

KINGDOM LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

MATTHEW 6:19-34

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness,
and all these things will be added to you.*

Matthew 6:33

INTRODUCTION

A. During my sermon preparation this week, I came across this article online:

We live in a material world. Every day, we are surrounded by things that compete for our attention, our money, our time, and ultimately our hearts. We are encouraged to accumulate more, upgrade what we have, protect our assets, build financial security, and make sure we have enough for tomorrow. The world tells us that a full life is found in what we own, what we can control, and what we can keep.

But Jesus confronts that way of thinking in Matthew 6:19–34. He does not deny that we have real earthly needs. We need food, clothing, shelter, work, and provision. Nor does He commend irresponsibility or careless living. Instead, Jesus addresses something deeper: the tendency of the human heart to make material things its treasure, wealth its master, and tomorrow its burden.

In this passage, Jesus speaks about three closely connected matters: treasure, mastery, and anxiety. He asks us where we are storing our treasure, what has become the master of our lives, and whether we

truly trust our heavenly Father with our daily needs and our uncertain future.

Kingdom living in a material world means learning to hold earthly things in their proper place. It means seeing that possessions are temporary, money is a poor master, and worry cannot add one hour to life. It means fixing our hearts on what lasts, serving God with undivided devotion, and trusting the Father who knows exactly what His children need.

The world says, “Store up, secure yourself, and worry about tomorrow.” Jesus says, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” The question before us is not simply, “*What do I have?*” but, “*What has my heart?*”¹

B. In Matthew 6:19-34, Jesus teaches us about kingdom living in a material world.

1. We encounter FOUR alternatives that set the direction of our thoughts and our actions each day:

- The choice between *two treasures* – on earth or in heaven,
- The choice between *two conditions* – light or darkness,
- The choice between *two masters* – God or money,
- The choice between *two life purposes* – our own welfare or the kingdom of God.

2. Here, in **Matthew 6:19-34**, Jesus provides us with His ACTION-PLAN to make the right choices every day – to daily practice kingdom living in a material world.

¹ Perplexity

- Store up your treasures in heaven.
- Guard the vision that directs your life.
- Determine who you will serve.
- Prioritize the Kingdom of God.

STORE UP YOUR TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:19-21

6:19-21 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.

A. The keyword in this paragraph is “treasure.”

1. It appears three times in these three verses.
2. “Treasures” mean “*wealth, riches, and possessions.*”

B. Each day, we are faced with the choice to either lay up our treasures on earth or in heaven.

1. “¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal...”
 - a. FIRST – What this does *not* mean:

i. This does *not* mean we should not own possessions.

In **Genesis 12-50**, God blessed Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph with property and possessions for their welfare, and so they could bless others.

ii. This does *not* mean we should not provide for ourselves and others.

1 Timothy 5:8 calls the believer who refuses to provide for his family “worse than an unbeliever.”

iii. This does *not* mean we should not prepare for the future.

Proverbs 6:6-8 praises the ant for storing food in the Summer to have during the Winter.

iv. This does *not* mean we should not enjoy the good things we have.

1 Timothy 4:3-4 and 6:17 tells us that God provides us with good things to enjoy, and we receive them with gratitude.

b. NEXT – What this *does* mean:

i. Jesus calls us away from attitudes and actions that disregards the purposes of the kingdom of God and prioritizes a self-centered pursuit and accumulation of material wealth on earth; that is, *self-kingdom building, self-will advancing*.

aa. In the Disciple's Prayer, Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10).

bb. The person who cares little to nothing about the advancement of God's kingdom and the accomplishment of God's will on earth is self-concerned –

bb-I. *His aim and agenda in life are to advance his own kingdom on earth – with fame and fortune, prosperity and financial security.*

bb-II. *His aim and agenda in life are to accomplish his own will on earth – by realizing all his "Vision-Board" aspirations – by completing all his agendas – by making all his dreams come true.*

ii. FACT: Earthly riches are not permanent.

