

What Are You Living For?

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Bible Verse: Matthew 6:19-21
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Our text for this morning's sermon comes from the gospel of Matthew chapter 6 and I invite you to turn there. I trust, I hope, by the power of the Holy Spirit as he works through his word that this will be a reorienting kind of message that we hear today, lifting our eyes from the things of earth to the things of heaven in a most profound way. This is a text that's not often preached; it's not one that really fits with the contemporary nature and philosophy of ministry in so many churches, promising people the help of Jesus today and, you know, your best life now and all of that, this is a text that shows us what it is that we are to fix our hope upon, and we will go through it in detail. Matthew 6, beginning in verse 19.

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.

Scriptures teach us that true Christians are on the receiving end of an inheritance, something that will be received in the future, a great reward that is coming to us that God has prepared for us before the foundation of the earth, and over and over again, in many different ways, the Scriptures teach us to look forward to that, to set our hearts on that coming reward rather than the things of this earth, and we're not going to take the time to turn to all of these Scriptures, but I want you to listen and just absorb the significance of that theme in so many Scriptures that we're going to look at here. In Ephesians 1, verse 11, as Paul is praising God for the many blessings of salvation, he speaks of Christ and he says in verse 11, "In him," that is in Christ, "we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will." And so desiring as God that we would enter into that inheritance, he gave us his Holy Spirit. In verse 13, we read, "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory." There is an inheritance that we have that is waiting for us in heaven, and the Holy Spirit is given to us to indwell us, and he is the personal guarantee that we will enter into and acquire the possession of that inheritance which God has prepared for us.

So important is that inheritance that Paul goes on to pray in Ephesians 1, verse 16, he says, "I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know," so he's praying that God would expand our understanding, illuminate our hearts so that we could grasp something very significant that pertains to the reality of our salvation. He says, "that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you," that which lies ahead in the future, "what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe." Paul says, "I want you to know that this inheritance," that he's already been talking about in Ephesians 1, of whom the Holy Spirit is the personal guarantee that we will receive it, he says, "I am praying to God that by an act of the Spirit, he would illuminate your mind and help you understand how great and wonderful this is because if you understand this, you will dwell in a full assurance of your salvation and have hope of glory that will transcend anything that may happen to you here on earth."

It's not the only place at all where Scripture speaks of that. In Romans 8, in the middle of a long discourse about the greatness of the work of God and the many ways that we can know that we are children of God, Paul says this in Romans 8, verses 16 and 17. He says, "The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children," meaning if we are now children, then there are consequences, there are implications of being a child in that Roman society, you were entitled to your full portion of the inheritance that belonged to the father. Paul takes that earthly comparison and says that's what it's like in the realm of salvation. In Christ, you have God as your father, and the consequence of that is this, is that "if you are children, then you are heirs--heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him." If you're a child of God now, and Scripture says abundantly over and over again that you are, then you are in possession, you have a legal right that God has given to you that you will enter into a fullness of an inheritance that is yet to come when you enter into his heavenly presence.

In Colossians 1, Paul praying again for these readers in the church of Colossae, he says this, he says may you be "strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy; giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light." Over and over again, talk about the inheritance. We saw it in Ephesians 1, Romans 8, Colossians 1 here. We're not done. In fact, I'm not at all giving you a full catalog of the places where Scripture speaks of this. But beloved, this is a foundation-rattling theme that we are looking at here because we are all so pressed by the things that we see and that we forget the things that are unseen that are the greater reality that belong to us in Christ.

In 1 Peter 1, verse 3, we read this, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to," unto this end, with this goal in mind, "to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for

you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." Again, the inheritance that God has for us, an inheritance that is waiting for us in heaven, that God is preserving, keeping, and will never be lost, will never fade away, that is the birthright of every true child of God.

