
TWO TREASURES & TWO MASTERS

George Battey | 3/5/14

QUESTIONS:

- 1) In the first half of Mt 6, who is being deceived? Who is being deceived in the second half?
- 2) How is the Greek word for "*rust*" usually translated in other passages?
- 3) Where did poor people use to hide their money?
- 4) The "*moth*" illustrates destructive forces which strike from what?
- 5) According to Jesus, how do we "*store up treasures in heaven*"?
- 6) What is an "*evil eye*" according to the scriptures?
- 7) Whose calf seems to always die?
- 8) Why are some sinners really happy?

INTRODUCTION

Matthew 6:19-24

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.

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

In these verses Jesus sets forth a series of alternatives for His disciples to consider:

vv19-21 – *two treasures* (earthly and heavenly)

vv22-23 – *two bodily conditions* (light and darkness)

v24 – *two masters* (God and mammon)

Later:

vv25-34 – *two preoccupations* (physical and spiritual)

A SHIFT

Mt 6 can be broken into two halves:

vv1-18 – deals with deceiving *others* (hypocrisy); acting like something we are not

vv19-34 – deals with *self-deception*; those who have deceived themselves into thinking earthly treasures are better than heavenly

The cure for both is: ***Keep your attention focused on the Father!***

A CONTRAST

There are two great contrasts made in this chapter:

vv1-18 – Jesus is saying we should be ***different than the religious people*** of that day (the Pharisee, the hypocrite, the idolater).

vv19-34 – Jesus teaches we should be ***different than the irreligious*** of that day (the Gentiles ^(v32) who seek earthly treasures and care not for sacred things).

TEXT (1)

Matthew 6:19

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

Now, this is a strange command:

- If the "**Jehovah's Witnesses**" are correct. They say this earth will not be destroyed, but renovated and changed into an eternal paradise.
- If the **Premillennialists** are correct. They say Jesus will return to this earth and reign 1000 yrs.
- If the **Jews** are correct. They believed the coming of the kingdom would be a restoration of the "glory days" of David and Solomon.

It is easy to see that the Kingdom of heaven is spiritual, and because of that Jesus forbids treasuring up earthly treasures!

REASONS WHY

Jesus gives several reasons for this prohibition:

REASON #1: Moths will corrupt earthly possessions

In Bible days clothing was an extremely valuable treasure:

- Josh 7 – **Achan** stole a Babylonish garment.
- Judges 14 – **Samson** persuaded 30 men with 30 changes of clothing.
- 2 Kings 5 – **Naaman** brought Elisha 10 changes of raiment for a reward.
- Lk 15 – Upon returning home **the prodigal son** received first of all a robe.
- Lk 16 – Special notice was given to the clothing of **the rich man** (purple and fine linen).

In Bible days there were no "fashion trends" to keep up with! Their clothes did not become "outdated" like ours.

Clothes (especially nice, durable clothes) were hard to come by.

- They were not mass produced.
- They were all hand crafted and were very expensive.
- As a result: **a nice suit of clothes would last for several years.**

A person was pretty well off to have just one nice change of clothing, but some rich men of that day would have several.

NOTE: I understand that there were some wealthy kings of certain nations that had enough money to own up to seven changes of clothes!

Imagine that if you can! These kings could wear something different every day for up to seven days!

(Think about that the next time you open your closet and complain that you have nothing to wear!)

BUT, as valuable and as precious as clothing was, Jesus reminds us that it is easily destroyed by a moth!

REASON #2: Rust will corrupt earthly possessions

rust (βρῶσις) – This word occurs 10 times in NT and this is the only place it was translated as "rust."

Romans 14:17

17 for the kingdom of God is not **eating** (βρῶσις) and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Obviously "rust" would not work in that verse!

John 4:32

32 But He said to them, "I have food to **eat** (βρωσις) of which you do not know."

Jesus was not saying He had food that would "rust"!

So, an accurate translation of Mt 6:19 would be: "*moths and eating corrupt.*"

REASON #3: Thieves will steal

"break in" – lit: "*dig thru*"

There were no locks with keys in those days except perhaps in governmental buildings.

(The average householder had no locks and keys.)

If the homeowner left he could not lock the door so as to keep out thieves.

What little money the common man had would be buried in a secret hiding place. Thieves would of course "*dig throughout*" the house and steal it!

WHAT IS BEING ILLUSTRATED?

Now, what is Jesus illustrating by all of these destructive forces?

1) **Moth** – destructive forces which strike from ***non-use of earthly treasures***.

A moth doesn't follow a man around and munch on clothes while they are being worn!

2) **"Eating"** – destructive forces which strike from ***the use of earthly treasures***.

- The more you use a **shovel**, the more the blade is "eaten" away by rocks and dirt.
- The more you use a **saw** ...

3) **Thieves** – destructive forces that take away (thieves, hurricanes, tornadoes, storms).

All earthly treasures, then, are subject to:

- Deterioration from **non-use**
- Deterioration from **use**
- **Loss**

TEXT (2)

In contrast to earthly treasures, Jesus says:

Matthew 6:20

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Neither natural, nor human forces can destroy heavenly treasures.

