

TREASURE WORTH STORING

Matthew 6:19-21

I. INTRODUCTION

II. THE TEXT

KJV—**19** Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: **20** But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: **21** For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

NIV—**19** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **20** But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

NASB—**19** Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. **20** But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; **21** for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

ESV—**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.

The Message—Don't hoard treasure down here where it gets eaten by moths and corroded by rust or—worse!—stolen by burglars. Stockpile treasure in heaven, where it's safe from moth and rust and burglars. It's obvious, isn't it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being.

III. BACKGROUND

A. CONTEXT

1. Parallel passage
 - a. **Luke 12**—background
 1. Jesus was teaching the crowds—including some parables
 2. Parable of the Rich Fool—**Lk12:13-21**
 3. Then teaching against anxiety—dependence on God—**Lk 12:22-33**
 - Parallels Sermon on Mount—**Mt 6:25-34**
 - b. **Verses 33-34**—parallel the 'treasure' passage from Sermon on Mount

Lk 12:33-34—*Sell your possessions and give to charity; make yourselves money belts which do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near nor moth destroys,. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

- c. This passage also tells **how to store up treasure in heaven**
 1. Sell all you have and give to charity
 2. Same instructions given to Rich Young Ruler—**Mk 10:21**
 3. Also relates to first righteous act in Sermon on Mount—**almsgiving**—**Mt 6:2-4**
2. Context in Sermon on Mount
 - a. Relates to all three righteous acts in **Mt 6:1-28**—almsgiving—prayer—fasting
 - b. Each act was to be done in ‘secret’ = **κρυπτω**—**vv 4, 6, 18**
 - c. Each act receives a divine award (later)—**vv 4, 6, 18**
 - d. Individual prayer—to be done in the closet—**ταμειον** = hidden treasure room
 - e. Implied strongly—acts done secretly—hiding them as treasures for the future

IV. EXPLANATION OF TEXT

NASB—19 *Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; 21 for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

A. STORING UP TREASURES ON EARTH

1. Store up treasures
 - a. Double use of words drawn from same root = **τίθημι** = put—place—lay aside

τίθημι → θησαυρός → θησαυρίζω
 - b. Store up = **θησαυρίζω** = gather—heap up—reserve—accumulate riches
 - c. Treasures = **θησαυρός** = storehouse—treasury—*things* laid up in treasury (treasure)
 - Greek origin of “thesaurus”—a treasury of words
 - The Magi presented Jesus “treasures” of gold, frankincense, and myrrh—**Mt 2:11**
 - d. Meaning
 1. Could mean obsession with ‘treasure’—valuables—wealth for symbolic, purchasing power

2. More likely meaning = stockpiling consumable goods for future use—for practical needs

3. Literal meaning = “treasure the treasured things”—or “store the stored things”

2. On Earth

a. **Location** ‘earth’—can be used only on earth—temporal value only (not eternal)

b. **Insecurity** of ‘earth’—vulnerability—to anything that can destroy them

c. **‘Earthly’** goods

1. Temporary—good only for short term needs—last only a short time

2. Corruptible—subject to loss or decay

3. Related biblical passages about earthly treasures—things of this world

a. Jesus describes this as “mammon” or “wealth”

6:24—*You cannot serve God and mammon.*

1. Term here is **μαμωνᾶς** = mammon—wealth—treasure

2. Here Jesus equates focus on mammon with idolatry!

b. Earthly goods as the source of envy and strife—**James 4:1-4**

- You lust and do not have—so you commit murder
- You are envious and do not obtain—so you fight and quarrel
- You ask and do not have—because you ask with wrong motives