And what are we to do with that? How are we to think in light of that? Well, Peter goes on to say in verse 13 of chapter 1, he says, "Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." Christ is coming again. When he comes, the inheritance will be coming with him, so to speak. There is a grace, a further grace that will belong to you. And so if you're discouraged this morning because of the difficult adversity that you're walking through, if you find yourself praying and nothing seems to be changing, there is a spiritual opportunity for you in the midst of that to realize that salvation was never intended to be primarily about this life and about having an easy life right now. Jesus said in John 16, verse 33, "In this world you will have tribulation." You know, these people that want to claim promises, they never claim that one. "I'm going to claim the promise of Jesus." Well, Jesus promised you that you will have tribulation in this world. Do you want to claim that one? Well, why is it that you are reluctant to and you just kind of pick and choose things? Peter says, "set your hope on the glory that is to be revealed to you." And in like manner, in 1 John 3, although he doesn't use the word inheritance in the text that I'm going to read to you, listen to what he says about being a child and what's going to come to the children in days to come. Chapter 3, verse 1 of 1 John, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God," and the original text reads, "and we are." We're not just called children of God, we are children of God if we are in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he goes on to say, the reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. He says, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him because we will see him as he is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself as he also is pure." One more text from the mouth of Jesus himself in Matthew 25, verse 34. Listen to what Jesus says will be his own words. He gives us a foretaste of his words in that coming great day of judgment and he says, "the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

Beloved, once again, we just need the help of the Holy Spirit to expand our minds to somehow grasp something of the marvelous wonder of what we're talking about here and what Scripture reveals to us here. Before creation, God chose those who would be in Christ, and before creation, before Genesis 1:1, he prepared for us the inheritance that we would one day receive. He appointed it for us, and he appointed a glorious inheritance that we would receive as the outcome of our salvation and Jesus says the time will come when we will be before him, and we will walk into that inheritance in the fullness of what God had prepared for us all along. This is the path that the children of Zion are walking upon. This is the destination to which the pilgrims of Christ are ultimately going to. Here, Scripture says in Hebrews, we have no lasting city. We are seeking the city to come and that city is revealed to us at the end of the book of Revelation. And so over and over and over again, the New Testament talks to us and tells us to understand that there is an

inheritance coming, that it is greatly glorious, that God has reserved it for us, that we will certainly enter into it, and that that will be the final outcome, that is the ultimate object of our salvation altogether.

The glory of that fills the room. The wonder of that fills our minds and everything about that is not contingent upon the things that happen here on earth, and the fact that it's going to be so great and so glorious and that it's going to be eternal makes everything earthly fade by comparison. Listen to what the Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 4, at the end of that chapter. 2 Corinthians 4, writing to those that were perhaps discouraged, he says in verse 16, "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." If it's seen, it's transient. It's passing. If it belongs to this world, it's not a part of the great eternal outcome of all things. And all of this has a glorious, transforming, hopeful impact on the nature of our lives. To inherit this, to know that this is our inheritance, gives us that which we should set our affections on, that which we should love, that which we should count on.

Now, beloved, in a real sense, there's nothing in this earth that we can ultimately pin absolute certainty and absolute hope upon. The best spouse, the most faithful child, you know, we're all going to depart this earth if the Lord doesn't come first. The greatest investments subject to loss, the most earnest attention to bodily health and diet and exercise and all of that are all subject to intervention by disease, by accident, by any other thing. And so we have to come to grips with, if we're going to be flourishing Christians, we have to come to grips with that there is nothing in this earth that we can truly and rightly set our hope and affection on and count on it to be with us always. Life does not work that way. We can't set our hope on having good health throughout all of our lives. We can't set our hope on even having a good mind throughout all of our earthly existence, as those who have dealt with family members with dementia understand far too well and with far too much pain that accompanies it. And so, Scripture teaches us these things, not to make us despair over earthly life, but to give us a hope that endures and carries us through all of that with an ultimate outcome that brings us to glory.

