

# Heavenly & Earthly Treasures (Matt. 6:19-24)

## A Small Group Outline



### 1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
  - Sing a few songs of praise to God

### 2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

### 3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

### 4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

### 5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

- **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (MB)*, pp. 88-95
- Vs 19: Treasures on earth
  - This is a reference to accumulating worldly goods for security, and is associated with a love for money, worldliness, greed and perplexity.
  - Laying up treasures on earth is not a reference to making an honest living; rather it is an obsession with trying to gain security through possessions. A Christian will never be lazy or casual about providing for his own needs and for those of his family (cf. 2 Thess. 2:10)
  - The Christian is not anxious about the material necessities of life because of his confidence that God will provide for them (see Matt. 6:31-34).
  - In ancient times a person's wealth often consisted in expensive clothing (2 Kings 5:22; Josh 7:21). Jesus warned that this is subject to ruin through rust and moth, and what those two cannot get to, thieves may take away. In other words, worldly wealth is not a safe investment.
  - "Treasure laid up on the earth will engross the mind to the exclusion of heavenly things" (MB 88)
  - "Avaricious greed for wealth exerts such a fascinating, bewitching influence over the life that it results in perverting the nobility and corrupting the humanity of men until they are drowned in perdition. The service of Satan is full of care, perplexity, and wearing labor, and the treasure men toil to accumulate on earth is only for a season" (MB 88).
  - Note that Jesus is not so much concerned with our treasures as with our attitude to them. Treasure can be a great blessing in the hands of a converted person. The Bible however warns us against the love of money (cf. 1 Tim. 6:20),

and the world (1 John 2:15, 16) – cautioning us against these unhealthy attitudes to possessions.

- Why we should not lay up treasures on earth?
  - It reflects fear and uncertainty for future. Jesus said: Do not worry about tomorrow. This does not mean we should not plan or prepare for our future financial wellbeing?
  - They wear out and devalue over time.
  - We are subject to death, so we cannot use them after we die. A Spanish proverb says that a shroud (the cloth used to wrap a dead person in) does not have pockets. Nothing can be taken with us to the next life. We therefore have to spend our monies wisely while on earth to further God's kingdom and bless others. It is not wise to hoard hard-earned monies that others will spend (often recklessly) after our death.
  - They can become all absorbing, causing us to lose our grip on Jesus
  - They tend to feed the selfish nature.
- What we should keep in mind concerning material possessions
  - They belong to God (Ps 24:1; Ps 50:9-12; 1 Chron 29:11-14)
  - We are God's stewards to wisely manage them
- Vs 20: Store up treasure in heaven. We can do this by:
  - Acts of kindness (feeding the poor, ministering to the sick, providing for the homeless, etc.)
  - Through character building (i.e. developing a Christlike character)
  - Winning souls for eternity
- Vs 22: If your eyes are good...
  - "Singleness of purpose, wholehearted devotion to God, is the condition pointed out by the Saviour's words. Let the purpose be sincere and unwavering to discern the truth and to obey it at whatever cost, and you will receive divine enlightenment. Real piety begins when all compromise with sin is at an end. But when the eye is blinded by the love of self, there is only darkness" (MB 91).
  - "Every indulgence of that desire strengthens the soul's aversion to God. In following the path of Satan's choosing, we are encompassed by the shadows of evil, and every step leads into deeper darkness and increases the blindness of the heart" (MB 92)
  - Relation of the 2 types of eyes to treasure
    - The eye is likened to a lamp. The Greek word for lamp refers to the source of light or the medium through which it shines (similar to our understanding of 'window'). As the eyes let in light into the body, so the state of our spiritual eyes will determine the light that gets into our hearts.
    - If our spiritual perceptions and understanding are correct (i.e. we have 'good' or 'single' eyes), we will have a correct view of both earthly and heaven treasure.
    - If our eyes and mind provides us with biased (unspiritual) data, we cannot make right decisions regarding our treasures.
- Vs 24: No man can serve two masters
  - "Christ does not say that man will not or shall not serve two masters, but that he *cannot*. The interests of God and the interests of mammon have no union or sympathy" (MB 93)
  - Relation of two masters to treasure
    - The service of money is enslaving

- Slaves had no rights and were under the complete control of their masters, who could sell them, throw them out, or even kill them.
- Jesus likened laying up treasures on earth to slavery. No one can be under the complete control of 2 masters, who give opposite instructions. Thus it is impossible to serve God and money at the same time.
- *Read Matt. 6:19-24. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
  - How have you felt when you have lost a valued possession? Share an experience to illustrate.
  - What do you think it means to lay up (store up) treasures on earth?
  - Can money change people? Elaborate.
  - Why are we encouraged not to lay up treasures on earth?
  - What do you think is the modern equivalent of moth and rust with regard to our treasures?
  - What do you think storing up treasures in heaven means?
  - How do you think the two types of eyes are related to this section on treasure?
  - How do you think the reference to the two masters are linked to this section on treasure?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
  - Based on evidence from your lifestyle, do you think your eyes are darkened in the areas of money, divine provision, and trust?
  - What sort of things do you think about most?
  - Share an experience of how money may have changed you at some time – made you want more, brought you perplexity, made you jealous, made you proud?
  - Share about a time of when you laid up treasure in heaven. How did it make you feel?
  - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group’s secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. “I will budget my time and money to do one small missionary project every week (e.g. bake bread and share with a neighbour, give out a tract, assist a needy family, etc.) and thus try to lay up treasure in heaven by extending God’s kingdom and blessing humanity.”

## 6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today’s lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

## 7. Closing prayer