Heavenly treasures are both durable and secure. The joys of heavenly treasures do not diminish with the passing of time.

ILL: Exercise equipment.

ILL: One time Brother Gene Grant bought a juicer. He was going to drink his way to health, fitness and a slim waistline. The first week was a smashing success! There were crates of fresh fruit and vegetables everywhere in his house. Everyone was drinking:

- *carrot juice*
- *apple juice*
- *orange juice*
- *pineapple juice*
- *cabbage juice*
- *spinach juice*
- *celery juice*

BUT, as the weeks passed, the juicer lost its luster. The next thing you know, Brother Gene was eating cream puffs and drinking store brand orange soda!

What was the problem? The problem is: *the joys of earthly treasures diminish with the passing of time.*

Heavenly treasures are not this way! In fact, Jesus is saying the joys of heaven not only remain constant, but there are indications that the joys are on an escalating course!

We will enjoy heaven more and more with the passing of time!

WAS JESUS FORBIDDING BANK ACCOUNTS?

When Jesus said, "*Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,*" **was He forbidding us to have bank accounts?** I don't believe so!

- 1) **Nature** – teaches that we must make preparations for the future. The Scriptures praise the ant which stores up food in the summer for the upcoming winter:

Proverbs 6:6-8

6 Go to the ant, you sluggard! Consider her ways and be wise,

7 Which, having no captain, Overseer or ruler,

8 Provides her supplies in the summer, And gathers her food in the harvest.

- 2) **Scriptures** – teach the idea of preparing for the future:

2 Corinthians 12:14

14 ... For the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children.

In Lk 19 – You will remember that Jesus rejoiced when Zacchaeus promised to give **half** (*not all*) of his goods to the poor.

In Acts 5 – Ananias and Sapphira were not condemned for keeping some of their money, but for lying.

WHAT HE IS SAYING

If Jesus was not all together condemning saving money, what was He teaching?

The key to the whole verse is the phrase "***for yourselves.***" We may lay up money for the future, but ***we may not do it solely for ourselves:***

Ephesians 4:28

28 Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

NOTE: This implies we must save part of our paycheck. We cannot spend ***all*** of it on ourselves! If we run up so many bills that it requires ***all*** our pay check, how could we "***have to give to him who has need***"?

Jesus was forbidding His disciples making earthly possessions their chief concern.

Psalms 62:10

10 ... If riches increase, Do not set your heart on them.

He did ***not*** say, "***If riches increase, then give them all away.***" He said, "***Do not set your heart on them.***"

Don't trust in them; don't make riches your #1 priority.

HOW DO WE TREASURE UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN?

How do we go about "***laying up treasures in heaven***"?

Jesus taught repeatedly that ***we store up treasures in heaven when we use our earthly possessions to help people:***

Matthew 25:34-36

34 Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

35 for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in;

36 I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.'

Luke 12:33

33 Sell what you have and **give alms**; provide yourselves money bags which do not grow old, a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches nor moth destroys.

Once, when Jesus met a rich young man:

Matthew 19:21

21 Jesus said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and **give to the poor**, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."

TEXT (3)

Matthew 6:21

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

In the Bible, when men dedicated their lives to God, it showed in their pocket-book!

- 1) **When the collection for the tabernacle was being taken**, the people gave so generously they gave too much:

Exodus 36:6-7

6 So Moses gave a commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, "Let neither man nor woman do any more work for the offering of the sanctuary." And the people were restrained from bringing,

7 for the material they had was sufficient for all the work to be done — indeed too much.

- 2) **When the collection for the temple was taken** the people gave just as generously:

1 Chronicles 29:9

9 Then the people rejoiced, for they had offered willingly, because with a loyal heart they had offered willingly to the LORD; and King David also rejoiced greatly.

- 3) **When men were converted to Christ** they gladly sold their possessions and shared them with their poor brothers:

Acts 2:44-45

44 Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common,
45 and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need.

Q: What made these people do those things?

A: They had their hearts in heaven!

TEXT (4)

Matthew 6:22-23

22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

"if your eye is bad" – Biblically speaking an "*evil eye*" means someone who is **greedy** and **stingy**:

Deuteronomy 15:9

9 Beware lest there be a wicked thought in your heart ... and **your eye be evil** against your poor brother and you give him nothing, ...

Proverbs 28:22

22 A man with **an evil eye** hastens after riches,
And does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

"good eye" – is contrasted with the *"evil eye"* and this indicates a generous man:

Proverbs 22:9

9 He who has a **generous eye** will be blessed,
For he gives of his bread to the poor.

Now, here's the point. Jesus is saying that when someone looks greedily at earthly treasures, he has an *"evil eye"* and as a result, his entire life is darkened!

- There's nothing like generosity to give you a clear, undistorted view of people and of life.
- BUT ... there's nothing like stinginess and an *"evil eye"* to darken your entire outlook on life.

ILL: Window vs. Mirror.

Window is glass that allows you to look out and see others. Mirror is glass that allows you to see only yourself. The difference? A little silver.