Now, with all of that background and introduction in mind, come to Matthew 6, Matthew chapter 6 verses 19 through 21, because it will help us enter into the exposition here today. Jesus said in verse 19, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay 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." Now, this all comes on the heels of Jesus' teaching against hypocrisy in verses 1 through 18, where he said, practice your giving, practice your prayer, practice your fasting so that men don't see it, but your Father who sees in secret does, and he will reward you. Now he's kind of pivoting to what the implications of that are for the priorities by which we live, the things that we love, and the key verse in that text to help us understand everything that is going before it is verse 21 and I just want to highlight a couple of things for you here.

Jesus said in verse 20, he's making a contrast, "Don't lay up for yourself treasures on earth but by contrast, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Verse 21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." And the two words in that text that I want to call your attention to is the word "for" and the word "heart." And then, so we're kind of looking at the end and then we're going to go back and come through the text when we have a clear idea of what the goal in mind is. The word "for" is an explanatory connection that states the reason for his command to think about where you store up your treasures. "Don't lay up your treasures on earth for," verse 20, "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven for," for this reason, because, here is why you do this, "for" is stating the reason for his command to store up your treasures in heaven and not on earth. And the reason that he gives in verse 21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also," the heart being that fullness of the inner man, the fullness of the center of your personality that embraces your mind, your emotions, your will. Everything that makes you "you" is bound up in that word "heart" and Jesus says where your heart is, where your mind, your emotions, your affections, your volition, your will, where that is, where your heart is, is where your treasure will be.

Now, there's something else here. Sometimes I like to throw in a little bit about the original language because it gives a sense of clarity from time to time. I don't do it often but this is one that your English text would not pick up for you at all. The word "your heart" comes at the end of the sentence in Greek. You read it here, it says, well, there your heart will be also, but it reads differently in Greek. In the original language, it says, "there also will be your heart." Now you say, that doesn't sound like that's too important. Can we move on to something else? Well, let me just help you understand the idea here. In this instance, putting that at the end of the sentence shows what the emphasis is. It's like it hangs in the air and refuses to leave, there also will be your heart. If you call out from a mountain into a valley and you get an echo back, it's kind of like that, the way it hangs in the air. There also will be your heart, your heart, your heart, your heart. The heart is the lingering concern here that Jesus is making, your heart, your heart, your heart. And what Jesus is doing here is he's showing us that the emphasis here is where your heart is, what you love, what your affections are, what you are hoping for, what you want out of life and eternity, where is your heart, your heart, your heart.

Now, let's just dismiss something really critical here. Jesus, when he talks about not laying up treasures on earth, he's not making a statement about earthly wealth, really, at all. That's not his point. He's not condemning earthly wealth. He's not making any ironclad rules. Scripture says in 1 Timothy 6, gives instruction to the rich that in this present age that they should not set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. The Bible doesn't tell, tell as an enduring principle for all men of all time, to divest yourself of everything that you own. That's not biblical. Paul says there in 1 Timothy 6 that if people have wealth, that this is how they should handle it and how they should view it. So Jesus isn't making a blanket rejection of earthly wealth here. He's talking about something far more profound here. He's talking about your heart. He's not talking about your bank account. He's not talking

about your house or anything like that. It's far more invasive than that. He's talking about who you are, what you love, and what you want out of life.

Now, let me illustrate this just with what I think are self-evident propositions here to show that he's not talking about earthly wealth. A beggar on the street can be very greedy. The fact that he is supposedly in poverty doesn't mean that he is free from earthly greed. He wants money. That's why he's out there begging for it. And so a beggar on the street can be greedy and selfish and violate Jesus's words here in terms of what it is that he wants from his heart. By contrast, a successful businessman who generously supports the work of the kingdom of God may be fulfilling Jesus' words here perfectly. Not having set his heart on the wealth, the Lord blesses him with wealth, but he's generous with it, he gives it away. I know a lot of people like that, and they're a blessing to be around by showing what it is that they love. And so it's not about what a person actually has accumulated up to this point in his life. It's not about that at all. It's about the heart, the heart, the heart, the heart. It's about who you are and what you love and what you want and what your priorities are. If you can understand that, and it's what Jesus' conclusion there is in verse 21, then we're in a position to be able to look at this profitably.

