

MESSAGES FROM THE MOUNT – *Treasure Seekers*

Open your Bibles to **Matthew 6:19-21** (pg.1504) as we consider what the LORD JESUS has to say to us about “*Treasure Seekers.*” Listen carefully: 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 moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.** ²¹ **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

We all seek treasure. We all long for things we think will improve our quality of life. There are material things we value. Houses, cars, jewelry or just hard cash. Yet, some folks in Texas and Florida were reminded that the adage of “*here today and gone tomorrow*” rings true. Others have made investments that didn’t pan out. I “*put all my eggs in one basket*” as far as retirement was concerned - and that basket fell apart. I know of millionaires who “*lost it all*” when the value of their stocks suddenly plummeted.

There are positions we consider worthy. Being an executive or a CEO – or having any job with a sizeable salary, or a decent benefit package, maybe even some great perks – like company cars or corporate cards. Yet, there are likely some of you here right now, who have lost jobs that you thought were secure - or are concerned that the next corporate restructure may leave you out in the cold with little prospects of anything more than an entry level position elsewhere.

We cherish meaningful relationships. Family and friends; a “*significant other*” to do life with in the way one God intended. Sometimes we take loved ones for granted, but the tomb of loneliness is one of the darkest places on earth.

Besides, what’s any – even all - of this worth without youth and health? Many have saved up for retirement only to die early – or find themselves so sick or frail that their estate was eaten up to pay for their maintenance. As the lyrics of an old song declare, “*Money can’t buy back, your youth when you’re old – or restore a love, that has grown cold.*”

And isn’t this Jesus’ caution? Treasures of earth just don’t last. As good as they may be, they tarnish with age or wear out with use. Even people get sick and die. **Yet, Jesus describes Treasures that...**

- **Are Secure:** They can’t be lost or stolen. No one can take them away.
- **Endure:** They can’t fade away or be used up. They are eternal; lasting forever.

It may be impossible to precisely identify what these “*heavenly treasures*” will be, but Jesus certainly indicates they exist. In the Sermon on the Mount, **He says God rewards...**

- **Suffering persecution for His sake (5:12)**
- **Loving our enemies (5:46)**
- **Discrete giving and fasting (5:46)**

These “treasures” were all promised to come from our heavenly Father who **“rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”** (Hebrews 11:6) Yet, history bears out that few of the faithful ever personally received physical rewards for their sacrifices and faithfulness. Hebrews 11:13 tells us that even some who appeared to be rewarded in life did not receive all God intended. It says: **“All these people (Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham) were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; They only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth.”**

Later on, in Matthew 10, Jesus also refers to...

- **The reward of the prophet. (10:41a)**
- **The reward of the righteous. (10:41b)**
- **Rewards for any who help His “little ones.” (10:42)**

Some insist such rewards are only available on earth. Perhaps, the prophet will reward the one who helps him with a word from God, or with healing or other blessing. The reward of the righteous or the one who assists a child or a disciple of Christ could be a clear conscience or a sincere confidence just for doing the right thing. Pr 15:6 says **“The house of the righteous contains great treasure.”** And Mt. 12:35 says **“A good person produces good things from the treasury of a good heart.”** The apostle Paul’s words in 1st Tim 6 also support this idea. He writes: **“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.** That sounds like present reward, doesn’t it? But he goes on: **“Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way, they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.** That sounds like future spiritual reward!

Jesus certainly says that there are eternal rewards in heaven. So once more, this does not have to be an “either/or” proposition, but can surely be, as so often is the case, a “both/and” situation. **There can be both temporal and spiritual rewards for those who seek Heaven’s Treasures.** Yet, I’m afraid that for many, a pursuit of temporary earthly treasures will cause them to lose out on the eternal rewards of heaven. And that seems to be Jesus’ concern, too.

For me, **the greatest treasure is God Himself** and all my greatest longings can be found in my relationship with Him. Psalm 16:11 says: **“In His presence is fullness of joy, and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore.”** And Psalm 37:4 promises: **“Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart.”** Since **my treasure is in heaven, that’s also where my heart is.** How about yours? **We have this treasure in jars of clay...from God. (2 Cor 4:7)**