

A WISE INVESTMENT

Matthew 6: 19 - 24

INTRODUCTION

- fast as much as can -

Why do you suppose Christ took time to speak on this subject to his disciples? He has just given them instructions concerning (fasting.) And I suppose that one reason was the sense of (insecurity) that man has in this world. It was happening then, and probably still happens today. Men were worrying about the cost of perfume and other things, and Jesus knew that man was anxious and that he had certain attitudes towards things. And toward his possessions and toward the future. All of these things would test the relationship of ~~xxx~~ man with God.

I think we can divide this passage of scripture into three ideas. The great treasure, V. 19-20. The great darkness, V. 21-23. And the great impossibility, V. 24.

I. The great treasure, V. 19-20.

Our Lord now is dealing with the question of a Christian living in this world and his relationship to the world which is a problem. There is always the world, the flesh, and the devil with which man has to deal.

And two of the main temptations which he has is the one about his treasures. What does he consider valuable?

In V. 19, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth."

This will fit anywhere. It will fit any day, any culture, any development.

Don't treasure the things of the earth.

When he talks about treasure here, he means that is the aim the goal of your life. Don't treasure up your treasures upon earth. A great many people would like to work out some secret compartment which could be used to take some of their wealth, stocks and bonds with them when they leave this world. Now we accumulate things in this world, we use some of them, we leave some of them to our children.

The moth will cause clothes ~~to disappear~~ or cloth to disappear, a garment.

Rust will cause iron to disappear. It will corrupt. The idea is to disappear.

Thieves dig through and steal. And the earthly treasure may disappear.

These are destructable character of the earthly riches. Their wealth may have been beautiful (dresses). You remember Achan dug a ~~treasure~~

hole and buried some garments. He reminds his hearers that moth or rust will destroy earthly treasures.

Watch the things ~~of~~ your own lusts - the things that you want to possess, if you are keeping your eyes on the earthly. Lay up, he says, don't treasure up treasures, is the same word. Money, people say is the root of all evil, which is not true. It is the love of money. Then if this be so, every poor man can love it. He can love it more than a wealthy man. And it will be more corrupting to him with a little as a man with much. He has to watch lest he be grasping and this be his whole attitude, toward getting more and more. As one young fellow during the depression days who was so grasping he took out too much insurance. His whole life was burdened, and ~~fin~~ finally he said, "I'd be worth more dead than alive." The great weight of this proposition is that you do not put all your emphasis upon this treasure.

Now he is not denouncing every kind of saving, for Paul said, II Cor. 7:14, the parents had a duty to lay up for the children. Every man and every woman has a right and a privilege and a responsibility to insure himself for the future.

There is not a word here against a man setting apart a certain

sum as capital to be used in the development of his business. If he is manufacturing something, or if he has some sort of business with a yearly output, he must lay aside a certain amount for this operation. It is necessary.

Treasure not treasures upon earth - he forbids the amassing of money not for the use of it but for its own sake, that is a man hords it. Now, this is a great temptation that involves all people. Young people who are entering into life want to make a fortune quick. They want to take the shortest, easiest route.

Now Jesus gave some reasons here why they should not hord up money or things. And he knew that these things would cut down on the interest of a Christian in his spiritual devotions.

✓ A man may really test whether he is treasuring the treasures of the earth. First, by the little store of money which he has already made. Is this the thing that he spends his time thinking about? From one year to the next? Is this the thing that constantly comes before him that he depends more upon this than he does in trusting in God.

He may also in the second place test whether or not he is envious of other men who are making money more rapidly than he is. And in connection

with this, he may ³ test himself as to whether or not all the service he performs - does he do it in the light of some monetary advantage? Is it his habit to gain and to see that everything that he does is motivated by this sort of pressure.

Now, Jesus is telling the disciples here that the reason why he is charging them in this way - that they can't take it with them. Treasures on earth are uncertain. Treasures on earth soon pass away. Treasures on earth tend to turn the mind away from God. And treasures on earth may become such a passion as to dull the spiritual eye of a man. Lay not up - do not have the habit - do not treasure your treasures. And as I have said, making proper provision for the future is not ~~here~~ condemned. God who ordered the seasons also gives us good sense to store food until the next harvest season.

The moth, whether the dress is costly or not, if it is stored up, it is liable to be consumed by moths. James 5:2. Job 27:16.

Rust is something that eats and gnaws and corrodes. It consumes and causes a thing to disappear.

Thieves break through - this was easy to do. The walls were made of mud or ~~sun-dried~~ sun-dried bricks. They could dig through. Today we would

say they are able to pick a safe. And nothing will be secure.

