

did
JESUS
really say?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: WEEK Six

Please Read Matthew 6:19-24

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, 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. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

What immediately jumps out to you from this passage?

Thinking about the historical context, what do you think would have stood out to people in the first century?

Looking at these verses through a modern lens, what should contemporary followers of Christ glean from these verses?

1. Read verses 19-21 again:

19 "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

So, again in this passage we see Jesus drawing us to think, not just about our physical life on earth, but also about heaven and the next life. The phrase "treasures in heaven" has delighted and confused Christians for centuries. What do you think is the difference between a treasure that can be stored on earth and a treasure that can be stored in heaven?

In 2021 we may not be as afflicted with moths and vermin and thieves as they were in Jesus' day when they did not have banks or secure homes. But our earthy treasures have similar problems, our technology goes out of date and eventually our lives end. Earthly treasures have a shelf life. Can you think of any example in your life where you treasured something, you had to have it, but then after acquiring it you had some buyers remorse or at least, as you look back now, you see how foolish it was to treasure it?

2. Verse 21, reminds us that it's really about our heart. Jesus makes this profound statement, **"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** What do you think Jesus intends us to take away from this statement?

Many commentators link the passage we are studying Matthew 6:19-24 with what Paul says in Colossians 3:1-2, they link them because Jesus and Paul are both talking about the heart and focusing on the heavenly realm. Colossians 3:1-2 **Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.**

Do you see a parallel between these verses?

I think these verses bring us to a decisive point of examining what we actually treasure and how what we treasure shifts our focus. Could you honestly identify (and write on this page) some earthly things that you need to treasure less and some eternal things you need to treasure more?

3. The next two verses may not be easy to understand, but I think if you think deeply about them, these mysterious verses might begin to make more sense. Read them again please, **"22 The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"** So, what do you think Jesus is trying to say?

General consensus on these verses is that Jesus is talking about how we evaluate what we treasure. If your eye is healthy then you see clearly what is of true value, heavenly treasure. But if your eyes are unhealthy, if you actually value things that are bad for you or just unhelpful, then the light within you is darkness. That means you are valuing and treasuring things that will never satisfy but you don't know it, so you keep running after them. Does the verse make more sense now?

Another scripture that comments on people who treasure and seek after things that are unhealthy and ungodly, is Philippians 3:18, **"For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things."**

So, looking at both of these verses together we understand there are people who have unhealthy eyes, who, when they see what is evil they think it is good. As Paul says, they take glory in things they should be ashamed of. He sums it up by saying **their mind is set on earthly things**. Sadly, at times our minds can also be set on earthly things. When are you most tempted to treasure and focus on earthly things?

4. Now read the last verse again, 24 **"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."** After thinking more deeply about this passage, what do you take away from verse 24?

Jesus in this last verse might be addressing those who are thinking they can treasure both earthly things and heavenly things. The analogy He uses invokes the world of slaves who have masters. It was commonly understood in Jesus' day that any slave who had two masters would value and be devoted to one more than the other. This understanding may not resonate with us today, but the last half of the verse should bring any follower of Christ into full focus. We cannot serve both God and money. The word translated money could also refer to our worldly possessions. So this last phrase brings the entire section together, Jesus is saying we have to choose what we will treasure and we can't have it both ways.

What is one takeaway you have from this study? What concrete changes do you need to consider based on these verses?