

CITY CHURCH-EASTSIDE WEEKLY WORSHIP GUIDE

November 15, 2009



Sermon on the Mount: Treasures in Heaven

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal...”

The Sermon on the Mount contains words that are not only famous, but more importantly words that are transformative. Chapter six has led us to consider the all so important topic of prayer and this week we're led to the most spoken of subject in the bible, money. While culturally we avoid discussing the subject with anyone at anytime, you simply cannot talk about spiritual growth without talking about money. This comes into particular focus when we consider the destructive influence that money can have and yet it is a lifeless, inanimate object. Matthew 6:19-24 calls us to see how money controls us, why it controls us, and how we can find freedom in our finances.

While money is an impersonal object, according to this passage it can be thought of with either an earthly or heavenly perspective. Compared to the heavenly perspective, the earthly perspective on money keeps us hungry.

Our heart, as Jesus points out, can be given over to consumerism which is another word for addiction. When we trust in riches we operate like addicts, fearful that our needs will never be met outside of a relentless pursuit of control. In this passage such an insatiable appetite is coupled with a blindness that results slavery. This pronouncement is profound as Jesus is saying that greed is more difficult to recognize in our life than other sins. Greed leads us to believe that without the next “thing” we will lead of very dissatisfied life and yet lifestyle is truly a relative concept. The old adage that your checkbook register is a barometer of the heart could be worth a moment's thought.

It is also profitable, in a heavenly sort of way, to consider why money controls us. In verse 21 Jesus calls us to consider what we treasure, because whatever we prize most has captured our heart. As we move into verse 24 we see that Jesus is ultimately talking about idolatry or the masters we serve. Here Jesus encourages to examine how we respond to the things

of this world. If something is a “good thing” in our perspective and we lose it, we will feel sad and disappointed. But if something has become an “ultimate thing” and it's lost we end up feeling crushed. Which dynamic is true for you when it comes to money? The answer to this question helps us to understand if money is serving us or if we are serving money.

The ultimate question is how do we find freedom in our finances? 2 Corinthians 8:9 provides us with direction. Here Paul tell us that Christ became poor that we might become rich. The march to the cross and the spiritual poverty that Christ embraced there enabled the impoverished to find a new, more fulling treasure, Christ himself. When we embrace Christ as our highest affection our identity is secured and as a result we begin to view money with a fresh perspective. No longer are we slaves to money, but money begins to work for us. Now with a heavenly perspective peaces is ushered in.

Sermon Application

The questions and thoughts below can be used for further reflection this week. Seek to use a journal or discuss with a friend. Most of all use this to consider how the gospel of Christ can be transforming. Enjoy!

Application Questions: Matthew 6:19-24

Intersect: Making Money Work for You.

1. Discuss some of the concerns that you have with our culture's approach to money. What has been your experience with the church as it relates to money?
2. Share with your group what you learned about money growing up. How were you taught to view money especially in regard to your relationship to God. How have you changed?
3. Read Matt 6:19-24. Define the difference between a heavenly and an earthly view of money. How does the earthly view keep us hungry for more? Consider:
 - a. Our heart is designed to be filled, so what happens when it's focused on money?
 - b. Our heart is often blinded in our relationship to money.
4. The second point of the sermon addressed the question "Why does money control us?" Which of these diagnostic questions resonated with you and why?
 - a. Do I look to money for security & trust?
 - b. Do I seek to make money to acquire power?
 - c. To I use money to secure approval from others?
 - d. When I lose money do I feel devastated or empty?
5. Read the reflection quote to the left. This quote reveals the power that money had in Carnegie's life. How does this impact your own view of money?
6. Read 2 Corinthian 8:9. How did Christ treat the greatest of all riches, the riches of heaven? If we are centered on Christ how can we avoid the pitfalls of money and ultimately have money serve us in a way that establishes the peace of His kingdom?

For some Matthew 6:19-24 shed light on the broken relationship that we have with money. For many of us our relationship with money has crushing affects due to the way we treasure it in our hearts. In writing the worship guide this week I found a great article on Crown Ministries' website. The article deals with impulsive and compulsive spending (<http://www.crown.org/LIBRARY/ViewArticle.aspx?ArticleId=426>). Read the article and consider:

- What is my biggest personal take-away from this article?
- Am I in control of my spending? If not, why not?
- Review the "10 signs and symptoms that characterize compulsive spending." Is any of this true for me?
- What could be helpful from this article to change my relationship to money such that God is glorified and peace is established?

Also as you plan for holiday gifts we want you to consider spending your mula with Amani Ya Juu. We have talked quite extensively about this ministry over the past months, but if you want more info read here (<http://www.amaniafrica.org/>). Our pre-sale kickoff party will be Friday night from 7:30-9:00 where items will be on sale for the first time. Wine and cheese will be served so it should make for a great time to support the kingdom of Christ abroad while celebrating the Advent season with a Christo-centric focus. Blessings!

"Although Carnegie built 2,059 libraries... a steelworker, speaking for many, told an interviewer, "We didn't want him to build a library for us, we would rather have had the higher wages." At that time steelworkers worked twelve-hour shifts on floors so hot they had to nail wooden platforms under their shoes. Every two weeks they toiled an inhuman twenty-four hour shift, and then they got their sole day off. The best housing they could afford was crowded and filthy. Most died in their forties or earlier, from accidents or disease...."

Excerpt from a Carnegie biography.



Carnegie Library, Atlanta, GA