly basis. What does our FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM account reveal about who is your Master?

***If you are between the ages 30-40*** you may be consumed with building a “mini” empire of houses, cars, money, bank account, vacationing. Having a house, care, work etc. is not bad in itself. It has become your Master when ***the motive is for the pursuit of more, guaranteeing you will always have enough. But it is never enough is it?*** If you are a young Mom you may be obsessed with staging for the world on social media what a great mom you are. If you are a young entrepreneur you may be obsessed with showing you peer group you are highly successful. Nothing wrong in being a good mom or working hard. But are these pursuits your master? What if no one but God knew....is that enough? What if you lost everything? Is that ok?

***If you are between 40-60*** years old maybe your Master is the obsession is retirement. To have enough money to retire. Are you constantly consumed with fear and anxiety as you watch the stock market fluctuate? OR you are daily anxious about money in general. Again, there is nothing with being wise in good stewardship. But anxiety can be the Master.

How about if you are retired? Who is your Master? You may be consumed with your house, yard and vacations. Perhaps what you own actually demonstrates who was your Master throughout our life. Instead of downsizing and supporting Kingdom work, you shine your trophies and possessions?

So, we either serve our possessions as a Master OR

### ***When God as our Master.***

(We are Bond Slave to Him.) The word Matthew uses for serve is actually the word “slave”. The Western view of slavery is often frowned upon. Yet, it critical to understand the Ancient Near Eastern view of slavery especially in Israel. Because of God’s providence, slaves in Israel where allowed to go free on the seventh year. However, on this seventh year the slave could declare “I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,’ then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life” (Exodus 21:5-6). He would be become a Bond-Servant, and would live serve the master and live him for the rest of his life. In the New Testament Paul, Timothy, James, Peter, and Jude all describe themselves as “bondservants of Christ” (Romans 1:1; Philippians 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1).

We all want to believe that we are free, but the Bible tells us that we are not. We are slaves, every one of us. We are slaves to sin, or we are slaves to Christ. Romans 6 says: Romans 6:6, 23-22 states: “For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin....But now that you have been set free from sin and have **become slaves of God**, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life. 23 For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”.

### **Conclusion:**

The real question this morning is this: Who is your master? Whose business are you about?

It’s one thing to gather in this comfortable building once a week – to raise your hands in worship and make attentive notes during the sermon – but God looks at Monday to Saturday as well. Who are you really? Whose kingdom are you seeking to advance? Who is ultimately your master?

***A radical life is determined by Whose we are and NOT what we own.*** The Christian life is about surrendering to Jesus Christ as your Master every day. The Christian life is about using the limited time and resources we have now to store up a treasure in heaven that will last forever! Our lives are meant to look **RADICALLY** different than those of our neighbours.

*This is the life He has called us to. This is where true joy and everlasting benefit can be found. And this is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.*