

The Eternal and Heavenly Treasure of Christ
Matthew 6:19-24

Introduction

People of God, what do you desire above all else? Our passage today teaches us that the **Eternal Heavenly Treasure of Christ** is **worth more than all the treasures of this earth, and therefore, is more worthy of your love and affection and devotion than the fleeting treasures of this earth.**

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

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.

Consider your cherished childhood teddy bear, a faithful companion whose nose was nibbled by the family dog, an eye held together by a thread, and stuffing seeping out. Reflect on that bicycle left to rust in the rain, or the beloved toy doll who lost her arm when you tried to protect her from your brother. Your prized sweater caught on a nail and acquired a hole. And your favorite jeans gave up the ghost when they burst at the seams.

We all know that Earthly treasures will not last forever.

Even your Ford Mustang will ultimately succumb to rust and decay. Your treasured Larry Bird poster mysteriously disappears, and the baseball cards you envisioned as valuable collectibles lose

their allure. Money can be stolen, homes destroyed by tornadoes and cities devastated by hurricanes.

This is the reality of life in this world. Things fall apart. Nothing lasts forever. All things are destined to lose their value and worth as time goes on and eventually become dust in the wind. Every antique shop or garage sale is filled with one man's junk that becomes another man's treasure, until it becomes junk again. This is how things are.

Jesus uses the example of a moth's rust and thieves to prove the point. Moths will find their way into your wardrobe or closet and lay eggs on your woolen garments. And when the eggs hatch, the larvae will eat away at the garment, leaving holes, destroying your favorite clothes. Rust also decays your belongings, and thieves likewise can break into your house and steal your most precious belongings.

The main idea here is we all have things we care about. And if we are saddened by the loss and damage of those temporary earthly items, which were here one day and are gone the next, then why don't we give more care and concern for that which lasts forever? Where are you going to keep those things which are most important?

The Pharisees loved money and they loved being praised by people for their good deeds. All the money and things in the world, with the empty praise of men, is worth nothing eternally. We can't take any of it with us when we die. Here on earth, we have no lasting treasure.

God further showed that we have no lasting treasure on this earth, by destroying his own temple. Rev, 18 says:

‘Alas, alas, that great city that was clothed in fine linen, purple, and scarlet, and adorned with gold and precious stones and pearls! ¹⁷For in one hour such great riches came to nothing.

Every shipmaster, all who travel by ship, sailors, and as many as trade on the sea, stood at a distance ¹⁸and cried out when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, ‘What is like this great city?’

¹⁹“They threw dust on their heads and cried out, weeping, and wailing, and saying, ‘Alas, alas, that great city, in which all who had ships on the sea became rich by her wealth! For in one hour she is made desolate.’

²⁰“Rejoice over her, O heaven, and you holy apostles and prophets, for God has avenged you on her!”

In one hour all of Jerusalem and her riches became nothing.

And this causes Heaven and the Holy Apostles and Prophets to rejoice. Why? Because the temporary earthly things which so easily lead men’s heart away from placing their eternal treasures of Heaven have been destroyed.

And just as swiftly as the temporal things of this world will be swept away, in one hour, so too will you be swept away with them in the hour of your death. So do not place your trust, hope, and wholehearted affection in them. To do so is foolish.

We ought instead to place our hearts’ treasure in Heaven, where our riches in Christ can never be destroyed.

What are some of these eternal heavenly riches that are in Christ which can never be destroyed?

God the Father has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings with Christ in the Heavenly places.

He chose us before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish.

He predestined us to the adoption of sons, according to the good pleasure of His will.

He has made us accepted in Christ, the beloved, to the praise of His glorious grace.

According to his divine power he has given us all things that pertain to godliness;

We have been given exceedingly great and precious promises, chiefly, that he has made us to be partakers of his divine nature.

He has freed us from our sins by His blood.

He has saved us, not by our own works of righteousness, but by his great mercy through the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit.

He has sealed us with the holy spirit.

He has sanctified us by His Spirit.

He has united us to Christ in His death and resurrection.

Justified us by his grace.

And adopted us into His family.

Made us heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

And in Christ we have the promise that we will never die.

And no matter what happens to us, nothing will be able to ever separate us from the love of Christ.

And much more. And all these benefits have related blessings, such as assurance of God's love, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Spirit, increase of grace and holiness, and perseverance to the end of our lives.

The benefits of Christ go beyond this life too, in to the next. Such that when we die, we have the promise that our souls go immediately to be with Christ in Heaven.