The child early learns to grasp and to hold, and Jesus gives here and prohibition. This uncommon love which we have for things and for money and treasures of this earth that we will not place all of our emphasis upon these. As I have said, this has a problem for all ages. A teenage boy and girl were getting married much to the displeasure of both sets of parents. Finally, the minister came to the ring ceremony. He had the boy repeat with him, "With this ring I thee wed and with all my worldly goods I thee endow." At this point, the father of the groom said, "Well, there goes his bicycle."

Now you may feel a bit like the father. That this sermon tonight - we're talking about the inevitable things - your treasures and your money, and some people don't really like it when you talk about this. Especially when the church talks about raising the budget. They think that it ought to be separated from all the spiritual life and living. But these three great symbols Jesus used. Don't spend the strength of your lives trying to lay up for yourself perishable treasures on earth.

V. 20, he gives a positive side. Make your deposits in heaven. Live for what lasts. This is an injunction. Make your treasures the

treasures in heaven. This is something that we need to discover, to make sure of our own end. If you have money so use it while you are here in this world that when you arrive in glory, the people who benefited by it will be there to receive you.

Paul expounds I Tim. 7:17, "Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life." If you have been blessed with riches in such a way ~~in~~ in this world that you will be building up a balance for the next. Our Lord said this in talking to a group of people one day. ~~When~~ "When I was in ~~prison~~ prison, you visited me. When I was hungry, you fed me, when I was thirsty, you gave me to drink, and inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, you have done it unto me."

The rich young ruler was disappointed. Jesus went on to teach how hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The self-confident never lose sight of your pilgrimage. The mighty men in Hebrews, the 11th chapter, had great faith, but they had one purpose. They were

following the invisible as seeing. Abraham responded to this. Moses could have had the wealth of the Egyptian court. He decided to spend his life out as a shepherd for 40 years in the desert. The principle is that we might reach a view of ourselves and take a right view of the gifts in our possession. We must give an account. It matters not whether it is money, intellect, or personality, the worldly man thinks he owns himself. I am not the possessor, what I have is merely on lease. I cannot take my wealth with me. I am the custodian of this. How can I use this for the glory of God? Jesus says, "Don't, if you were making a treasure here in this material earth, that's going to" - do what? Disappear. Now if you have made your ambitions become these things, we ~~are~~ are going to leave it. A treasure up in heaven. This is the place where your interests should lie.

If you are going to manage to your best advantage, you are going to take this alternative which Jesus is pointing out something which will be permanent, and that will remain secure whether you have earned or worked for this money, or whether you have inherited it, you have no right to give it away or squander it, but to pass it on in a way that it will build in the interest of the kingdom of God. We ought to adopt a principle of giving a

part of our income to the cause of Christ, each week. The temptation comes to us when we look at money and we say, "Well, I need so and so," and we neglect God's work. What will the result of a spiritual attitude like this be?

The moth - has to do with circumstances.

order chest -

The rust - has to do with time. Time does terrible things to your material elements.

Thieves has to do with greed or other diseases that may come.

Often a great old mansion that may be filled as a museum with fine furniture with art treasures, in a little while becomes useless because the owner may become an alcoholic or waste his substance. And the whole entire estate disposed of in a moment. Demus hath loved this present world - this now world. Things that are temporal. Jesus is saying - Delight in the things of heaven. Treasure up.

What is the best investment of money a Christian man can make?

What about a Christian will? A preacher once closed his sermon by an appeal of scriptural giving of money. One layman said to him, "The sermon was great, but you ruined it when you talked about money." Now, Paul talked about this.

Now concerning the collections, he said, Jacob thought about this in the ~~Old Testament~~ Old Testament when he promised that he was going to give God ~~power~~ tithes of all his income. And Jesus knew that no man is any stronger spiritually than his attitude toward money, and what money can buy. This is the thing that has plagued men - materialism. And Jesus said, "Lay not treasures upon earth" - but make your treasure in heaven.

Carve your name high above shifting sands,

Where the steadfast rocks defy decay,

But all you can hold in your cold dead hand

Is what you have given away.

Conquest in gold and fame, ah, how grand,

King of the saloon, the mart, a day,

But all you can hold in your cold dead hand

Is what you have given away.

These words were by ^{Hubert} M. Poteat, Sr., and I think fit well into

what Jesus had to say here.

