

Reading: Matthew 6:19-24

Theme: Our Treasure Store.

It is well known that advertisers use pester power to sell products. The process goes something like this: especially on children's TV, in a shop, on children's websites and social media, along with ordinary advertisements there are those aimed at, geared at children. While children may not have big income, they are captivated by the adverts, therefore the product and they pester all the time until there is a confrontation between them and adults or the adults give in and buy it! What the child sees, it wants, longs for, must have and is not satisfied until it has the object of its desire and satisfied then!?

It is one of the oldest tricks in the book, but modern advertisers think it is wonderful! Yet it has been around for such a long time - from the Garden of Eden when Eve was tempted to look at the forbidden fruit and to desire it!

In the verses we read, we in a new section in the Sermon on the Mount - chapter 5 Jesus shows what a Christian is; then goes on to warn of the teaching of the Pharisees and in the 1st part of chapter 6 warns of the practices of the Pharisees. In the 2nd part of chapter 6 the Pharisees, hypocrites fade into the background, only to appear now and then as Jesus turns our attention to living our life in a world with all its cares, worries and pressures.

Here we are. We are Christians and we want to live for God in a world that is anti-God. Living life has its own pressures, cares and worries, but to live in a relationship with God as our Father, adds further pressures as we try to live in a way that will please Him. Our lives have subtle, even open pressures on it to live in our society and to do so in a way acceptable to it. Some have said "No" and shut themselves away in monasteries or communes. Others

isolate themselves in an idealistic time warp and do not really live in modern society. Yet we are to be light and salt in our days. We are to live carefully so as to affect the world around us for God and are to be careful society and its standards do not shape and mould us to conform to its ways and standards.

We are to learn what Jesus is teaching here in v19-24 as it forms the basis of the confidence in our Father in verse v25ff “*Therefore...*” As Jesus comes to this subject of living in a relationship to God in our world and age, He gives us a command, a principal which He then, in His wisdom and love, gives us reasons, arguments why this is the right thing and so it should strengthen our understanding and resolve. Let’s note 3 things from these verses:

1. The Command Concerning Our Treasures.

I say “command”, not 2 commands because it deals with our treasures and there is both a negative and positive aspect to this command - v19a & 20a.

Negatively - Jesus says “*Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth*” - this is what we are not to do. Many today condemn wealth and capitalistic procedures but Jesus doesn’t say “money” but treasures. This term is not restricted to money alone but covers something wider and more important - anything we treasure and value. It is not so much to do with possessions, with things, but our attitude to such. A person may be fabulously wealthy and all they have may not be their treasure. A person can be poor and yet the little they have can be their treasure or they set their hearts on getting...

Our treasure is that on which our heart’s desires are set. It is that from which we get our main or total satisfaction from. It would involve things such as family, relationships, possessions, power,

status, cars, as well as money and many other things. Basically, Jesus is saying that we are not to store up things for our happiness and satisfaction **that centre on this life and world only**. If our joy and happiness exclusively centre on such things, then we are to realise we are storing up treasures on earth - whatever they are - friendships, reputations, relationships, wealth, power or satisfaction. Whatever form our treasure takes, we are commanded not to store it up on earth.

Positively - we are to store up treasures in heaven. Often people say this is pie in the sky when you die, but it is not. The storing of treasure in heaven means we have a right use of what this world has and offers, we delight in and use it to do good for others but not in a self-centred way. It involves a right attitude to providing for one's own future and for now too. We are to realise that whatever we have is not ours as an automatic right. As Christians we are stewards of such and have to use all for God's glory and to serve Him. It may be money and so Paul writes in 1 Timothy 6:17-19 *"Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, **who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment**. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life."* The Lord Jesus tells that on the day of judgement He will own our visiting, clothing, feeding and caring for Him - because we helped our brothers and sisters in need.

It is not doing good to gain salvation and eternal life, but because we have such a gift from God, we do things to please Him and at the same time are showing we realise this world and all it has will end and we are living in the light of eternity. We are pilgrims,

travelling home and all we have should be for our Father's use. That means we are careful not to exclusively centre our joy, hopes, happiness and love on such things that we have been entrusted with on the way home. Realising this, we will seek to use it correctly so we are not ensnared by such but use it to help others to come on the journey also. Our treasures are not to be the things of this life and world, but our treasures are those things of eternity in heaven. What then is our heart centred on? Does our joy, satisfaction depend on getting all or having this or that? We are to look and consider where our treasures really are. Moving on we see:

2. Why This Command Makes Sense.

Jesus is addressing His people - those who have trusted in Him. Jesus does not give a bare command, but also gives us reasons why it makes sense to have this right view, attitude and practice towards living in the world in this way. This is a danger we can fall into as Christians, but if it is a danger for Christians, then it is massively so for those who have never been born-again by God's Spirit. So, both Christians and those who are not yet Christians are to listen to what Jesus has commanded and to understand why the command makes sense. We all need to examine our attitude to life, for we all need to store up treasures in heaven and not on earth.

The 1st reason Jesus gives is in v19b – Message says “*Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse! -stolen by burglars.*” We are not to restrict Jesus' words only to moth, rust and robbery. Jesus says that the treasures of this life do not last, are changeable, are so passing, indeed they don't even last in the satisfaction they give. We know our cars will eventually rust, our homes need constant attention, our savings get eroded by inflation. Yet our treasures could be our health, our looks, our fitness but we know all those fade, decay and will go or

they can be taken from us suddenly. We may place our hope in a new relationship or friendship, or an experience but those things can suddenly fail and flee from our lives and we are left with no satisfaction from our treasures.