What is it that Jesus says? And today's message asks the question, the title of today's message, "What Are You Living For?" What are you living for? What is it that you want out of life? What is it that you have set your heart upon? And Jesus calls us to make a contrast in our consideration. There's two points here today: consider your earthly pursuits, consider a heavenly reward. Consider your earthly pursuits and consider a heavenly reward, and what Jesus does here is he exposes how uncertain everything in this life is with simple illustrations that would have been a part of daily life to those that were hearing him when he spoke these words.

Look at verse 19. He says, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal." This command could be translated, stop storing up your treasures. He comes and he speaks to people in the midst of life, in the midst of their pursuits, and he says, "You have something that you must stop doing." And understand, let's back up a bit here. Let's step back and just remember who it is that's speaking here. This is the Lord Jesus Christ, the one with all authority in heaven and on earth. These are words that are not optional, certainly not for the disciple of Christ, they're not optional. Christ comes and he issues a command. He is Lord over our hearts, not simply over our stuff, not simply over what we do. He is Lord over who we are in our hearts, and he comes and he addresses our very heart. If it was anyone else, it would be the height of presumption to speak to people this way, to say, "I am going to tell you who you must be and what you are to be like," but with Christ, who is the Maker and the Creator of us, then he can tell us whatever he wants.

And so the command is stop storing up treasures, and before I go any further, I just want to say, I just want to say this. There is no hidden punchline at the end of this message about anything that you need to do with your earthly stuff at all. That's not Jesus' point. It's not my point here this morning either. We're talking about something far more significant. Jesus is telling us, he says you need to stop and consider what it is that you

love and what it is that you're pursuing in life and what you want out of life, and you have to break away from that. You have to stop doing that and embrace an attitude that treasures first the kingdom of God. Break away from your earthly preoccupations and embrace a mindset in the depths of your being that says, "I treasure the kingdom of God first and foremost above all else." Now, beloved, that's why the texts that I read at the beginning of the message were so important to see that Scripture repeatedly tells us about an inheritance that belongs to us that we will come into and to fix your hope completely upon that, and that changes the way that you view everything on earth in the meantime.

The word "treasures" here, it's what you attach your greatest value to, what it is that is most important to you and Jesus says, talking about the earthly treasures, he goes to the simplest of things. He says, "Don't lay it up on earth where moth and rust destroy or where thieves break in and steal." In the first century, clothing was limited. They didn't have big closets like we do. Clothing was not easily replaced, and it was vulnerable to being eaten by moths. Rust comes from a like word for eating, referring not only to the corrosion of metal, but to destruction by rats and mildew and elements. Clothing, stored grain, other possessions were subject to immediate corruption despite the best efforts that they made to protect them. Thieves could dig through the mud brick walls of the homes and carry away valuables. Jesus' point is, everything that you love and treasure here on earth, you can lose it, and so he comes as a sympathetic Savior, he comes as a wise teacher, and he says, recognize that these things can be lost, and do not set your hearts upon them.

People were left with a sad reality and Jesus brought them face to face with the reality that their earthly labor could be taken away from them at any time and we all know about this. We all know that storms can wreak damage unexpectedly. We all know what it's like to have a car accident or somebody that's had a car accident. You know me, so you know at least one person that's had a car accident that was their fault. And the fruit of earthly labor can be taken away from them at any time. That's talking about it in the realm of stuff but, beloved, I think often about people well-intentioned and not even trying to be critical in what I'm about to say, but people that so evidently set their heart on the building of their earthly family. Yes, you should love your children, your children should love you, but children grow up and they move away. Children can break your hearts. And young parents that just are so focused on the immediacy of their little nuclear family lose sight of that, and they set their affections on things that may not serve them well in the end. It's a sad reality to be mindful of. But even more than the earthly relational outcome is to realize the demand of priority that Christ makes upon each one of us and upon his disciples and he says, "I must be first or you can't have me at all."