But at the resurrection on the last day, on soul and body will be reunited and we will be raised up in glory to be like Christ, we will receive our final vindication from the Father, and we will be made perfectly holy and blessed and able to fully enjoy God without the restriction of sin for all eternity.

Given such benefits of Christ, which transcend this life and give us great hope for the world to come, why would we ever entrust our hearts to the fleeting treasures of this world?

Even the afflictions of Christ and the persecutions we receive in His name are greater treasures than all the wealth of this world.

Moses considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the Reward. – Heb. 11:27.

So I ask you beloved, Is Christ and his gifts greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt and the world for you? Are you looking for the reward? Or is your heart congested with the fleeting pleasures of sin and the treasures of this world, such that you cannot even enjoy Christ?

Our precious Lord Jesus likewise says in Mark 8 - *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷ Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸ For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”*

But thanks be to God that the fleeting pleasures and treasures of Egypt and of Earthly Jerusalem are nothing in comparison with the eternal and permanent treasures of Christ and the Heavenly Jerusalem.

The Heavenly Jerusalem is a city that has true foundations, for its designer and builder is God, and therefore it cannot be shaken and destroyed, but remains forever. And so too will your soul be saved forever, preserved in the safety vault of Christ in Heaven if you place your hearts' reward in Christ and his kingdom, and not in the things of this world. For where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.

Look to the Light – Fix your eyes on Jesus.

But a question naturally arises: How do we place our hearts treasure and reward in Christ in Heaven?

Well, it actually depends on your eyes. Jesus said: 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!**

In simpler terms, your eyes reveal a lot about your inner self. They act like windows, allowing either light to brighten your soul or darkness to cast shadows over it. Likewise, whatever your heart and soul crave, whether it's goodness or evil, is reflected in what captures your attention.

If your eyes are clear, healthy, and full of light, sincere in their love for God, you will be filled with light because you seek the light. But if your eyes are tainted with greed and lust and hypocrisy, you will be drawn to darkness and sin, and your whole being will be enveloped in darkness.

This happens because what you focus on with your eyes influences your heart's desires. This principle is at the core of all advertising. Vibrant colors, attractive people – they all work together to grab your attention and persuade you to buy something: be it a product, a car, food, or a lifestyle. It's how we're wired; our desires are shaped by what we see, for better or worse.

Satan knows this. Consider our mother Eve. She **saw** that the tree was good for food, and it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree **was to be desired** to make one wise. So she took the fruit and ate. And she gave to her husband who was with her.

And in a stunning twist of irony, their eyes were opened, but they opened to sin, which let in the darkness. Satan blinded their eyes from seeing the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ. And all humanity followed.

The point, dear People of God, is that our eyes become the battleground in the struggle for our heart's desires.

As Proverbs 27:20 wisely notes, *Hell and Destruction are never full; So the eyes of man are never satisfied.* This is glaringly evident in the most explicit example—pornography.

In Job 31:1, Job himself declared, *"I made a pact with my eyes, vowing not to gaze with lust upon a young woman."* And so, we should also, in order to preserve our hearts.

However, our covenant with our eyes extends well beyond the realm of mere lust.

Consider the constant allure of your smartphone, perpetually tempting you to check it every few minutes, enticing you to aimlessly scroll throughout the day. It beckons you, offering a never-ending stream of stimulation and visual pleasure, attempting to satisfy your insatiable eyes and heart.

But do you not recognize what is happening? The desires of your heart are being trained as your eyes are being flooded with never ending streams of images.

Renee Girard once said: **"Man is the creature who does not know what to desire, and he turns to others in order to make up his mind. We desire what others desire because we imitate their desires."**

And this is true in terms of material goods, with what is in style being determined by what the next person is wearing. But it is also true of our political desires as well. The news cycle is forever telling us what we are supposed to be mad about. It is training us to love and hate. And many of us are consumed by our hatred of the evil that takes place in the world, because we can't stop looking at it.

But the German Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was right when he said: **"Battle not with monsters, lest ye become a monster, and if you gaze into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you."**

The more you give your eyes to consuming all the information about the evils of the world, the more you will become the very thing you hate. If you gaze into the dark abyss, the abyss gazes back into you, and turns you into the monster you hate. And the light that is in you becomes darkness. And if the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness?

But just as Christ teaches us we are not to repay evil for evil, neither can we defeat the darkness in us by staring into the darkness. The most effective way to fight against the darkness and not be consumed by it, is to look at the light and to cultivate a love for it. This is why the apostle Paul must tell us in Phil. 4 -

Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. ⁹The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Or to repurpose Jesus again, What shall it profit a man to get angry at all the evil in the world and lose his own soul?

