

Sermon on the Mount - Part 16

by David Servant

Jesus teaches that true discipleship involves living simply, giving generously, and prioritizing one's relationship with God above material possessions.

Duration: 28:30

Scripture: Matthew 6:24

Topics: "Stewardship", "Discipleship"

Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of stewardship as highlighted in Matthew 6:19-24 from the Sermon on the Mount. It emphasizes the contrast between laying up treasures on earth versus in heaven, serving God versus serving money, and having a heart in heaven versus on earth. The speaker challenges listeners to examine their lifestyles and ensure that their actions align with true discipleship, where generosity and laying up treasures in heaven are prioritized over material wealth.

Transcript

Welcome back to Galilee, Israel. Hey, it's so nice to have you with me once again here on Mount Arbel, which is very close to the place where Jesus gave the original Sermon on the Mount. As I've often told you, if you've been following with us in this entire series, this could have been the very mountain.

There's little doubt that Jesus would have walked many times up and down the valley directly behind me through the Valley of the Doves on his way back and forth from Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee over here to Cana of Galilee and Nazareth up that way. Some folks think that the Sermon on the Mount was given on a mountain on the other side up through this valley over there, but tons and tons of history in this place directly behind me on the other side of Mount Arbel through this great valley here, there's a wall. Now, you can't see it on the camera because it's just not possible, but we can see it quite clearly built by Herod the Great over 2,000 years ago when he was trying to expel some rebel Jews who were holed up in caves on this mountain right behind me.

So when you're sitting here, you really feel like you're in a very old, old place that has seen a lot of interesting events in history. Well, I am so thankful that we have the Sermon on the Mount recorded for us. It doesn't really make any difference where Jesus spoke it.

The point is he did speak it, and the more important thing is are we doing what he said? Now, in this program, we're going to focus on six verses, Matthew chapter six and verses 19 through 24. All about

stewardship could very well be the most ignored portion of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus said, and please read with me if you have your Bible, in Matthew 6, 19, do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Now, last time we defined what those treasures are, he wasn't speaking of literal treasures. He was speaking of anything that could become like a treasure to us, something that we value and we cling to it, but we'd be so much wiser to release it and to use it for some good in the kingdom of God, which would then ultimately result in laying up treasure in heaven.

Jesus was not speaking to wealthy people that day. He was speaking to subsistence farmers, trades people, people who didn't possess a lot, and he told them, don't lay up treasures upon this earth. Notice he defined treasures as those things which moths might eat.

That could mean clothing could become a treasure. Well, if you've got clothing you never wear and you don't need, that's a treasure. You're foolish.

Someone could benefit by that clothing. Give it away to someone who needs some clothing. Now, in our culture, which I often refer to as Disney World, very few people need clothing.

We have so much clothing. People write to me and they say, can you send my clothing overseas to help the poor people that you're helping? We found out that actually it costs more to send the clothing than it would be just to send the money, send the same amount of money that it costs in shipping and they could buy the clothing there. That's how it works out.

We need to make major adjustments in stewardship. Jesus is talking about being wise with what God has given us. If you have a credit card and you have credit card debt, well, you need to look at that as an indication that you have spending that is out of control, that you are not content as the Bible says you should be, and that you could very well be covetous and greedy because of that very fact right there.

You're willing to take God's money and pay 18% interest for stuff that you really don't need at all. The first goal for the average Western disciple who lives in the wealthy Western countries like ours, the first thing to do is get out of debt. If you have debt on credit cards, cut up all your credit cards, that's called plastic surgery, and get rid of those credit cards and never use a credit card again unless you can use it in a controlled manner where you can pay it off every single month.

Then evaluate all that you have and see how you can scale down. Live more simply. Again, if you think that by tithing that's all that God requires of you stewardship wise, well then why are you ignoring what Christ said right here? He didn't say a thing about tithing here.

He talked about don't lay up treasures on earth, lay them up in heaven. We want to live as simply as we possibly can and give as much as we possibly can. John Wesley had a great little maxim that I tried to present because it makes it so easy to follow.

Regarding money, make all you can, save all you can, then give all you can. Now make all you can, that means make it legitimately and don't ignore your spiritual life in order to make that money. Number two, save all you can.