II. The great darkness, V. 21 - 23

Verse 21 - ~~xxx~~ "For where your treasure is, there will your

heart be also." The treasure is a strong magnet, and it pulls the heart. Hording is idolatry, and the heart becomes enclosed by the treasures we seek. And where this treasure is, he says what? - he uses the heart, the sum total of one's desires, of one's ambitions, of one's purpose here in the world, the heart being the seat of the personality. Sometimes it is said to be of the intellect with the desire and with the emotions. Everything is centered there in the heart, and this represents all that you are as a Christian, and you find self-realization right at this point.

Verse 22 - "The light of the body is the eye." Light comes through the eye. You close your eyes and you stumble, and really your feet and your hands become ineffective.

I read about a boy who had double vision. He had hoped to be a photographer, but he was not able to focus the camera, and he had to give up. This is a good illustration when a man has his ~~xxx~~ treasure on earth and tries to have treasure in heaven. He develops what we call double vision.

This hording diverts the pure intention of the soul and blinds all spiritual light. We all know that faith is only possible for the pure heart. Therefore, if the heart is filled with false or earthly ~~xx~~ riches, then it is blinded. The throne of worship in the Christian's heart should be in heaven,

not in the First National Bank. The Christian man should have as his
 diety only God, not the almighty dollar. The lamp of the body is the eye.
 The single eye was the clear window of a godly soul. The evil eye is one
 that distorts and blurs the vision when there is coveteousness, and money
 easily can become a rival with God for a man's affections.

What is the key to wealth? How should Christians use their
 money? A man is where his heart is, and his heart is where his treasure is.

Verse 23 - He points out the great darkness which is developed,
 the sin which is in the eye, in the look. Single means as long as it is
 simple and does not see double. The blind man may recognize a pool by the
 touch of his cane, but the man with a good vision will see it before he
 arrives at the point of danger. A man with a double vision will think that
 the pool is a place to walk upon. Greed and jealousy as Judas had.

What a terrible service that Jesus is talking about these Pharisees.
 They (don't have any aim) and what great darkness he says, is here because the
 light of the body is in the eye. They demand our entire devotion. They want
 us to live for them absolutely. And this is the thing that God wants us to
 live for him. Great is the darkness.

A farmer who one day went in with great moves to report to his wife that his best cow had given birth to two calves. One was red and one was white. He said, "You know I have ~~an~~ a sudden feeling and impulse that we must dedicate one of these calves to the Lord. We will bring them up together, and when the time comes we will sell one and keep the proceeds and we will sell the other and give the proceeds to the Lord's work." His wife asked him which one he was going to dedicate to the Lord. ~~Was~~ He said, "There is no need to bother about that now. We will treat them both alike anyway, and when the time comes, we will do as I say." In a few months, the man entered the kitchen. He was miserable and unhappy. He was troubled. His wife asked him. He says, "I have bad news to give you. The Lord's calf is dead." But she said, "You have not decided which was to be the Lord's calf." "Oh, yes," he said, "I ~~had always~~ had always decided that it would be the white one, and it is the white one that has died. The Lord's calf is dead." Now, we may smile at this story, but when we think about ourselves, it ~~is~~ is always the Lord's calf that dies. When money becomes difficult, the first thing that we economize on is our contribution to God's work. It is always the first thing to go. So great is the darkness thereof.

Why is it that these instructions are necessary? Why is it that the Bible is full of this kind of warning. It is to be found everywhere. This is just an example. What is it that makes it necessary? A man tends to say, "I am a Christian. I do not need this." But we all need this. And the thing that explains it is that there is sin, and it has a terrible power and effect upon mankind. It upsets the balance of a man, his body, his mind, his soul, and his spirit. Man, made in the image of God, comes under the power of these things of the world, these material treasures. They master him, they control his personality. This is the result of man's fall. Man loves darkness rather than light because his deeds are evil. And the important thing is that no man should be governed by these things. The simple truth is that men are governed by their prejudices and even the fool hath said in his heart, "There is no God." It is the heart that covets these worldly things. ~~It blinds~~ It blinds a man in certain vital respects.

Worldly treasures. People pride themselves on their (personal) appearance. They forget they are going to get ill one day and they are going to die. Men pride themselves on their (money), and you cannot take this with you. You're going to die and lose it, and it's going to pass away. If a man really sits down and faces the (simple truth), yet all people tend to live on the opposite

assumption. The real situation is very obvious. I am today living in this world, but what is going to happen to me? What is my future? I may go on to live for a number of years or I may not. I do not know. May not live till tomorrow or next week. But I ~~do~~ know for certain that this is bound to come to an end.

We are blind to the relative value of things as we think about time and eternity. We are creatures here of time. Time is limited, but ~~eternity~~ eternity of limitless.

