

*Sermon on the Mount: Jesus' Challenge to Authentic Discipleship – Week Thirteen*

# ***Loving God with Our Money***

*Matthew 6:19-24*

**Introduction:** We love God with our money when God alone is our master, money is our tool, and we consistently invest in God's kingdom work, anticipating a God-centered reward in heaven.

## **1. *ADMISSION* – Jesus' teachings on money are often tough to interpret.**

- A. *Challenge* – When we read Jesus' teachings on money, we face three interpretative problems.
  - 1. Some interpret them in light of prosperity theology. "God wants you to be rich."
  - 2. Others interpret them in light of Marxist notions of class envy. "God hates the rich."
  - 3. Still others interpret them in *gospel contexts* only. "You're more spiritual if you're poor."
- B. *1<sup>st</sup> Guideline for interpretation* – Interpret Jesus' immediate statements in light of the entire Bible.
  - 1. Immediate statement: You must understand figures of speech, namely hyperbole.
  - 2. Entire Bible: You must understand the topic of money broadly.
- C. *2<sup>nd</sup> Guideline for interpretation* – Interpret Jesus' words in light of economics and church history.
  - 1. Capitalism has Christian roots. Utopianism is wrong. Wealth flows from productivity.
  - 2. Historically, God has used both rich and poor. God doesn't think like we do.

## **2. *JESUS' NEGATIVE COMMAND* – Don't lay-up treasures on earth. *Matt. 6:19***

- A. Jesus' command seems absolute.
  - 1. We have to determine first, "What figure of speech is this? How does it apply?"
  - 2. We have to set this vs. in context of other Scriptures (Pr. 6:6-8; 1 Tim. 5:8; 4:3-4; 6:17).
  - 3. The core attitude Jesus addresses is preoccupation as a god.
  - 4. He urges us to decisively break off the action of independent hoarding.
- B. Jesus gives two practical reasons for not laying up treasures *on earth* that appeal to our benefit.
  - 1. The 1<sup>st</sup> problem is internal to the asset. Things wear out.
  - 2. The 2<sup>nd</sup> problem is external to the asset. Things can get stolen.

## **3. *JESUS' POSITIVE COMMAND* – Do lay-up treasures in heaven. *Matt. 6:20-21***

- A. Jesus' command forces us to address the biblical teaching of rewards. 6:20a
  - 1. Jesus often speaks of rewards in heaven.
  - 2. Why people recoil about the idea of rewards in heaven.
  - 3. What will our rewards in heaven will be like?
  - 4. What will we ultimately do with those rewards?
- B. Jesus gives two practical reasons for laying up treasures *in heaven* that appeal to our benefit.
  - 1. Your investments are secure. 6:20b
  - 2. Your heart will be drawn to a different place. 6:21

## **4. *DECISION* – Disciples face two fundamental options in life. *Matthew 6:22-24***

- A. Option #1 – You can have spiritual eyes vs. non-spiritual eyes. 6:22-23
  - 1. The eye in this picture is your decision making faculty affecting how you perceive life.
  - 2. Some people choose to see life with eternal values, and they apply this to money.
  - 3. Others choose to see life with totally temporal values. They too apply this to money.
  - 4. The result of that choice is dramatic: darkness vs. light. See also 1 Tim. 6:10
- B. Option #2 – You can experience slavery vs. freedom. 6:24
  - 1. Money and God are both powerful in that they provide transcendence and significance.
  - 2. Since they are both ultimate, you cannot serve both at the same time.

## Notes:

Address the Platt and Chan problem in the beginning.  
You can become an idolator in your serving and in your helping.

Our culture is steeped in Marxism. It's hard to even think about money without thinking about Marxism.  
The rhetoric of Marxism is part of our culture.  
The worldview is in compatible with Christianity. It is something to be repented of. You cannot embrace Marxist economics and stay close to Christ.  
Jesus never teaches the worldview of Marxism. Jesus never teaches that money in itself is bad. Jesus never teaches the enforced redistribution of wealth.  
There are fields of studies trying to retrofit Marxism into Christianity. Jesus was not a proto-Marxist.  
What I want to say to you is different than what you might hear.

Jesus view of money:

There will be people who are rich and poor. God will use both.  
God will call some rich people to sacrifice for the sake of a cause.  
God will allow financial crashes to bring some godly rich people to poverty.  
God will lift up some poor people unexpectedly.  
Wealth is not necessarily good or bad. It is a function of living in this world.  
We are not looking for a utopia.  
It's not how much you have, but it's whether you are willing to use financial resources in God's way.

in history, you see that God uses rich and poor to advance kingdom.

Jesus is not into class envy.

Greed does not produce wealth; productivity does.  
Not all wealthy people are greedy are rich. There are many poor people who are incredibly greedy.  
There are many governmental workers who are incredibly greedy.

God might ask some rich people to become poor. God might ask some poor people to gain wealth.  
Will you submit your wealth to God.

The problem: radical prosperity theology and a Christianized Marxist notion of poverty. It's unbiblical and antihistorical.

How do you deal with the strong statements of Jesus? It's harder to follow God if you're rich because you don't have to depend on him. It's easier if you're poor because you have to depend on him.

So here's the deal: Jesus uses hyperbole. Some will say, "O sure downplay the commands of God with the hyperbole card." In the culture of Jesus hyperbole was a rhetorical principle that was used to disrupt complacency and force them to think. Like gouging eyes out.

When Jesus says no rich person goes to heaven, it's a hyperbole. It's impossible unless God breaks through.

### **Don't store up stuff so that you can indulge ego. Does that mean you can't...**

Does it mean you can't save up money to put a down payment on a house?  
Does that mean you can't put money in a 401k?  
Does that mean you can't put money into a health savings account?  
Does that mean I can't buy a car that might have some luxury to it?

Jesus is talking about you living as a practical atheist.

It's bad for you if you do those things.

**Store up treasures**

Remember the concept of heaven: it's now and not yet. It's power and mission is now. Death doesn't interrupt it. It brings it to full fruition. Jesus is talking about the now and not yet of the Christian life. It's like engagement.

We don't set our hope on heaven to kick back and do nothing. We set our

Use your present resources in a strategic way.

Ex house.

Ex car.

Ex vacation house.

Ex. time

Are there any formulas for this.

God calls us to wrestle with how we'll use our money at every stage of our lives.