That doesn't mean save it up in a bank, he means use as little as possible for yourself so that way you can be frugal and save, which enables you to number three, give all you can. For many who are watching this, you should be giving 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, you could possibly be giving 90% of your income away if you would scale down and learn to be content instead of trying to impress people whom you don't like with things that you don't need using money that you don't have. As one guy said one time, keeping up with the Joneses, having what everyone else has.

My wife and I, for example, decided a long time ago, we don't need to ever buy a new car because if you buy a new car, the day you drive it out of the showroom, it goes down in value. You lose thousands of dollars instantly. So why not buy one that someone else bought brand new and buy it after it's a year old and you'll save tons of money and it'll be just as reliable as it was when it was brand new.

Then you could take the money that you saved and give it to orphans and widows and missionaries and feed the hungry and clothe the naked and prove yourself to be a sheep rather than a goat because that's what the sheep are, right? The sheep are the ones who Jesus will say, I was hungry, I was thirsty, I was naked, I was in prison, I was sick, you came, you fed me, you took care of me, you cared. That's the sheep. If you don't have that, you're a goat.

And I would submit to you that quite a few great percentage of evangelical Christians are really goats. Now, Jesus said where your treasure is, that's where your heart is and so don't believe the lies that we're being told all the time that, oh, it doesn't make a difference how much you have, just as long as God has your heart, well, that's doublespeak, that's a contradiction because Jesus said your actions reveal what's in your heart. Where your treasure is, that's where your heart is.

And so God knows where your heart is, it's where you're putting your treasure. I read something a Christian said, this person wrote and said, I'm so glad God looks at our hearts and not our bank accounts, otherwise a lot of us would be going to hell. That is a complete and utter deception.

God knows what's in our hearts by looking at our bank accounts and by looking at everything else we possess. Wherever our treasure is, that's where our hearts is. So we have all these Christian cliches that are just utter deception.

You know, God doesn't care how much you have as long as he has your hearts. Or it doesn't matter how much you have as long as you hold it loosely. Now, that's doublespeak.

If you're holding it, it's still in your possession, that proves your heart is still on the earth. Holding it loosely and being able to rattle it to deceive yourself to think, well, I'm Well, I would give this away if I could find a good purpose for it. You know, meanwhile, people are starving around the world.

Meanwhile, people are waiting to hear the gospel. There's all kinds of good you could do with that and lay it up and have it, but you deceive yourself. Well, I'm willing to give it away if God should lead me.

Well, I'm telling you, God is not leading you, he's commanding you. Christ commanded all of his disciples. It's in the scripture.

He told them all, sell your possessions, give to charity. It's not just something he said to the rich young ruler, it's something he said to everybody across the board. Money can't be your God, and you prove whether God is your God or whether money is your God by where you're laying up your treasure.

Now, Jesus goes on to say some things that are a little bit cryptic to us. Verse 22, the lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

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 the darkness? Well, that's not easy to understand at first glance, but we'll come back to it and I think it'll become very clear to us. But notice he's talking about good eyes, bad eyes, body's full of light, body's full of darkness.

Okay. Keep that in mind. Now, verse 24, no one can serve two masters, for either you'll hate the one and love the other or you will hold to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and mammon. Serving God and serving mammon are mutually exclusive. There's nothing in the middle.

It's one or the other. Either money is controlling your life and if it is, God is not controlling your life. Or if God is controlling your life, money is not controlling your life because God has control of your money.

I woke up to that some years ago, even as a pastor, oh my goodness, I had to go through major, major adjustments and repentance. Selling my dream home, scaling down and so forth. Major adjustments to where now, praise God, we're able to live on less than half of what we were living on at one time.

And living like kings, every need met and so forth. Not suffering, really, in any major way. And yet enabled now to do so much more for the kingdom and lay up treasure in heaven.

Okay. Now, let's enter into trying to understand what Jesus meant about the good eye, the bad eye and the body full of light, body full of darkness. Well, everybody who heard Jesus talk that day about the evil eye in verse 23 or the bad eye, they knew what he was talking about because that was a common expression amongst the Hebrews.

It's even found in the Bible. A bad eye or an evil eye is a euphemism for, it's a figure of speech for a greedy heart. See, because your eye cannot be morally evil, but you can understand somebody who has a greedy heart, it could be described by an evil eye, looking for where they can get more and grasp more.