Ultimately, we, even if we latch on to a long-lasting treasure, we ourselves will decay, die and nothing we have of this world and all it offers will be of any use to us. We may fortify our homes, possessions, lives but all will be affected one day. Thieves will break-in - whether literal thieves, or other thieves of illness, sickness or bereavement. In today's climate it could be the thief of war or business collapses or relationship breakdowns. To place our ultimate confidence in the things of this life around us is a delusion and yet so many **only** place their confidence in what they can see, touch, enjoy or measure. Yet they and their treasures will one day cease to be. That's why we are not to store up treasures on earth as if they are our only and complete hope. I have to say this point that it is not wrong to have possessions, properties, finances etc. but our hearts are not to be set exclusively on such as if they are the be all and end all of what life is about. They will fade, decay and ultimately do us little good and either they will leave us or we will certainly leave them.

In contrast to this, the treasures stored in heaven will have no change or decay, nor can they be harmed by anyone or anything. Message v20 "*Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars.*" Incredibly, as we store up treasures there, we find so many benefits in our day by day lives from such investments in this heavenly savings account, treasure store! We will find our lives affected, benefiting and enjoying every day life more than we could have ever imagined. We will find our chief source of contentment and happiness is our treasure in heaven, for we know it is always ours and is "*an inheritance that can never*

perish, spoil or fade - kept in heaven for” us (1 Peter 1:4). More could be said here on this, but realise our treasure is kept, guarded, reserved for us by God and is guaranteed for us in its fullest enjoyment one day. We are kept for them too. Yet, even now we enjoy the “interest” on them in our everyday lives and if it is wonderful here on earth, what will the full enjoyment be like in heaven?

This is an argument of sense - *“Why have fading treasures when we can have everlasting treasures?”* It makes sense to store treasures in heaven. Whether we realise it or not, we are like the child affected by the adverts - our hearts become set on these treasures around us and we serve our desires for such. We are to understand, recognise these treasures will grip us, captivate us, enthral us and our desires and actions. What do we want to control and dominate us? Useless, perishing things or eternal, God-ward things?

We are not to let the treasures of earth captivate our hearts and blind our eyes as they will direct our life, mind and desires. We not to store up these treasures on earth and be enslaved by them, then lose them all one day. Aim to be constantly storing treasures in heaven and as we do this we will more and more correctly value the things of God, the spiritual things aright as our hearts and eyes will be there more and more and our desires, wills, motives and attitudes will be to serve and glorify God more and more here on earth.

What is affecting us the most at this time? Are we exclusively only concerned for the here and now and have no thought for eternal treasures? If that is the case then we may not be a Christian and we cannot really begin to understand or long after the things of God, as our focus will be on the treasures of this life perhaps be it

an ever so subtle influence. Perhaps as a Christian someone here is captivated by the treasures on earth, and the Lord desires our heart and life to refocus on Him and the things of His kingdom otherwise we will not only be the loser in time but miss out on greater joys in eternity when the rewards are given out (1 Corinthians 3:12-15).

3. Why This Command Is Needed.

Whatever captivates, directs, motivates and controls us is our master. In v24 the Lord Jesus places a choice before us - one or the other! Who or what controls our mind, will and motives? If it is only earthly treasures then we are to realise it is linked to a world that is contrary to God and His ways. If it is heavenly treasure, then it is a heaven that is contrary to the world and its ruling principles. Both cannot rule us! They are opposites and extremes. It needs to be one or the other. We are not to compromise, for if we do, we will not be happy in the world or happy in the things of God. We are to choose who we will serve - if God is God, if Jesus has saved us then serve Him; but if we don't think He is worthwhile serving, then serve earthly treasure and enjoy it while we can, for its enjoyment will soon diminish, fade and we have to have more of such to keep on enjoying such to the same level.

Man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever - both in this life and then in eternity - where we will do so in an ever increasing and never ending fresh way. Yet sin says "No" and tries to keep us occupied with a toy, a trinket, a pleasure, a stolen moment of wrong, a life of sin against the God who made us and keeps us alive, who is the true and fullest source of happiness, pleasure, joy. Other things are not really lasting treasures - fame, fortune, family, job. We can so easily sell our souls so lightly and cheaply. The Lord Jesus tells us that if we were to gain the whole

world and to lose our soul, we would have a rotten deal as we would sell our soul cheaply.

Both as a Christian or an unbeliever, we are to wake up! We are to be serious about finding this God for ourselves and serving Him all our days. To only lay-up treasures on earth is to put all our eggs in a basket that will be sure to be smashed and ruined and all our treasures will perish along with all our hope. To lay up treasures in heaven is to have them stored safely in the safest place of all and one day we will enjoy them for ever. As great as the treasures of earth are - for God has given us all things richly to enjoy, but they are only enjoyed for a short time 70, 80 years or a bit more, but possibly less. As time goes on they will fade in our lives, we will enjoy them less and less, we can so easily overvalue them and yet we can learn their worthlessness too late.

The treasures that are in heaven are forever and we will enjoy them constantly, in a fresh way and even after millions of years they will still be bringing us greater joys and pleasures. They will not fade, spoil or perish but sadly we so often undervalue them and not realise their true worth at this point in time. I ask us all now to begin to value and appreciate them aright and start storing them up from this day forward.

Perhaps someone here has never considered treasure in heaven. Well, it begins by making THE TREASURE of heaven our own - by trusting the Lord Jesus as our own Saviour. To those of us who believe He is precious and we are to make Him ours and then store treasure in heaven for ourselves by living aright in this world that God has given us; as we do so we glorify God and enjoy Him in preparation for glorifying and enjoying Him forever in heaven. Treasure in heaven will affect the way we live now and we draw down on its investment with joy and delight as our life goes on.