- Designer clothes that are worn as a status statement could be ruined by "moths" and fall-apart.
- Expensive metal jewelry that adorns the rich and famous could "rust" and lose their attraction.
- Highly valued possessions could be "stolen by thieves" and gone forever.

iii. The person who spends his entire life storing up treasures on earth will NOT achieve the ultimate good he is truly longing for; instead, he will find at the end of his life that he lost time and energy – people and possessions – and ultimately his own soul.

aa. To build your entire life on earthly, material wealth is an unwise – foolish – investment.

bb. In **Mark 8:36**, Jesus asked this question – “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul?”

cc. In **Luke 12:16-21**, Jesus told this parable:

A rich man had a fertile farm that produced fine crops. He said to himself, ‘What should I do? I don’t have room for all my crops.’ Then he said, ‘I know! I’ll tear down my barns and build bigger ones. Then I’ll have room enough to store all my wheat and other goods. And I’ll sit back and say to myself, “My friend, you have enough stored away for years to come. Now take it easy! Eat, drink, and be merry!” ’

“But God said to him, ‘You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?’

“Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God.” ^{NLT}

iv. THERE IS A BETTER WAY.

2. “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.”

a. Jesus teaches us to store up our treasures in heaven.

i. “Heaven” is *where God dwells* (Matthew 6:9) – is *where God’s will is accomplished* (Matthew 6:10) – *it is God’s throne* (Matthew 5:34) – *it is God’s kingdom* (Matthew 5:3).

ii. “Treasures in heaven” are what remains forever from a life that treasures Christ above everything else.

They are superior to “treasures on earth.”

- “Treasures on earth” can be destroyed by “moth and rust” – BUT “treasures in heaven” are indestructible.
- “Treasures on earth” can be “stolen by thieves” – BUT “treasures in heaven” are safe and secure forever.

iii. During our time on earth, we should be making real and lasting spiritual investments in heaven by our daily choices and actions.

aa. In **Matthew 6:1-18**, Jesus provided us three practical ways we can be storing up treasures in heaven:

aa-I. Matthew 6:3-4 – ... *when you give to the needy*, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. *And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

aa-II. Matthew 6:6 – ... *when you pray*, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. *And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

aa-III. Matthew 6:17-18 – ... *when you fast*, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. *And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.*

bb. Practicing generosity and praying and fasting are not timewasters; rather, they *display God's kingdom*, they *do God's will*, and they are *counted as true and lasting treasures in heaven*.

bb-I. Revelation 14:13 – I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write this: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Blessed indeed,” says the Spirit, “that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow them!”

bb-II. In short – “What we do in life echoes in eternity.” ²

² Maximus Decimus Meridius (played by Russell Crowe) in the opening battle scene of the *Gladiator*. 2000.

b. “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

i. In the Bible, the “heart” represents our whole-being. It is the control center of all our thoughts, emotions, and actions.

ii. There is a real attachment between our hearts and those things we cherish most –

aa. If our hearts are consumed and controlled by idolatry and materialism, then we will cherish “treasures on earth” most.

bb. If our hearts are consumed and controlled by Christ and His kingdom, then we will cherish “treasures in heaven” most.

iii. By seeing what people treasure most, we know where their hearts are.

aa. Where is your heart? What do you cherish most?

bb. May you cherish CHRIST above all things. May your heart be settled and safe IN CHRIST today and every day.

cc. C.S. Lewis – “Aim at Heaven and you will get earth ‘thrown in’: aim at earth and you will get neither.” ³

³ Lewis, C.S. *Mere Christianity*, book III, chapter 10, “Hope.”

GUARD THE VISION THAT DIRECTS YOUR LIFE

Matthew 6:22-23

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!

A. In **Matthew 6:21**, Jesus talked about the “heart.” Here, in **Matthew 6:22-23**, He speaks about the “eye.”

B. Jesus utilized *figurative speech* to teach His disciples an important life-lesson that they needed to learn.

1. The “eye” represents the attitude and outlook of our hearts that shape the direction of our whole life.

In **Ephesians 1:18**, Paul refers to “the eyes of your hearts.”

2. “If your eye is healthy” – In Greek, “healthy” means, “single, sincere, whole, clear, and undivided.”

This is a healthy attitude and outlook of a healthy heart in Christ, expressed by a life “full of light” from the inside-out – a clean and clear life before God.

3. “If your eye is bad” – “Bad” means “evil.”

a. This is an evil attitude and outlook of an evil heart without Christ, expressed by a life “full of darkness” from the inside-out – a sinful, selfish life before God.

b. “If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!”

i. When bad people think they are good people – “How great is the darkness!”

ii. “Good” people do not go to heaven; redeemed people do.

C. APPLICATION:

1. IN THIS CONTEXT –

a. People who possess *a healthy eye with a life full of light* are those who prioritize God’s kingdom and God’s will and extend God’s generous and practical goodness to others in need.