There's a proverb in the Bible that says, the man with the evil eye hastens after wealth. So you see evil eye, hastening after wealth, greedy person, money is his God type person. Jesus gave one time the story of the laborers in the vineyard.

Remember that story? Some guys worked all day. Some guys worked just the last hour of the day. The master paid the guys who worked one hour, the full day's wages.

The other guys thought they're going to get a big bonus, even though they'd agreed to work for the full day for a certain amount. At the end, the master says at their complaint, is your eye evil because I am generous? So what's he saying? Are you being greedy because I'm so generous? You're now focused on getting more for yourself. And he used the expression, the evil eye.

So the evil eye represents the greedy heart. Now keep that in mind because we're going to pick up on that and we'll explain these couple of mysterious verses in our next segment. We'll be right back.

See you in one minute. The first time Christian visitor to Jerusalem is often disappointed to find that things are not exactly the way they were when Jesus walked here 2,000 years ago. And here at the Pool of

Bethesda is a perfect illustration of that very fact.

I'm standing at the current ground level and about 30 feet below me is the foundation of a Byzantine church that was built on top of what is supposed to be the ruins of the Pool of Bethesda. And, of course, that church was built upon the ruins of a crusader chapel that was built in the same region. And so if you look down here, you'll see somewhere in this general vicinity is where Jesus told a man who had been so many years in his sickness, unable to get into the waters when the angel troubled him.

He said, take up your pallet and walk. And the man was healed to the glory of God. Alrighty, welcome back.

And let's keep talking now about these mysterious verses here in Matthew chapter six where Jesus is talking about the evil eye, the good eye, the body full of darkness, the body full of light. Now, I've just described to you what the evil eye was according to scripture, a greedy heart, a symbolic way of saying you've got a greedy heart, that's the evil eye. So obviously the contrast of the evil eye is the good eye.

Now the good eye then is not the evil eye, so it's not a greedy heart. So a good eye represents a person who's not chasing after wealth. And he's the one whose body is full of light.

Now obviously Christ is not speaking literally of literal light going inside of our bodies. And so light would be symbolic of truth, revelation, enlightenment as it so often is in scripture. And your body represents your being, the person.

Not just the physical man, but the spiritual man as well, clearly. Because spiritual light doesn't exist in the sense of in our physical fleshly bodies. It exists in our spiritual soulless realm.

That being said now, notice the man who has the greedy eye, he's full of darkness. He doesn't have light in him and he has darkness in him. He doesn't have the revelation of God, he doesn't have the truth in him.

He's in spiritual darkness as revealed by his evil eye which represents his greedy heart. Whereas the man who does not have the greedy eye, see he's the one who's not serving man but serving God. He's full of light.

He has the divine truth. You see? Amen. Okay, so now keeping all that in mind, notice in these six verses there are three different contrasts presented, but they all revolve around money and stewardship.

First of all, Jesus says about the laying up the treasure on earth and in heaven. Don't lay it up on earth, lay it up in heaven. That's the first contrast.

So imagine in your mind, here's a guy over here laying up his treasure on the earth, okay? On my right, your left. And then imagine over here a man who's laying up his treasure in heaven, okay? So this guy's piling up all he can, this guy over here is giving away all he can, keeping his pile here as small as possible. You got it? Okay.

Now, Jesus also contrasts in the same verses, heart in heaven, heart on earth, depending on where your treasure is. Well, this guy who's piling up his treasure on the earth, obviously his heart's on the earth. You got that? Okay.

This guy who's piling up his treasure in heaven, keeping his pile as small as possible on the earth, his heart's in heaven, because that's where his treasure is. You got that? Okay. Skip over the middle analogy of the eyes and the body full of darkness.

Go to the last one. Jesus contrasts before us the servant of man and the servant of God. Well clearly, if you're going to make a correspondence here, if I use that word rightly, the guy who's the servant of man is the guy over here.

He's the guy who is laying up his treasure on the earth. Money rules his life. Money is his God.

He obeys money and makes every decision based upon how it benefits him financially. But the guy who's a servant of God is obviously the guy on this side. He's laying up his treasure in heaven, because that's where his heart is.

Because he loves God, he's in heaven. You got that? Okay. Now, let's jump back to the middle contrast of the guy with the good eye, the bad eye, and so forth.