And the most important thing to do therefore, to give light to your souls and to store up treasures in Heaven, is to fix your eyes on Christ, the author and perfecter of your faith. And by looking to him, you will become more like him, because you will desire him more and so you will look to him more. And that final transformation of becoming like him will be completed on the last day when he comes back and you get to look upon him with new eyes filled with light. For John says:

...we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. – 1 John 3:2

Which brings me to my third and final point: **Love the Lord for His loveliness.**

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.**

We are called to serve God, which means we are to worship him. And the heart of our worship is love for God. So, you worship and serve what you love.

Jesus says you cannot serve and love God and Mammon. Mammon does not simply refer to money, but it includes everything that we prize and treasure on earth. It might be money, clothes, the praise of men, fast cars, cheap thrills, and pleasure. But Jesus Christ the Lord is lovelier than all of it.

Jesus says you cannot serve two masters, for you will love the one and hate the other. If you love and worship the fleeting pleasures of this world, then the simple fact is, you hate God. As James 3 says: *“Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”* But if you love God, and you worship and serve him, then you will despise the fleeting treasures of this world which try to steal your heart from God. And, because your eyes will be filled with light, you will be able to recognize earthly treasures for what they are.

1 John says: *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world - the desires of the flesh, the desires of the eyes, and the pride of life – is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*

In order to do God's will and abide forever, we must hate fleeting earthly things that try to turn our eyes and hearts away from God. We need to firmly believe that Christ is far more deserving of our hearts' devotion than anything else the world produces. We must be certain that He surpasses all earthly desires in loveliness and excellence.

As Psalm 73 says:

*Whom have I in heaven but You?
And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.*

Asaph was so far from desiring anything above God, that he desires nothing besides God.

The Apostle Paul likewise considered all earthly things as nothing in comparison to Christ. Saying in Phil. 3:

“But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. ⁸Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith;”

And so how is Jesus Christ lovelier and how are all other things reckoned as dung in comparison to Christ? I can only very briefly appeal to a few things here but know that all the books in the world cannot contain the catalogue of the excellencies of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we are told that our Lord Jesus is the radiance of the glory of God. He is the exact imprint of His nature. His insurmountable power in creating the world, and all things in it, is manifested in this: He spoke, and all things came into being.

He likewise sustains the universe with that same powerful spoken word. His wisdom is the foundation upon which all the laws of nature rest. His good and perfect will is executed in exact

precision in every last detail of history and science. He has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass, according to the good pleasure of His will, so that there is no one who can teach him anything, or say to Him, what have you done? And he is working all things together for the glory of God and for the salvation of His people.

He rules as the supreme sovereign Lord over all things. He sits at the Right Hand of the Majesty on High, and thus is become more superior to the angels, as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. At His name demons tremble and flee. At his name the host of heaven bow down and worship. At His name every knee shall bow, and tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

He is the wisdom of God. The gain one gets from him is better than silver or gold. He is more precious than rubies. And all that you desire does not compare to Him. By Him kings reign, and therefore when Solomon prayed for wisdom, God gave him His Son.

He lavishly pours out the grace of His life upon your head. By his own shed blood He broke the shackles of all your sin and despair. He is your only hope of eternal life. He is your strength and song. His mercy for you is deeper than the sea, and higher than the highest heaven.

He is all compassion and understanding. He is an everlasting waterfall of forgiveness, showering mercy upon you every single day. As far as the east is from the west, so far has our Lord Jesus

removed your sins from you. His blood washes away the crimson stains of all your sins, making you white as snow.

He is your righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption.

The winds and the waves of this troublesome world obey the voice of His command. Therefore, He is the calm for all your fears and anxieties.

His meekness blesses you when you curse him. His poverty of spirit rewards you with riches when you are poor in spirit. He is your comfort when you are mourning. He is your joy in sadness. He is your food and drink when you hunger and thirst for righteousness. He is your life in death. He is your light in the darkness. He is your defender when you are attacked. He is your friend when surrounded by enemies.

He is the lover of your soul when you are abandoned and neglected. He is your courage when you are afraid. He is your strength when you are weak. He is your all in all.

His tenderness heals your pains, and his voice soothes your burdened soul, inviting you to come to him and find rest in Him, saying: *"Come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."* He is Jesus Christ, the Lover of your soul.

Conclusion

O people of God, the Lord Jesus Christ is the most excellent and glorious treasure. He is more worthy of your love and devotion

than all the fading treasures of Earth. So fix your eyes on Christ, who is your eternal and never fading Heavenly treasure and reward. For you will find that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Amen.