Proverbs 22:9 – Whoever has a *bountiful eye* will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor.

b. People who possess *a bad eye with a life full of darkness* are those who despise God’s kingdom and God’s will and demonstrate selfishness, greediness, and lovelessness towards others.

Proverbs 28:22 – A man with an *evil eye* – *stingy man* ^{ESV} – *greedy one* ^{CSB} – hastens after riches, and does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

2. What kind of person are you this morning? Is your eye healthy or bad? – *We must daily guard the vision that directs our lives.*

DETERMINE WHO YOU WILL SERVE

Matthew 6:24

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.

A. Bob Dylan – “You’re gonna have to serve somebody. Well, it may be the devil or it may be the Lord, but you’re gonna have to serve somebody.”
– NO ONE IS EXEMPT.

B. At the very core of the issue of how we relate to material wealth is WORSHIP.

1. For this reason, the Apostle Paul connects “*covetousness*” – greedy and jealous desire – with “*idolatry*” – idol-worship.

Colossians 3:5 – Put to death therefore what is earthly in you ... covetousness, which is idolatry.

2. This is demonstrated in **Matthew 4:8-10** –

... the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, “All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.” Then

Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ““You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve (sacred service, worship).”

C. You cannot serve God and money.

1. FIRST – The choice of “masters” is between two gods – one is real and the other is false.

a. God is the uncreated Creator and Sustainer of all created things.

He is everything we need – He satisfies us with His life, presence, and joy.

Psalms 16:11 – You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

b. Money is made by humans, then served by humans.

Money is a false god and a liar – it promises happiness, satisfaction, and freedom, but it brings stress, anxiety, and bondage.

2. NEXT – The choice of exclusive allegiance – “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.”

a. *Under the rule of God*, our possessions do not possess us – instead, we serve God and His purposes as His faithful stewards over the material possessions He graciously entrusts to us.

b. *Under the rule of money*, our possessions possess us – these slaves are bound not free – these slaves are hoarders not Stewards – these slaves merely exist without living.

D. Who will you serve today and every day?

1 Kings 18:21 – “How long will you go limping between two different opinions? If the LORD is God, follow him...”

PRIORITIZE THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Matthew 6:25-34

6:25 ²⁵ “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?

A. “Therefore” connects **Matthew 6:25-34** with **Matthew 6:19-24**.

Because you are *storing up treasures in heaven* – because you *have a healthy vision for life* – because you *exclusively worship and serve God* – “I tell you...”

B. “... do not be anxious about your life”

1. “Anxious” – “troubled, preoccupied, mentally pulled apart by worry”

2. *This is the opposite of having faith in God – trusting in God.*

In Matthew 6:30, Jesus addresses anxious people – “O you of little faith.”

3. Anxiety comes when we permit our situations and circumstances to become “bigger” than God in our imaginations – when we allow our needs to become larger than God the Creator, Sustainer, and Provider in our fears.

4. Anxiety does not solve problems nor makes our lives better; it actually does the opposite – it makes us things worse mentally, emotionally, physically, and situationally.

5. THEREFORE – Jesus commands us, “... do not be anxious about your life.”

C. Listen to the comforting and settling words of Jesus in **Matthew 6:26-32**:

6:26-32 ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?

²⁸ And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹ yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ³⁰ But if God so clothes the

grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?

³¹ Therefore do not be anxious, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

A. In **Luke 12:32**, Jesus told His disciples – “Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

This is an argument from the greater to lesser – If God intends to grant us the kingdom of heaven, then we can trust Him to take care of our daily needs on earth.

B. THEREFORE – “Do not be anxious...”

Philippians 4:6-7 – Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

6:33 ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

A. This is the attitude and action of faith – this is the Action-Plan of King Jesus for His disciples in the world – PRIORITIZE THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

B. OUR PART – Seek the advancement of God’s kingdom and God’s moral and social righteousness in the world by (1) preaching the good news of Jesus and (2) practicing the way of Jesus – in heart and action, in speech and deeds.

C. GOD’S PART – He will provide for our daily needs.

Philippians 4:19 – My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

6:34 ³⁴ “Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

A. Practice Matthew 6:33 each day and every day.

B. If God has taken care of our PAST – *He forgave us* – and taken care of our FUTURE – *He will glorify us* – THEN WE CAN TRUST AND OBEY HIM IN THE PRESENT WITHOUT LIVING WITH GUILT ABOUT THE PAST AND FEAR ABOUT THE FUTURE.

C. “Do not be anxious – but seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”

CONCLUSION

Invite people to come to Christ – to believe in Him.