

Matthew 6:19-24

Out of the Heart Flows ??

Have you ever seen someone who was really washed out? Either they were sick or life had hit them so hard that they seemed to look unhealthy. Their color didn't look good and they were pale and pasty looking.

Kind of like this person.

Just by looking at them you could tell they were stressed, sick, not getting good rest or all the above.

As we go through the teachings of Jesus, this is His concern. He knows that if Christians get caught up in the ways of the world and the ways that can naturally come out of our flesh, our old nature, then we can become a Christian who looks like a washed out Christian. Someone who is not experiencing the joy, peace and vitality of the life Jesus died on the cross for them to have.

This morning we find ourselves right in the middle of the teaching Jesus had called the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus gives us some negative examples of how not to be but He also gives us some positive directions of how we can live out our new life in the Kingdom of God.

In fact, this is the hope Jesus has for us.

In the Old Testament you can read about Moses, after he had spent time with God on Mount Sinai getting the Ten Commandments and other directions from God on how to worship Him and how to live life.

Read with me this account.

Exodus 34:29-30a, "And it came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai...that Moses did not know that the skin of His face shone because of his speaking with God."

Moses spent time with God and it was evident to everyone. He was following God's lead for His life and the glory of God was on him for everyone to see.

This is where God wants each of you. This one of the reasons Jesus died on the cross. So you could spend time with His Father and have your face shine with the glory of God for everyone to see.

Let's look at our passage in Matthew.

Matthew 6:19-24, "Do not store up for yourself treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where 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 eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. 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! No one can serve two masters; for either they will hate the one and love the other. Or they will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

This is one of those teachings of Jesus where He is saying

- 1. Be careful of what you treasure because what you treasure will take you heart there**

Moth and rust will destroy earthly treasures Jesus said. Or someone might steal your stuff.

It is true that everything we have will eventually come to ruin. It might take 20 years, 100 years or even more. Whatever possessions you have will eventually fall prey to rain, rust, mice, mold or thieves. Or, at the end of this life they will be left to someone else to use or dispose of.

Before we go any further, Jesus is not saying His disciples can't have possessions, bank and saving accounts. There is nothing wrong with saving money for a rainy day. In fact, the Bible encourages a person to be prepared.

Look with me at **Proverbs 6:6-8**, “**Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Which having no chief, officer or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest.**”

2. Christians are encouraged to be wise and prudent with their finances, saving for the future

Some confuse the story of the rich man who came to Jesus and asked what He must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus asked him a couple of questions as to how he was handling life in light of the 10 commandments and the guy said pretty good but what do I still lack. Jesus said this one thing do you lack. Go and sell all of your possessions, give to the poor and come and follow me.

This is not something Jesus is asking us to do. This was a specific answer to this particular person's request as to what he should do. In the end the rich young man went away, didn't follow Jesus because he had great possessions.

Look at Jesus' response. **Matthew 19:23-24**, “**And Jesus said to His disciples, ‘Truly, I say unto you, only with difficulty will a rich person enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God.’**”

Why? Jesus could see this man's treasure had his heart. This man loved his treasure, his riches so much that he was willing to forgo a relationship with Jesus. That's the danger Jesus wants His disciples to take a look at.

3. Is your **earthly** treasure getting in the way of what true treasure is and that is an ongoing, developing relationship with Jesus

Jesus shows us how to avoid this when He says, **“But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where 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.”**

So the question is, ‘How do we lay up treasure in heaven? First I would say be obedient to the prompting of the Holy Spirit concerning the finances God has given you.

We are encouraged throughout scripture to give to the Lord of the riches He provides us aren't we? When we are faithful in the giving of our tithes and offerings, God sees these gifts and the heart behind it and He honors the giver by protecting them from being too focused on self and becoming too greedy.

But giving goes beyond what we put in the offering plate. A giving heart is one who is sensitive to the needs of others and is willing to help that need in some way.

I know some of you have opened up your home for others. Some have given extra help financially when you see a need within the church or in someone's life.