4—*You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

c. Desire for others’ earthly things—basic reason for the 10th Commandment

Ex 20:17—*You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.*

◦ In OT context—all these were earthly ‘things’ belonging to another person

B. WHERE MOTH AND RUST DESTROY AND THIEVES BREAK IN AND STEAL

1. Moth and rust destroy

a. Moth = **σῆς** = common clothes moth

- Reminder—clothes had great value at this time
- b. Rust = **βρῶσις** = act of eating—corrosion
- Can be by the elements—such as oxidizing—rust eating away
 - Or by vermin—that ‘eat’ away at things
- c. Destroy = **ἀφανίζω** = consume—tarnish—disfigure—to make something vanish/disappear
- From root meaning—not appear—not be manifest
- d. Reminder
- All earthly goods susceptible to decay and vulnerable to natural elements or vermin
 - **James 5:2**—*Your riches have become corrupted and your garments have become moth-eaten.*
2. Thieves break in and steal
- a. Thieves = **κλέπτης** = embezzler—pilferer
- b. Break in = **διορύσσω** = dig through—[a house]
- Easy then to dig through walls of unfired bricks or through earthen foundations
 - Basis for our phrase “breaking and entering”
- c. Steal = **κλέπτω**
- Root word for kleptomaniac
- d. Contrast with Jesus—the Good Shepherd—the thief is:
- Jn 10—1** *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. . . .* **8** *All who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. . . .* **10** *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.*
- e. Reminder
- All earthly goods vulnerable to those who covet and plot to steal
- f. The hypocrites—in **verses 1-18**
1. Have stored up only earthly treasures
 2. They *already* have their reward—paid in full now

3. They have the approval of men—but not of God

C. STORING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

1. In Heaven =

- a. **Location** ‘heaven’

1. The ultimate ‘hidden’ place—the ‘secret’ treasure room
2. Things to be used *above* for Kingdom purposes—eternal value

- b. **Security** of ‘heaven’—invulnerability—unreachable—nothing can destroy them

- c. **‘Heavenly’** goods

1. Permanent—endure forever
2. Incorruptible—not subject to loss or decay

2. Assurance this can be done—to the Rich Young Ruler

Mk 10:21—*One thing you lack; go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*

3. Those who are faithful—in **verses 1-18**

- a. Have stored up heavenly treasure—stored things in the secret place
- b. They do not receive earthly recognition—but the approval of God

4. Reminders

- Heavenly treasures are not subject to corruption or loss
- Heavenly treasures are stored for a purpose—to be used for Kingdom service later!

D. WHERE YOUR TREASURE IS, THERE YOUR HEART WILL BE ALSO

1. Heart = **καρδια** = center of your whole being—your devotion

2. Could mean two things

- a. *Possible* meaning—Your heart will follow the stock-piled treasure
- b. **Preferred** meaning—What you treasure reveals where your devotion lies

3. Main point of passage—is about of **devotion—loyalty—priority**

- a. We have a choice—either/or—whom we prepare to serve

- b. Points to **verse 24**—we can serve only one—either God or the world
- c. Give God our whole-hearted devotion—our whole treasure

Dt 6—love the Lord our God with all our **heart**—mind—soul—strength

V. APPLICATION OF TEXT

A. DO NOT BE WORLDLY—LOVERS OF WEALTH

- 1. It is **temporary**—fleeting

Pr 23:4-5—*Do not weary yourself to gain wealth, cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is gone. For wealth certainly makes itself wings like an eagle that flies toward the heavens.*

- 2. It **distracts** us—from godly devotion

Mt 6:24—either we serve God or we serve mammon

- 3. Love for wealth—is a **source of evil** and destruction

I Tim 6:9-10—*But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruination and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

- 4. Dependence on wealth—shows **lack of trust in God**

Heb 13:5-6—*Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, “I will never desert you; nor will I ever forsake you;” so that we confidently say, “The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?”*

B. DO STORE UP HEAVENLY TREASURE

- 1. We *can* store up heavenly treasure—future ‘rewards’—that will survive

I Cor 3:12-14—*Now if any man build on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is to be revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward.*

- 2. These rewards are not for us—but treasures we present to God

Lk 12:20-21—at the end of the Parable of the Rich Fool—*So God said to him, “You fool! This very night your soul is required of you; and now who will own what you have prepared?” So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, **and is not rich toward God.**”*

- 3. These rewards are for future use—in the Kingdom of God

I Tim 6:11-19—*Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy. Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.*

- a. NOTE: there is nothing wrong with being wealthy—if we do three things:
 - 1. Remain humble—not conceited
 - 2. Depend on God—not fixing our hope on things
 - 3. Do good—rich in works—generous—ready to share
- b. The treasure is:
 - 1. Laying a good foundation for the future—preparation for service
 - 2. Foundation is—good works—generosity—sharing
 - 3. This is the same kind of service we will perform eternally!