Listen to what he says in Matthew chapter 10, verse 34 and following, he says, "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it,

and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." Beloved, Christ comes and says that he must be preeminent in your affections and you love him more than anything else. Your family, your children, your grandchildren, are not something that you use Christ to maximize to get everything you can out of them, rather, they are somehow given to you by Christ as a means of expression of your devotion and love and worship to him. It's a complete reversal and flipping of the priority. And those of you that have seen children walk away from the Lord know the heartache of this by sad, direct, personal experience.

This is the way it is and using that as an example about what we set our affections on and what it is that we're looking for out of life, man, we love our families, but we don't love them first. I love my kids, but I don't love them first. You know why? None of my kids bore my sins on the cross. None of my children loved me before the foundation of the world. None of my children are keeping me safe for heaven. None of my children have prepared an inheritance for me that they are reserving for me in heaven. None of them have done that. I love my kids, but I don't love them like Christ and that's a very imperfect window into the kind of thing that Jesus is saying here so that even if a kid is taken away from you in one way or another, you still have the center of your affection firm and reigning on the throne of your heart and that's what Jesus is teaching us to do. And you take those relational things that are so close to our hearts, multiply it out and spread it out into the different directions, and you can see that what Jesus is saying is true, the fruit of your earthly labors, the fruit of your earthly love can be taken away from you at any time. We have different issues, but the effect is the same. A girlfriend breaks up with you. You lose your job. The housing market collapses. Your marriage is royally messed up. Children grow up and leave the house. Maybe they leave the Lord. Accidents happen. Sickness comes. People in authority abuse your trust, take advantage of you, don't do what they're supposed to do. Loved ones die, and eventually death comes looking for you. And you're laying on a bed with all of your strength gone and finding that everything that you worked for in ministry, in life, hangs by a thread and may not survive all of the effort that you put into it.

See, beloved, what Jesus is teaching us is so much more than our attitude toward money, and what Jesus is teaching us here as he tells us to consider our earthly pursuits, is that sooner or later, here's the thing, here's the thing, sooner or later, reality is going to shatter your aspirations. Sooner or later, life is going to break in with unwelcome consequences. So in big things and in little things, Jesus is teaching us to expect that there will be loss, to expect that there will be adversity, to expect that there will be difficulty. And I think when I preached on this as a younger man, there was no way that I really had a mature perspective on just how severe that could be, how heart-wrenching and how heartbreaking that could be. These earthly things are like a mirage in the desert. It looks real, you move toward it, you pursue it, and then it vanishes just when you think you are about to arrive at it.

So what's the point then? Why bother? Why bother building a career? Why bother investing in a family, investing in children? Why bother investing in ministry? If all of this can just take wings like a bird and go up and fly away, why bother with it if there's nothing lasting, nothing permanent, nothing guaranteed? What's our hope in the midst of

a world of futility? What if you are sitting here today in ashes, as it were, with all your dreams torn apart? Man, I know people like that, people dear and close to my heart, scattered throughout the country. People who have been betrayed by spiritual leaders, betrayed by family, abandoned by family, and your heart throbs with the pain of it all. Beloved, it's precisely people like that that Jesus speaks these words. He doesn't speak to rob us of hope or to rob our life of meaning. He says these things to invest our life with meaning, to protect us, to help us so that we don't squander our lives with a passing mirage and that's why we come to our second point, consider a heavenly reward. Consider a heavenly reward.

Look at, just to give a picture to it, look at the end of chapter 7 here of Matthew. See the promise, see a picture, see a priority. In verse 24, he pierces through our unteachable hearts and says, "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was its fall." A picture so easy to understand, a picture of making an ultimate decision, an ultimate choice on whether to build our lives on the word of Christ or to ignore it and keep going our foolish way because of our love for the world. And what are we going to do with it? And the outcome is certain. The outcome for those who reject Jesus' call to a heavenly priority is certain. The ones who do not build on this will see the collapse of everything that they built their hope on. It's inevitable. I've stood at the sides of too many deathbeds to say anything else to not be very blunt and candid about it all, and to call it to your attention and remind you of these things.

