

PP 360° Giving: Give Ahead and Lay up Treasures for Eternity

Text **Matthew 6:19-24**

2/7-8, 2015

Illus William Wise of Tennessee, was buried in 1960 with his horse, best hunting dog and a sword. He was sure he would go to hell, and determined to track down the devil and kill him. Then you have the oil socialite, Sandra West, buried behind the steering wheel of her Ferrari, intent, she said on driving right through the pearly gates. Or Frank Sinatra buried with a flask of Jack Daniels and a pack of Camels cigarettes.

But, as they say, you don't see hearses pulling U-Haul trailers
You can't take it with you, but, you can send it ahead, and this is what we are about to learn

PP Two Treasures (6:19-21)

'Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth..but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven'

Jesus gives two commands here: *Do not lay up for yourselves earthly treasures; Lay up for yourselves heavenly treasures*

And notice, surprisingly, we are to lay up these heavenly treasures for *ourselves*

He didn't say that *if* we decide to lay up treasures, make sure they are in heaven, He commands us to lay them up, He wants us doing our banking in heaven

Handling money well is a big deal to God, as the Bible devotes more than 2,000 verses to it
16 of the 38 parables Jesus gave in the NT are on this subject

He talked about money 5 times more than He talked about any other subject in the Bible.

But what does Jesus mean by ***'lay up treasures'***?

PP Look at what the Greek word for ***'treasures'*** is...thēsauros

A thesaurus is a treasury or storehouse of words

PP But interestingly, look at what the Greek word for ***'lay up'*** is...thēsaurizō

Same word...except ***'lay up'*** is a verb and ***'treasures'*** is a noun

He literally said *Do not treasure treasures on earth*

His warning is simple...don't stockpile monies and possessions

To be clear, He isn't condemning savings accounts, or retirement plans, or having nice things

PP Proverbs 21:20 tells us ***"Precious treasure and oil are in a wise man's dwelling, but a foolish man devours it."***

PP Or, ***"By wisdom a house is built, and by understanding it is established; by knowledge the rooms are filled with all precious and pleasant riches."*** Proverbs 24:3-4

And it's ok to have nice things, and it's wise to save as we Solomon noted from a Queen Ant,

PP who, ***"without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest."*** Proverbs 6:6-8

PP And saving money has benefits to our children and grandchildren: ***"For children are not obligated to save up for their parents, but parents for their children."*** 2 Cor. 12:14

What Christ corrects in us is not investing, saving, possessing, but the stockpiling of earth's things beyond what we need and deriving from them happiness and security

Hoarding is wrong on every level

There is an abundance too big to use, piled up, and it is not how a Christian should live

PP *“Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist.”* Proverbs 23:4

And Jesus gives us the reasons to not stockpile *‘on earth’*, it’s *‘where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal’* 6:19

Wealth in biblical times was often measured in 3 commodities: clothing, grain, precious metal

Remember the leper Naaman from Syria who offered 10 changes of clothes to be healed?

Or when Samson promised 30 linen garments and 30 changes of clothes to solve his riddle

Or Joseph lavishing 5 changes of garments onto his younger brother Benjamin

But there was a problem...moths

The best cloth was wool, which was especially vulnerable to moths who love to eat the fabric

And here is the point...moths never eat what you are wearing and using, only what you store

Even moths have a divine purpose, to prevent us from hoarding and stock-piled clothes

Do you have more shoes and clothes than you need...then give some away, or sell them and

with the cash help the needy or support a ministry committed to the Gospel

The second way wealth was measured was in *grain*

Many of our bibles in these verses have a footnote for the word *‘rust’*, that says *worm*

The word nowhere in the bible means rust, it means *eating*, which having grown up in Central

NY, the winter salt would eat away your car and truck

But grain was eaten not by rust, but by rodents and worms

I read recently that the cause of food shortages in India, are caused by stockpiling grain in poorly

built sheds or open air, and 30% of it eaten or destroyed by rats and vermin

Are our cupboards and freezers filled to overflowing, then consider sharing it with the hungry, or

buy less, use coupons and share the savings with the poor around the world

These are ways to resist treasuring earth’s treasures and invest in your eternal reward

Then there is the third way wealth was measured...gold and precious metals, which were especially susceptible to *‘thieves’*

The majority of their homes were built out of clay and earth, and if a thief wanted in, he would

‘break in’ which means to dig through the wall

Often people in biblical times would find a spot on their property, dig a hole for their coins and precious metals and jewels and hide them

Do you have more household items than you realistically need?

Then give them to those who could use them, don’t stick them in a closet, attic or shed

Have you more money than you need, then wisely give the excess as God directs

In each of these-moths, rust, thieves-prove that stockpiled possessions are vulnerable commodities...you hoard it, you lose it!

Do your banking in heaven, and you will discover what the martyred Jim Elliot once taught:

PP *“He is no fool to give what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose”*

Send it ahead, into eternity, and the way you do that is by generously investing now in God’s kingdom!