Think of all the things that stinginess and love of money have done to men:

- **Delilah** sold Samson for 1,100 pieces of silver (Judges 16).
- **Samuel's sons** took bribes and perverted justice (1 Sam 8).
- **Judas** sold Jesus for 30 pieces of silver (Mt 26).
- **Soldiers** lied about the resurrection for money (Mt 28).
- **Simon** offered money to Peter to receive ability to transfer miraculous power – a money making scheme (Acts 8).

For money men have:

- Killed their wives to receive insurance money.
- Killed their parents to receive inheritance.
- Women have sold their virtue.

- Companies, mobsters, thugs sell drugs with no conscience for those who use them – just to make a buck.
- Children have been exploited.
- Infants have been kidnapped and sold on the black market.
- Men have hired themselves out to murder for money.
- People sue others for profit.

For a dollar some men lose all morals, all virtues and all sense! Everything is fair game for the gain of a buck!

When your *"eye is evil"* (stingy & greedy) it darkens your whole outlook on life!

ILL: Once a farmer joyously reported to his wife that his best cow just gave birth to twin calves – a red one and a white one. He said:

"I've been led of the Lord to dedicate one of these calves to God. We'll raise both together and when the time comes to sell, we'll keep the profit from one and take the money from the other and give it to the Lord's work."

His wife asked which calf was going to be dedicated to God and he assured her there was no need to decide right then. *"We'll treat them equal and when it's time, we'll sell them like I said."*

Several months later the farmer came dragging into the house very sad. His wife asked what wrong. He said, *"I have bad news for you! The Lord's calf died today."*

It's always the lord's calf that dies isn't it?

Truly Jesus said, *"If your eye is evil (stingy, selfish) then your whole body is full of darkness!"*

TEXT (5)

Matthew 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

Jesus first began discussing the self-deception of *a man who has convinced himself that earthly treasures are better than heavenly treasures.*

Now He discusses the self-deception of *a man who thinks he can have both at the same time!*

NOTE: Jesus assumes from the very beginning that we are going to be slaves. We have no choice as to whether we are free, or slaves. We are slaves!

(But we do have a choice as to who our master will be.)

"No man" – This teaching applies to all men, not just rich men!

We sometimes rejoice when these verses are read: **"I hope that brother with the BMW heard that!"**

But listen, you in your poverty can idolize mammon! You can:

- Adore it
- Desire it
- Long for it
- Cherish it
- Worship it

and in the process, though you're still poor, you have served and worshipped another god besides the Lord!

OPPOSING MASTERS

The two masters under consideration are two masters *"of a different kind."*

Matthew 6:24

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love **the other** (ἕτερος), or else he will be loyal to the one and despise **the other** (ἕτερος). You cannot serve God and mammon.

There are two Greek words that can be translated "other."

- ἕτερος – another of a different kind
- ἄλλος – another of the same kind

Jesus used the word that means "another of a different kind." A man cannot serve two masters of opposite character and interest.

mammon – material possessions in general; not restricted to money

There are two masters: **(a) the heavenly Father**, and **(b) earthly possessions**.

An unknown author wrote:

"Their orders are diametrically opposed. The one commands you to walk by faith, the other to walk by sight; the one to be humble, the other to be proud; the one to set your affections on things above, the other to set them on the things that are on the earth; the one to look at the things unseen and eternal, the other to look at the seen and temporal; the one to have your citizenship in heaven, the other to cleave to the dust; the one to be careful for nothing, the other to be all anxiety; the one to be content with such as you have, the other to enlarge your desires as the grave; the one to be ready to distribute, the other to withhold; the one to look at the things [needs] of others, the other to look at one's own things; the one to seek happiness in the Creator, the other to seek it in the creature. Is it not plain that there is no serving two such masters?"

Joshua knew that men could not serve two masters of a different kind:

Joshua 24:15

15 And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."

1 Kings 18:21

21 And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If the LORD is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. ...

Yet in spite of all this men still try to do just what Jesus said could not be done. They:

- Serve God on Sundays, but mammon on weekdays
- Serve God with their lips, but mammon with their hearts
- Serve God in appearance, but mammon in reality

KEY TO HAPPINESS

This is the key to true happiness!

Have you ever wondered why some sinners are happy? Why do they seem to enjoy life so much? ***Because, they have only one master!***

(True, it's the wrong master, but at least it's one master.)

That's why many Christians are miserable, because they have not decided on one master. They have:

- **Just enough world** in them to keep them from enjoying the church
- **Just enough church** in them to keep them from enjoying the world

CONCLUSION

In reviewing Mt 6 there is a logical chain of progression. Jesus is not just randomly tossing together several subjects.

- **Mt 6:1-18** – Men are giving alms, praying and fasting in order to be seen by men. Why?
- Because earthly treasures are more important to them than heavenly. Why?
- Because their outlook on life (eye) is diseased. Why?
- Because they have not chosen the right master.

Jesus is trying to teach us the secret of true happiness both now and for eternity:

- **Choosing just one master and**
- **Choosing the RIGHT ONE.**