And so what Jesus is saying is, rather than build on earthly sand, build on the rock of what he says. Look at verse 20, chapter 6, verse 20. He says, "but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," the things that you most love, what is it that you think on, what is it that you cherish, what is it that you want, what is it that you are hoping for? And the true Christian, the true disciple of Christ says, "I want that heavenly reward more than I want a happy life on earth. I want that heavenly reward more than I want health in this life. I want that heavenly reward more than I want prim and proper children, more than a prosperous career, more than fame, more than fortune, more than family itself."

And so Jesus makes this contrast here in verse 20. He says, "lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." Beloved, the whole point of that heavenly inheritance that we opened the message talking about, the Scripture points to over and over again, the whole point of it is it's reserved. It's undefiled. It cannot be touched. No one on earth can take it away. Satan cannot touch it. Adversity does not lessen it. Indeed, adversity may contribute to it and help build it up as we respond and trust to what the Lord brings to us in life. These earthly treasures, they all rot. They all rot. The point of what Jesus is saying is, is that heavenly treasures will not rot.

And what are those heavenly treasures? What is that inheritance? It's the reward that God stores up for those who belong to Christ. It's only for them. It's the reward that God gives to those who live out the righteousness described in the Sermon on the Mount. They have been born again. The Spirit has brought them to repentance. They pursue the heart attitudes that are found in the Beatitudes, verses 3 through 12 of chapter 5. They pursue righteousness. They reject hypocrisy. They live quiet lives of seeking to glorify God and pursuing him privately where no one sees. They trust his promise above all else, and they are undaunted when adversity strikes.

Let's look at some of it and just see how the promise of reward is woven through the Sermon on the Mount even. Look at Matthew 5, verse 12. Matthew 5, verse 12, to those who are persecuted for the name of Christ. Jesus says in verse 12, "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you." You treasure the promise of Christ, the name of Christ, the reward from Christ, you treasure that so much so that you are undaunted by the opposition of small men and women on earth.

Chapter 6, verse 4, let your giving be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Verse 6, pray in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Verse 18, fast in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

Turn to Matthew 10 with me verses 41 and 42. "The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward." He has an inheritance stored up for him in heaven, unfading, undefiled, that can never be taken away.

And so, beloved, to store up your treasures in heaven, to treasure these things, it's not complicated. You store up heavenly treasure with the simplest of devotion to Christ and a firm fixing of your mind that he is the preeminent object of your affection because earthly men cannot take Christ away. Men who seem to be Christians, seem to be great servants of the Lord who are exposed for being phonies, they can't take Christ away from you. Families grow and go, I just made that up. Families grow and go, it doesn't change anything about Christ. And here's the thing, beloved, here's the challenge for our hearts. When you value Christ above all else, you can look at the prospect of earthly loss and say, "If that happens, I'll be okay, because that's not what I'm living for anyway." If something near and dear to your heart is lost to you, you can step back, maybe with tears streaming down your eyes, but you can still say, "At the end of the day, that's not what I was living for. That's not who I was living for." And when life brings you into those conflicts, when your spouse has left you, when your health has left you, when ministry didn't turn out like you thought it would, when the kid that you thought was a Christian proves not to be, beloved, you can rub your eyes, rub the tears out of your eyes, and you can still say, "That is not what I was living for. That's not what I am living for. My hope is still secure. My Lord is still on the throne and he will never leave me. He will never forsake me. And I have an inheritance waiting for me in heaven that cannot be taken

away." And there, beloved, there you find your strength, there you find your confidence, there you find your joy, and it lifts you beyond the realm of earth into that heavenly realm where Jesus says we're to be storing our treasures in the first place.