Even before we know exactly what those mean, which we actually do at this point in time because we've described that, where do they fit in? If you're going to parallel all these things, where do they correspond? Well clearly, the guy with the evil eye, which represents the greedy heart, is the guy laying up his treasure on the earth. Bigger pile here. His heart's on the earth.

He's serving mammon. He does not serve God. The man with the good eye, which represents the non-greedy heart, who's full of enlightenment, who knows the truth, that's why he's not laying up his treasures on this earth, but laying up in heaven.

He's the guy over on this side. You got it? Okay. And he's full of the truth.

He's full of light. Now, here's a very important question, and I pray you will listen so closely because this is so, so, so, so, so very important. Jesus is not describing to us two kinds of Christians.

He's describing to us a person who's full of darkness and a person who is full of light, a person whose God is money and a person whose God is God, a person who his heart is on the earth and a person whose heart is in heaven. Those are not two Christians. This man is unsaved, full of darkness.

God is not his God. Money is his God, and he's full of darkness. That's not describing a Christian, folks.

This man is the Christian. This is the true disciple. He's characterized by his generosity, his laying up treasures in heaven, his living simply upon this earth.

And so you can see there is a difference, according to Jesus, between a Christian and a non-Christian, how they live their lives and specifically what they do with their money. And so we should be greatly alarmed at professing Christians who look no different than this guy over here, full of darkness, laying up treasures. If you're laying up treasures on the earth, that proves.

Your heart's on the earth, that proves. You correspond with a guy whose God is not your God. Money's your God.

You prove it by your actions. You're not going to heaven. You're going to go to hell.

What's more alarming are these fellows on TV who are telling us how much faith they have and proving it by how many treasures they have laid up on this earth. Full of darkness. Now, Jesus made a very interesting comment about those types of guys who correspond to the ancient Pharisees in at least this one sense.

Look what he said in verse number 23. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness? Now how could it be possible that light in you would be darkness? Well, that's impossible. That's a contradiction.

The only way that could be true is in this sense. You're a person who's full of darkness. You're the guy on this side, but you think you're full of light.

You see, that's the person who's in the greatest darkness, because if you're over here and you realize, oh my goodness, I'm in the darkness, I'm full of darkness, I need to repent and make God my God and repent of being so greedy and having this evil eye and laying up treasures on this earth, then you get over to that side and now you're full of light and your treasure's in heaven and you're going to heaven where your heart is. But if you're over here and you think you're over there, in other words, you're full of darkness but you think you're full of light, that's the deepest darkness, but you have no chance of getting out of that darkness. And that describes many of these preachers that we're hearing all the time.

They're so sure they're right, but I want to tell you, they're full of darkness as proven by their lifestyles. Proven by their lifestyles. Full of darkness, but they think they're full of light and they have no hope.

And all they can do is quote a few Old Testament scriptures out of their context. They'll say, oh, look at Solomon, God made him rich. Actually, read the whole story about Solomon.

God said about Solomon before he was ever born, he said to Israel, when you get a king, don't allow the guy to multiply silver or gold for himself, don't allow him to multiply wives for himself, and do not allow him to multiply horses for himself. Now what did Solomon do? All those things. What happened to him? He married 700 wives, 300 concubines, immense treasures for himself, thousands of horses, total contradiction to God's word.

He became an idolater, worshiping before statues. And that's the one you want to set up as an example for the body of Christ? Come on. And they'll take all these scriptures out of their context.

I wrote an entire book. You can read it for free if you'd like on our website. Just go to www.heavensfamily.org and you can navigate your way there.

It's a book called Through the Needle's Eye. You can order that book as well and read it, the hard copy of it. And it answers everything that these guys are saying that is such a perversion of the word of God.

They are full of darkness, thinking they are full of the light. And so you need to look at your lifestyle. A lot of people think, well, God is my God.

If you'd have asked the Pharisees back in those days, any Pharisee, ask them, do you love God? What would they have said? Every one of them would have said, of course I love God. But these are the same guys that murdered Jesus. So did they love God? No.

And it was not only proven by the fact that they murdered Jesus, it was proven by the fact that money was clearly their God. Luke 16 tells us that the Pharisees, money was their God. They were lovers of money.