And when you do, you’ll discover that *“where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”*

There are not many clearer ways to gauge the condition of our hearts then looking at how we handle our money, which leads us to the next great contrast in this sermon

PP Two Perspectives (6:22-23)

“The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 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!” 22-23

Jesus just taught that where our treasure is our hearts will be also and He talks about our ‘eye’
Not the eyes below our foreheads, but the eye of our heart, the motivation within us
Paul prayed in Ephesians that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened, meaning to be opened
by God so that we would know spiritual truth

The Holy Spirit does this as He in effect, pulls up the blinds, pulls back the curtains in our hearts
so that we can see our incredibly need of salvation, and God’s incredible love to save us
Look at this word ‘*healthy*’ or perhaps in your translation, single, or good, or clear

PP The word is derived from *bountiful*, or *generous*

It is a single-minded heart, focused clearly on eternity, laying up treasures there by having a
generous heart here

If you have a new heart, and a generous motivation, then your whole body, your whole self will
be full of light, full of joy, peace, light and happiness

A generous motivation fills our souls with joy

PP This is why Hudson Taylor said, *“The less I spent on myself and the more I gave to others,
the fuller of happiness and blessing did my soul become.”*

But, *if your eye is bad*, or literally, if you have the evil eye, a grudging and stingy motivation,
laying up treasures on earth, you’ll be full of darkness, sadness, meaninglessness, despair

If ‘*then the light that is in you is darkness*’...how can light be darkness?

If the motivation that is in you is selfishness, hoarding, coveting, then your whole life will be
without the knowledge of God that produces joy and peace and happiness

PP *“A man with an evil eye hastens after wealth...” Proverbs 28:22*

PP *“Take care lest there be an unworthy thought in your heart...grudgingly [evil] on your
poor brother, and you give him nothing, and he cry to the LORD against you, and you
be guilty of sin.” Deuteronomy 15:9*

An evil eye in Scripture was an eye of hoarding and selfishness and coveting

If we treasure this earth’s treasures, storing them up, our eye will be evil, our hearts darkened,
and it will keep us from joy, peace and happiness

But if we have a generous eye, we will be full of joy, laying up treasures in heaven, anticipating
them for all eternity

PP Two Masters (6:24)

*“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.” 6:24*

The Sermon on the Mount, in its entirety aims at our hearts, the control center of all our living!

The ancient Assyrians had a superstition that if a demon saw itself in a mirror, it would fly away

The idea was that the demon’s ugliness would cause it to flee

Christ’s sermon here graciously serves as a warning and a promise, a mirror to see into our hearts

Jesus is showing us what is potentially in our hearts...a treasuring of this world's things
And if we see that...flee to the cross, which alone has the power to set our eyes on things above,
and change our hearts and change your investment strategy by giving ahead

God is not like Tolkien's dragon, Smaug, hoarding vast piles of gold in Dwarvish mountains
He already owns all wealth, what we give cannot add to His overwhelming riches and power
He isn't telling us to lay up treasures in heaven for His sake, but for ours
And his warning is this: stockpiling more than we can use, treasuring this earth's treasures, will
enslave a person

PP *"Where riches hold the dominion of the heart God has lost His authority."* John Calvin

If God begins putting it on your heart, maybe even during this sermon, to give more, to give
sacrificially and you feel that familiar tug of war, maybe even resentment, have you ever
really thought on that?

There are two competing masters, and money promises much but cannot deliver on either side of
the grave

God promises, give generously, you will have what you need here, and more than you ever
imagined in eternity

The money master tells you that giving generously is divesting, God tells you it is investing
Money master tells us to stockpile, your future is uncertain, but God tells you to give generously,
He will take care of all you need and your eternal future is glorious

If we begin to devote ourselves to money, pursuing it, we will despise God, regarding Him little
But if we devote ourselves to God, then we regard money properly and give it generously
That whom you worship will be your master, and it will completely determine your life
How difficult it is to have money and prevent your money from having you!

About 10 years ago, I had someone in our church actually write me into his life insurance policy
Each time he gets sick, I suddenly pay close attention

Almost *accidentally* ran him over with my truck a couple years ago

Money messes up most of our hearts, but the cure is to learn to give generously, investing
forward, and laying up treasures for eternity

Do you own stock?

How often are you checking it?

Obsessively...Addictively...is it messing with your mind, interfering with your life?

Checking your savings and 401 numbers over and over, worrying that they are going down, or
the bank might not be calculating it right?

PP But let me close answering this question: *How we can lay up treasures in heaven?*

Listen to what Paul tells young Timothy: *"As for the rich in this present age, charge them not*

PP *to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life."*

1 Timothy 6:17-19

Friends, we can send treasures ahead of us by giving generously to God's kingdom

The key is in the words of Jesus about the indestructibility of investing in heavenly treasures

Nothing of this earth's material will last forever

We lay up treasures in heaven by investing in what is indestructible and the only two things that will last forever on this earth, are people, and the Word of God

PP *“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”* **Matthew 24:35**

PP *“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.”* **Matthew 10:42**

We lay up treasures in heaven when our giving is attached to people and God’s Word

PP *“Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the LORD, and he will repay him for his deed.”* **Proverbs 19:17**

Many years ago, we had foolishly gotten ourselves into credit card debt, and did the familiar dance of transferring the balance from one 0% interest card to the next

The debt was putting a strain on our marriage, and we learned the lesson of slavery to the lender

Two families, independent of each other, sensed that strain, relentlessly asked us what was happening, and when they felt confident we had repented from mismanaging our monies, each independently gave us the money to get completely out of debt

Did that earn for them their salvation?

Absolutely not, for salvation is by grace through faith alone, it was bought and paid for by the blood of Jesus Christ

But they laid up treasures in heaven and God will repay them for their deed

“Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit.” **Philippians 4:17**

PP *“I have held many things in my hands and I have lost them all. But whatever I have placed in God’s hands, that I still possess.”* Martin Luther

And nowhere will your giving be a better investment than getting God’s Word to people, be it a missionary, a Christian college, a church, a ministry

Christian, reject extravagant living, live simply, give generously laying up treasures in eternity
Amen?

Pray