I've told this story before, I think, but when Martyn Lloyd-Jones, that great preacher who lived from 1901 to 1981 and ministered in London with great effect for decades and then spent the last 10 years of his life editing material that were published in books that have circled the globe multiple times over, but at heart, he was a Welch man, and his love, his true love, was not in writing books, but in preaching. That's what he upheld, and that's where he believed that the Lord most did his work was through the preached word of God from a pulpit to a people. The books were incidental to him. When he lost his health toward the end of his life and as he was nearing the end of his life after several decades of faithful pulpit ministry, his ill health made it so that he could no longer preach. His body gave out before his heart did. Iain Murray, his biographer, was interviewing him, was in his home, as I understand it, toward the end of the doctor's life, and this subject came up about not being able to preach after devoting your life to that for so long. Martyn Lloyd-Jones said this, and shows us what it means to have your treasures in heaven rather than on earth. He said this shortly before he died, and he hadn't been able to preach for at least a year, as I recall. He said, "People say to me, it must be very trying for you not to be able to preach. No, not at all. I was not living upon preaching." People looked at his life and they interpreted it, watch this, beloved, they interpreted his life and that stage in life through their perspective of the way that they would be thinking if they had been one of the most prominent preachers in the world. They said, "Oh, to lose that on earth must be very difficult for you," because they were people who, to one extent or another, were setting their treasures on earth. What Martyn Lloyd-Jones was saying is, "No, that was never the point. That was never the point. My treasures are in heaven." I'm interpreting it here, not quoting him. "My treasures are in heaven. I love Christ first and foremost. I had this great certainty and assurance that I belonged to him. I know what it was like to be redeemed from a futile life given to worldly pursuits. And I know Christ. I know the hope that awaits me. That's where my heart is. That's where my treasures are. And losing preaching doesn't affect that at all. And so no, no, it's not trying for me at all. This is what the Lord has given to me here at this stage in my life."

And the course and conduct of his life, as you read it at the end, Iain Murray talks about at one point they prayed together, one of the last times that they prayed together and he just, and I have no idea what this must have looked like, but he said that as Martyn Lloyd-Jones was praying there in the room, his face was glistening. There was a holy aura about it as these things of earthly versus heavenly treasures were being discussed, as he reflected back on a life of ministry, giving thanks to God for it, but it was secondary. Even a ministry like that was secondary to the one who did it, to the greatness and the glory and the grace of Christ. When his preaching was gone, his Savior was still with him, and that was enough.

Beloved, our Lord Jesus calls all men to forsake the world, to forsake sin, and to follow him, to love him above all else. Do you? I can't answer that question for you but I can ask you the question, what are you living for? What is most central to you? And beloved, all I

can do as your friend in the pulpit is to say this to you: answer that question really well, consider it and answer it really, really well because where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Let's pray together.

Father, it is so very difficult to know our own hearts. Sometimes it's only exposed to us through your word, sometimes through our response to adversity and disappointment. Father, I pray that you would look with mercy on those under the sound of my voice today with mercy. They've lost their health. They've lost loved ones. They've lost other things that they had devoted so much to. Their affections have not been returned by those to whom they were given. Father, bring good from the sorrow. Bring good from the evil. And Father, if nothing else, through these things, teach us and lead us more and more, better and better, to not lay up for ourselves treasures on earth. They're all going to be gone sooner or later. But instead, Father, to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven which are safely kept in the nail-scarred hands of our living Lord. By gracious work of your Spirit, Father, open the eyes of each one here to see where they truly stand and if the idea of Christ being preeminent is foreign and something that cannot be understood in the present state of mind, Father, I pray that you would lead them to the gracious gospel of Jesus Christ, that Christ died for sinners, he was buried, he was raised on the third day to pay for the sins of everyone who would ever believe in him and now he calls and says, "Come and follow me. Repent, and believe in the gospel." Father, for the many that are here who are hearing that clearly for the first time, do a wondrous work of grace in their hearts, transcend the limitations and the futility of the words of the preacher here this morning and do a perfect work that brings them safely into your heavenly kingdom. We pray in Jesus' name, amen.

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