

Sermon Series: Spurred on to Holiness (and Power) by Immersing Ourselves into the Life of Christ Through the Eyes of the Apostles – A Harmony of All Four Gospels

Sermon Title: Let's Have 20/20 Laser Focused Eyes on the One and Only Treasure that Lasts Forever.

March 17, 2019

Theme verse: Acts 4:13 Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus. (ESV)

Today's Scripture: 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 eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, [23] 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! [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. (ESV)

Introduction: You've heard the quote by Pablo Escobar, the Colombian drug lord, "Everyone has a price, the important thing is to find out what it is". What that means is that you can get anyone to do anything you want them to do against their will if you know what is important to them and threaten to take it away or give them something more valuable than the value they put on violating their conscience. If getting someone to provide a false alibi can be purchased for a million dollars then you know their price. If getting someone to kill someone if you threaten to kill their family, then you know their price. Since Pablo Escobar was a servant of Satan it is safe to assume he got that wisdom from Satan himself. Therefore Satan and Satan's servant, Pablo Escobar, who is presently serving an eternal sentence in Hades, are on to something are they not? You will do practically anything to protect or gain your earthly treasure. So if we make our treasure a heavenly treasure instead of an earthly treasure no one can get us, even Satan himself to do things we don't want to do or shouldn't do.

Main point: The sacrifices we make here on earth to expand the Kingdom of God by our time and generosity, are collected, saved, and returned to the investor to savor for all eternity.

Context:

Exegesis

- In Bible times a measure of a person's success was the clothes they wore, much like

today, but if an expensive garment is left unattended, moths can easily eat the entire garment and destroy what the owner prized so highly.

- The word rust is not the normal word in Greek for rust but the word for waste away. Many rich people stored up their grains only to find their storage eaten away by mice, and worms and rot.
- The word for thieves digging through referred to the clay walls people used to protect their homes and gold. If a person left to go on a trip, a thief could easily dig through the clay and get into the home.
- The healthy eye Jesus speaks of is haplous in Greek which means generous. It is used this way in *James 1:[5] If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. (ESV) and Romans 12:[8] the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. (ESV)*
- And in verse 23 when Jesus says if your eye is bad the Greek word is poneros and often means stingy, grudgingly.
- In verse 24, the word for serve is doulos and means slave and the word for master is kurios meaning lord. Ideally it should be translated no man can be a slave to two owners. An employee can, and divide his time between two employers but not a slave.

1. Laying up earthly treasures is simply a bad investment that is guaranteed to go south.

- The old Spanish saying was “There are no pockets in a shroud”. Today we say “There are no U-Haul trailers behind a hearse”. Think this through. . .
- The OT story of Achan visualizes this stupidity. Joshua 6:17-18; 7:1-26. Stole a beautiful garment, 200 shekels of silver and 50 pounds of gold. The gold alone was worth 1.04 million in today's money. Imagine how much he could have done with all that money. He may have even thought, wow, I could give half to the poor once I build my estate. . .
- The rich young ruler in Matthew 19 (what a sad story) *Matthew 19:16–22 [16] And behold, a man came up to him, saying, “Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?” [17] And he said to him, “Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments.” [18] He said to him, “Which ones?” And Jesus said, “You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, [19] Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” [20] The young man said to him, “All these I have kept. What do I still lack?” [21] Jesus said to him, “If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” [22] When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. (ESV)*
- Annanias and Sapphira in Acts 5

2. If laying up earthly treasures can be time-consuming, then laying up heavenly treasures must also require a time commitment.

- It is not enough to think about the unimportance of worldly wealth, and the importance of heavenly wealth, one must actively make deposits.

- What are those deposits? 1) generosity and charity, 2) hospitality to those in need of friendship or shelter, 3) providing for missionaries and traveling evangelists like Paul, 4) providing a living for pastors through a tithe, 5) contributing time to ministries like LifeRight or Life Connections, 6) or mentoring a student that needs more than just academic help. . . .
3. The time and money spent on these deposits are real deposits in heaven and actually kept in heaven in a different form. [20] *but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.*
- Here's how it may work. George gave 30% of his salary to the ministry and missions and 50% of his free time to mentoring troubled children in the neighborhood. God kept track of every dollar noting how little George kept for himself to live on (since God doesn't look at percentages but what is kept back, think widow who gave 100% with nothing left to live on) then,
 - With accurate accounting God greets George after a lifetime of serving and giving and says to George "Well done good and faithful servant, I am putting you in charge of "New Chicago" or "New Minneapolis". That assignment comes with honor, respect, more face time with Jesus (just speculating on that one), and the satisfaction that George is now serving as a millennial high bishop over sub-bishops who serve over pastors and sub-pastors. His sacrifice has earned him an enormous reward in heaven.
 - Therefore every dollar you spend in a monthly tithe could have been spent on personal pleasures like vacations or newer vehicles, or whatever but, not one dime of your tithe has been lost in God's accounting and not one nickel has been eternally wasted. For example, if a person in good faith gave 10,000 dollars to Joel Osteen and Joel used that to spend on himself and his Lear jet, then those 10,000 dollars were wasted dollars that Joel will have to provide an accounting for but the person who contributed the \$\$ in good faith has 10,000 heavenly credits to his account waiting for him in eternity.
4. Like sunlight through our pupils bringing everything into clear focus, so does generosity bring everything into alignment with our spiritual lives. [22] *"The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, [23] 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!*
- If an eye is clouded with cataracts, everything gets blurred. Surgery is needed. Once removed, crystal clear vision (normally).
 - If a life is clouded with greed and self-centeredness, a person misses out on the blessings of helping others and enjoying their smiles and most of all the smile of God.

Application

1. There are two ways to die, happily or grudgingly. If a man treasures only things of this world he will leave this world grudgingly. But if his treasures are safely tucked away in heaven, he will delight in his own parting and look forward to his death. Think this through.
2. As a church, the more people we have who choose to die happily the greater our impact on the

world. During the Decian persecution of the church Roman authorities broke into a church to loot its treasure. The commander demanded that Laurentius the deacon hand over the church's treasure. Laurentius pointed to the widows and orphans they were feeding and said to the commander – "These are our treasures"