

WHAT DO YOU TREASURE

During our last devotional I asked everyone the challenging life fulfillment question, “Do you know what you are living for?” I also asked if you were truly happy and content with what you do and/or what you have. These challenging and thought provoking questions cause you to think about the true meaning of life and happiness. Although it has only been a week since our last game and devotional, I hope that some of you had a chance to think it over, and if not give it some thought right now.

“What are you living for?”

“What do you consider is the true meaning of life and happiness?”

I expect and hope someone will give me the typical (yet correct) ‘Sunday school/church’ answer, “Knowing God and bringing Him glory.” This is the correct answer, but I wonder how many of us truly believe this, pursue it and have evidence of it in our lives? When I asked these questions, what was the first thing that popped into your head; *family, education, a good job/career, money?* I’m not expecting anyone to confess that they were thinking these things, nor am I claiming that any of the things are in and of themselves bad. However, it is extremely important to realize what place these items have in your life. What is in your heart?

I believe in the infallibility of the Bible as the Word of God given to us to learn and be fully equipped for every good work¹, so let us turn to the Bible and try to decipher and learn together. We will be looking at two parables. Let us start by reading, *Luke 12:13-21* (ESV).

The Parable of the Rich Fool

¹³ *Someone in the crowd said to him [Jesus], “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.”* ¹⁴ *But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?”* ¹⁵ *And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for **one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.**”* ¹⁶ *And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully,¹⁷ and he thought to himself,^x ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’* ¹⁸ *And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods.’* ¹⁹ *And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up^z for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’* ²⁰ *But God said to him, ‘Fool! ^zThis night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’* ²¹ *So is the one^e who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”*

In this passage the Lord Jesus teaches us about what it means to be a fool, a RICH fool. Jesus tells us a parable about a foolish man who has placed his treasure in something that is very temporary. Before I proceed any further, I want to note that this message applies to all of us, both Christians and non-Christians.

I believe a key idea in this passage is that a **person’s life is not defined by what he has or possesses** for these items are very temporary. How many of us have chased after happiness in the form of a particular degree, a specific job/career, or even a certain level of wealth. What if you acquire all these things and the Lord calls for your life before you are able to enjoy any of it? Just as the rich man has acquired ample riches to retire, relax and be happy the Lord takes what he cannot store: his life/soul.

To help us get a better understanding of this idea, let’s look at another passage in the Bible that teaches us a parallel message. Let’s look at *Matthew 6:19-24* (ESV).

¹ [2 Timothy 3:16-17]¹⁶ *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,* ¹⁷ *so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

x [Eccles. 5:10] ¹⁰ *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.*

Vanity: excessive pride in one’s appearance, qualities, abilities, achievements, etc.; character or quality of being vain; conceit

z [Prov. 27:1] ¹ *Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring.* ² *Let another praise you, and not your own mouth;*

z [See ver. 19 above]

e [Matt. 6:19, 20] 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.*

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Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust⁶ 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.**

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!

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.¹ [Greek *mammon*, a Jewish word for money or possessions]

This passage also warns us about placing our treasures/desires on earthly things, where the items can be destroyed and stolen. I think an important note should be placed on verse 21. This puts it in plain English, ²¹ **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.** Where is your heart? Is it on the things of this world or on the Lord? I challenge all of you to really give this some thought.

As mentioned earlier this message applies to both Christians and non-Christians. If anything, it is an even more extreme warning to people who profess to be “Christians” yet act in this exact same foolish manner. They attend church, participate in church activities, they may even have church responsibilities, but their hearts are not sincerely for the Lord. It is of deeper concern that these “Christians” may profess and even believe that they are Christians even though their hearts are set on the things of this world. As read, “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.” [Greek *mammon*, a Jewish word for money or possessions]

Many times I find that we are anxious about tomorrow and our future, and that is because these things are illusive and can be taken away without notice. At these times we should really pause and think about what it is that we hold of value. What is our treasure or desire? Are they things that please the Lord or selfish things to please our own sinful desires? When we feel anxious we should look to God and His Word, the Bible, for guidance. Philippians 4:6-7 reads: “⁶do not be anxious about anything, ⁵but in everything by prayer and supplication ⁴with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And ³the peace of God, ²which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

Lessons:

- 1) Foolishness = putting your trust in empty things
- 2) Share what the Lord has blessed us with
- 3) The things of this world will not, and cannot, provide the peace and happiness that people often seek through these empty things.
- 4) Warning: where your heart = what you treasure/value
- 5) Be rich towards God and His treasures ⇒ peace [of God] that surpasses all understanding

Application:

- 1) Where have we placed our treasures? If they are not in the Lord, we need to re-assess our life and the things that we hold dear.
- 2) Take time to draw closer to God and learn about the everlasting joys and peace of seeking the things that please God.

If you are not familiar with the things that please the Lord, please ask your governors or feel free to ask me and I will try to answer any questions you may have.

⁶ Or *worm*; also verse 20

¹ Greek *mammon*, a Semitic word for money or possessions

^r See Matt. 6:25

^s [Prov. 16:3] ³ Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.

^t See Rom. 1:8

^u [ver. 9; Isai. 26:3; Col. 3:15]; See John 14:27

^v [Eph. 3:19]

Other References

- 1 Corinthians 3:10b-15, 19-20

- Luke 12: 22-34 - **Do Not Be Anxious**

²² And he said to his disciples, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴ Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵ And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶ If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷ Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸ But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰ For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹ Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

³² "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³ Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴ **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.**

- Matthew 6:25-34 - **Do Not Be Anxious**

²⁵ e "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? ²⁶ ⁸ Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. ^h 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. ³³ But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

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

n [Matt. 6:8] ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

y [Matt. 6:20] ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

e For ver. 25-33, see Luke 12:22-31

f ver. 27, 28, 31, 34; ch. 10:19; 13:22 (Gk.); 1 Cor. 7:32 (Gk.); Phil. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:7

g [Job 38:41; Ps. 147:9]

h ch. 10:31

i Luke 2:52

2 Or a single cubit to his stature; a cubit was about 18 inches or 45 centimeters

j 1 Kin. 10:4-7

k ch. 8:26; 14:31; 16:8; [ch. 17:20]

l ver. 7

m ver. 8

n [ch. 5:6, 20]

o ver. 10

p [1 Kin. 3:11-14; Mark 10:29, 30; 1 Tim. 4:8; 1 Pet. 3:9]

q [James 4:13, 14]