Some of you are willing to serve in the church because you see the need and because you want people to experience the presence of the Lord in their lives in the best possible way.

I commend you because it shows what you treasure. You treasure above all else, the Lord and His ways.

A great passage that we will come to later on in Matthew is this one.

Matthew 13:44, “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again, and from the joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.”

What do you think the treasure in the field was that the man was willing to sell all he had to obtain? Was it a pot of gold? Was it a diamond mine that would make him wealthy?

No, it was Jesus.

4. Finding Jesus and the blessed life with Him He came to offer is the greatest treasure in this life

Look at how Paul put it.

Philippians 3:7-8, “But whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”

Paul’s eyes were on Jesus weren’t they? And because His eyes were constantly focused on Jesus everything else this world had to offer paled in comparison.

How did Paul come to this place?

PIC

Michal and I have these two kittens in our basement right now.

We have lived in the parsonage for three years and over the last three summers we have watched as a couple of alley cats have had kittens. The first year we lived here the two female cats had kittens and I think there were three in each litter. We watched as they would grow, play and explore. It was fun to watch. But then at about 5-6 months they would get sick and pretty soon we saw them stumbling around, going blind in their eyes and then eventually we found them dead.

The last straw for us is when I had to put down one that was really sick and then Michal found another one dead in our window well. There were really cute cats that had the potential to be great and affectionate cats for someone but they were in the world and the world damaged them and then eventually killed them. No more we said. We couldn't stand to sit by and watch them as kittens playing and romping around and then die. So last year we made a choice. We would snag the kittens, rehab them, settle them down, help them to eliminate their fears of humans and then we would find good homes for them. And we did. It wasn't too hard last year as the kittens were only 4-5 weeks old when we captured them.

Well, this year we weren't able to capture the new kittens so early. It was at about 8 weeks or so before we were in a position to capture them. These kittens though had been in the world long enough that they are really scared of us. Even though we feed them, pet them, they don't trust us yet. It is going to take more time spent with them to win them over. But we are patient because we know that eventually, in time, they will come around and put their trust and faith in us.

For now though, Michal and I going to be using another strategy. Instead of forcing ourselves on them, picking them up and forcing them to sit on our laps with the expectation that they will come around, we are going to sit down by their cage, open their door and let them make the decision to come to us. It will take a little more patience on our part but if they make the choice then they will come to love us as much as we love them.

Do you see the parallels between Christ and you?

Look at a couple of scriptures.

2 Peter 3:9, “The Lord is not slow about His promise (to return) but is patient towards you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.”

Jesus looks out upon the earth and He sees all the traps the world, your flesh and Satan has set for you. He knows how easy it is for people to get caught up in the things of the world and in a similar but deeper way as Michal and I ache for the kittens in our alley, Jesus aches for each of you.

When Michal and I come into the room where the kittens are they back up into the furthest part of their cage and they cower.

Sometimes, I think when we come to teachings from Jesus like where we find ourselves today, people shy away from it. But I believe at the core of their...how do I say it, bristling up? At the core is a misunderstanding. They don't understand just how much Jesus loves them and has only the best life for them.

Jesus doesn't command us to give to the poor, serve others, store up treasures in heaven. That is not an end to itself. He hopes that as He sits by us and when we choose to set by Him we will automatically begin to see things differently and we will want to use the wealth we have been given to serve others so they can experience the Savior and the life they have been given.

John 8:12, “The Jesus again spoke to them, saying, ‘I am the light of the world; he that follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.’”

Back in our passage of Matthew Jesus said...

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

Jesus is the light isn't He? We celebrate Him, what He has done for us and the fact that He is in us.

5. As we spend time Jesus, celebrating Him and learning from Him, Jesus is the light that fills our entire body

and that is what we want...amen?

They don't know it yet but in the end, these kittens will be full of love, joy and happiness, so much so that they will share that love with others and bring them joy and happiness too. This is what Jesus wants for you.

We don't think of storing up treasure in heaven but it does happen as we are filled with Jesus' love and we share that love with those around us.

Let's pray