They were not, therefore, lovers of God, because those two things are mutually exclusive. As Christ so plainly said, it's one or the other. Well, they'll quote you, given it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over.

Hey, glad you quoted that. Now, quote it in context. Jesus did not say, I remind you, given it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, so then you can disobey God and lay up treasures on this earth.

Huh? Well, that's not what he said. He said, given it shall be given unto you, good measure, pressed down, shaken together, so you don't ever have to worry. You're not going to have what you need.

In fact, God's going to give you more than you need, so you can continue to have an abundance to give. That principle is found all over the place in scripture. Read, for example, in 1 Corinthians, chapters eight and nine, Paul writes about that in great detail.

And he says, hey, don't worry, God's going to give back to you, so that you'll be enriched for all liberality. God will supply everything you need, so that you can be generous and so forth. That's the whole point.

You give, God repays you what you give, and then, praise God, you can have more to give, and you can keep on laying up treasure in heaven, okay? So don't ... People say, well, what about Job? You know, look at Job. He was very, very rich. Read the whole book of Job, and you can see what Job did with his wealth.

He didn't live high on the hog, living in lavish luxury and self-indulgence at the expense of his exploited laborers. No, he took care of hundreds of people who were employed in his business of livestock. And his own testimony, there were always orphans and widows at his table eating.

He took care of them. He made the widow's heart sing for joy. He looked out for the handicapped and the blind and so forth.

He was a good steward. That's why God said he's the most righteous man on the face of this earth, because money was not his God. And he proved it by his lifestyle.

He didn't live in lavish self-indulgence, always getting the best and the latest and the greatest, okay? But he used his wealth that God had blessed him with to be a blessing, and so do all the true disciples of Christ. So take a look at your life. We're going to close now.

Take a look at your life. If all you're doing is getting more stuff, more and more stuff, you're going the wrong way. You should be getting less stuff.

According to Jesus, he told his disciples, sell what you possess. Isn't it amazing how the gospel has changed? John the Baptist said, if you want to prove your repentance, if you've got two coats, share with him who has none. Give one away.

If you've got food, do likewise. Today the gospel is, what? You only have five coats? Come to Jesus. He'll give you 10 coats and make you rich in coats.

That's the exact opposite of what John the Baptist said when he preached the gospel. So take a look at our website for all those sermons on stewardship. Lots of stuff there for your edification, and you'll be glad you did, okay? Hey, thank you so much for joining me here once again in Galilee as we look at this very serious sermon sobering us up, making us think.

Until next time, keep on following Jesus with all your heart. God bless you. Hey, there's a whole lot more happening through the ministry of Heaven's Family than just this teaching broadcast.

Heaven's Family consists of three divisions, the first of which is Shepherd Serve. And through the ministry of Shepherd Serve, we are literally equipping thousands of hungry pastors around the world with vital biblical truth every single year. We do that in two ways.

First of all, by pastors conferences. They're happening almost every single month somewhere in the world. And secondly, through the translation and publication and distribution of a 500-page equipping manual called The Disciple-Making Minister.

Pastors are just loving this book because it's full of information that helps equip them to be more fruitful for the Lord Jesus Christ. That in a nutshell is the ministry of Shepherd Serve. The second division of Heaven's Family is known as Orphan's Tier.

And through the ministry of Orphan's Tier, we are meeting the very pressing needs of over a thousand Christian orphans in over six different developing nations through a sponsorship program that is absolutely wonderful. For just \$20 a month, you can provide food, clothing, shelter, school fees, and Christian nurture for a little follower of Christ somewhere in the world. Hey, why don't you check out orphansteer.org. There's probably someone waiting there just for you.

The third and the final division of Heaven's Family is known as I Was Hungry, obviously taken from the words of Jesus in Matthew chapter 25, where he warned about the future judgment of the sheep and of the goats. Through the ministry of I Was Hungry, we are meeting the very pressing needs of Christ followers around this world in very poor nations. We're helping widows, orphans, lepers, refugees, victims of disasters.

You can read all of our current projects at IWasHungry.org. You can make a real difference. If you'd like to get involved in all three of the divisions of Heaven's Family, you can invest in what is called the Heaven's Family Mutual Fund. It's a great idea.

You can read about it at all three of our websites. Thanks so much. God bless you.

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