That's why Jesus uses the comparison of darkness and light. There is nothing more wonderful than light. Nothing more amazing, and yet he talks about the darkness, because this has an influence on a man and his relationship to God. He is blinded to all of these opposites. And he persuades himself, he compromises, and he lives in this whole dream-world, and no wonder Jesus says, "Great is the darkness thereof." Our Lord employs contrast - the eye is the light of the body, as the lamp or the candle in a room. Now, the same word used here ~~was~~ a word used for John the Baptist. He was a burning and a shining ~~light~~ light, and the same word he used that men do not light a lamp and put it under a bushel. So the man who has an eye which is the lamp of his soul, it is very obvious that he is talking about your inner

soul here, the power of your affections, the real goal or the intention of your life. That is not blurred. A good clear eye will give you a distinct vision. How much more then will you be able if you store up your treasures in heaven? Some people have no intention - they live day by day without any intentions at all. There are other people who have double intentions. He says they care about this world and the next world, but what he is trying to emphasize here is that you have one pure, simple intention. That is to do the will of God, that your whole eye, your whole soul be lighted up. This was the thing that Solomon asked for the understanding of heart, that he might know God's purpose, that God might honor him. Now, if a lamp is pure in its intention, and is clean, that's marvelous, but if not, how great is the darkness.

I think another way to illustrate this would be that when darkness settles upon the forest, the roar of the lion and some of the animals that have been sleeping all day hiding from the sunlight creep forth. Our Lord says that when a man's heart is set on doing God's will, that evil will remain in hiding. But when a man has a blurred vision, then darkness comes and how great is that darkness. And may the Holy Spirit cause you to be able to see the difference between the treasures of this earth and the treasures of heaven.

✓ III. The great impossibility V. 24

We have considered the great treasures and the great darkness, and in the last place, we consider the great impossibility. No man can serve two masters. Money is a master.

Now let us get this straight. Jesus did not teach that the possession of riches were inconsistent with his kingdom principles, but rather he is teaching the constitution of ~~wealth~~ wealth is the damning element. Zacchaeus, repenting of his covetous ways, gave half of his goods to charity in order to ~~make~~ make restitution. The reason for this illustration is to give a word to those who are subject to worldliness and ~~worldly~~ worldly mindedness. The fatal tragedy - the world is so ~~subtle~~ subtle, and we are all guilty of it. We sometimes ~~available~~ label worldliness as meaning certain particular things, or we confine it to certain things, such as the theatre, or certain other things that people ~~indulge~~ indulge in. But worldliness is an attitude toward life.

Now this might happen even ~~in~~ in the political interest in this country. When you think about the great elections which we have what in the last analysis is the real interest? There are people on both sides who seem to be concerned about something. I wonder if it is some kind of a treasure on this earth. ~~##~~

As we apply this, we make our choice of candidates, and we express our political points of view. Is one side altogether wrong and the other side altogether right?

What is really the real interest? I think that this can also be illustrated by the way in which people grow up into manhood, womanhood, when in certain stages of life they seem to be always talking about new things, new fashions, new enthusiasm, for a while. And a little later on those things no longer interest them. As they advance in years they change perhaps, young people, older people, get wrapped up in this. The element of moth and rust infects all of us in the process. There is a corruption in these earthly things. It is inevitable that the most beautiful flower that you can pluck this morning you will soon throw away. It is true of everything in this life and in this world. It's fading away. As a result of sin, it is subject to this process. Utterly, it is going to be corrupted. Peter put it in this phrase, he says, "To an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for you." I Peter 1:4. Now this is the thing that you work toward. But we have great spiritual dangers that these treasures will cause us to try to serve two masters, as V. 24 states. Have you seen the change taking place in your own life? The

idealisms which you had a few years ago. Have you grown cynical in your outlook? The focus here is on what my master is. I am a slave. I belong to what I serve, and I can't belong to God and mammon. You just can't do it. Now we may love them, our heart may be captivated by them, by what they are, but the things that

The idea here is of a slave. You could do anything with a slave you wanted to. You could kill him, put out his eye, you owned him. How could this slave belong to ~~xxx~~ this one and to another also? How can he divide himself? He can't be slave to this person over here and to another over there. He may try to but what's going to happen? He's going to hate the one and love the other. You just can't divide yourself, you cannot be a slave of God and of man. So make a wise investment. Many people try to serve on two or three jobs at one time. This is an impossibility.

Dr. Johnson tells of man - gave 35,000 to Ch. Bldg -
 Depression - Business failed - lost worldly funds -
 friend - aint sorry gave money to ch -
 no, all have - somebody will be preaching gospel
 teaching - twin remake, new hope will come -
 Best investment -