

Future Security ~ Matthew 6v19-34

by William MacDonald

The Lord Jesus teaches us to lay up treasures in heaven, not on earth, and to trust God to provide for our needs.

Duration: 37:12

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-25, Matthew 6:31-34

Topics: "Future Security"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of investing material things in the cause of God. He emphasizes that this goes against the common belief that the purpose of life is to secure future earthly security. Jesus teaches that our heart follows where our treasure is, whether it is in a safe deposit box or in heaven. The speaker also highlights the impossibility of serving both God and material things, drawing parallels to the tension that arises when one tries to serve two masters. The sermon concludes with a reminder to trust in God's miraculous provision and to learn from nature's example of living day by day without worry.

Transcript

May we turn to Matthew chapter 6 and read verses 19 through the end of the chapter. Matthew chapter 6, verses 19 through the end of the chapter. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye.

If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness.

No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, take no thought for your life what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on.

Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought

for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin. Yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Wherefore God so clothed the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek, for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." As we have been speaking in various assemblies these last few days, we've been seeking to show something of the revolutionary character of the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. We ourselves have a tendency to dull the sharp edge of his words and to explain them away, and especially, I think, in a passage like this, to put it into a dispensational pigeonhole and say that these teachings do not apply to us today, which of course is a very comfortable way of getting rid of the force of the passage. And yet we always say that in studying the Bible, if the first sense makes sense, don't look for any other sense.

And as you read this passage of the word of God, I think we have to admit that the first sense does make sense. Actually, the teachings of the Lord Jesus are of such a character that if you read them and find them quite easily possible, then you've missed the point. The teachings of the Lord Jesus are not easily possible, they're consistently impossible.

Because Christianity is a supernatural faith, it cannot be lived in the energy of the flesh, it requires divine life. And so when we do come to the teachings of the Lord Jesus, and they seem to be impossible to us, well, then we can be sure that we're getting at the right meaning. And this casts us upon the Holy Spirit of God to empower us to live this kind of a life.

Now I think this passage of Scripture is especially appropriate in a day when people are so security-minded as they are. I presume it's the same in this country as it is in our country, but most people in our country, many Christians included, spend most of their lives providing for future security. And we have vast security schemes, including a great social security program that seeks to cushion and pillow us for the rest of our lives here on earth.

We're well propped up with crutches and have need of nothing. However, this is somewhat in violation of the teachings, it's somewhat in conflict with the teachings of the Lord Jesus that tell us that ours is a life of faith and not of sight. And if we go through the teachings of the Lord Jesus in the Gospels, it boils down to this, that the Christian's life should be a perpetual crisis of dependence upon the Lord.

But this is very uncomfortable to the flesh, it goes across the grain of human nature. Now let us just look at what the Lord Jesus is saying here, and incidentally this passage has to do with the subject of security for the future. The first thing he does is tell us in the clearest possible words that we are not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal.

In the days of the Bible, a man's wealth consisted in clothing, money, coins and grain. And two of those forms of wealth are mentioned here, clothing and money, that is coins. James mentions the third by inference, the grain.

Now the Lord Jesus here tells us that we're not to accumulate wealth on earth, that it's strictly contrary to his mind for us. And we no sooner read that than our minds begin to rationalize. We say, well, it couldn't possibly mean that.

The Lord knows we have to live, doesn't he? And it's only prudent to provide for your future. If I didn't do it, the other Christians would think I was shiftless. And all of these thoughts go through our minds.

Jesus says, don't do it. Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust corrupt and thieves break through and steal. If this says anything, it says that I mustn't make my future security on earth my concern at all.

Do you agree with that? Well, let's go on. It says in the next verse, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. In other words, the Christian should really think about his future.

But his future is never said to be here on earth. His future is said to be in heaven. And so in the matter of laying up, all laying up should be done with the future in view.

Now, how do you lay up treasures in heaven? Well, the only way you can lay them up in heaven is by sending them on before. Isn't that right? By sending them on before, by using material things, by investing them in the cause of God. Now, is there anybody in the world who shouldn't be standing here saying these things tonight? I suppose it's myself.

I've already mentioned that my training was all in business, and I just want to tell you that you'll never learn this at Harvard University. In fact, they'd probably send for the little man with the white jacket to take you away and give you some tranquilizers if you ever suggested such a thing as this. They all know that the chief end of man is to provide for his future security here on earth.

But Jesus said, don't do it. Now, why? Why would the Lord ever give instructions like that? Well, the next verse gives one reason. He said, Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And what that means, taken literally, is if my treasure is in a safe deposit box, that's where my heart is, too. And if my treasure is in heaven, that's where my heart is, too. It's rather searching, isn't it? But it's true, and we all know it's true.

After all, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. And if I can speak more enthusiastically about stocks and bonds than I can about the glories of heaven, well, it shows where my treasure is. That's all.

The thing I can wax most eloquent about is my treasure. It could be a game of golf, or it could be politics, or it could be my business, or it could be my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Why did Jesus say, Don't do it? Well, another reason is that it robs us of a life of dependence upon himself. To the extent that I'm well propped and supported and cushioned in this life, my prayer life suffers adversely. We all pray better when we're really cast upon the Lord.

The best prayer comes from a strong inward necessity. We don't like it, but it's good for us. That's when we pray the best.

And man is at his best when he's on his knees before the Lord. Actually, it robs us of a blessing, too. It robs us of the blessing of seeing God working for us in a miraculous way, of seeing God's miracle provision for our needs.

As long as we take upon ourselves the providing of our future security, we can't see that. But if we're really cast upon the Lord in a life of faith, then we can see him meshing the gears in a supernatural way, and we can see him working for us in such a way that we wouldn't give it up for anything. Someone has said, Once you walk on the water, you never want to ride in the boat again.

Now it seems that in the next verses the Lord Jesus is changing the subject, and you often find this in the Gospels. But if you look more carefully, you'll find it isn't a change of subject at all. It's exactly carrying on and driving home the point, step by step.

He says, The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness? First of all, the lamp of the body is the eye. That's a wonderful statement, isn't it? And it is true that the light gets into my life through my eyes. Here in the room now, the lights are on, and I don't know how it happens, but in some way or other those light rays are getting inside my head, and there must be a projection screen in there somewhere, and the image is formed.

But if I were blind, I wouldn't be able to see it. He says, The lamp of the body is the eye. Now he says, If your eye is healthy, your whole life will be flooded with illumination.

And this is true, too. As long as our eyes are healthy, we see, we see where to go, we don't fall in the ditch, and so forth. Now what is the healthy eye? Ah, the healthy eye is the eye that's looking ahead to the future and laying up treasures in heaven.

That's the healthy eye in the context. The eye that has a single motive to do the will of God and to live a life of dependence upon him. But he says, If your eye is evil, that is, if your eye is diseased or blind, your whole life shall be filled with darkness.

What is the evil or diseased eye? Ah, it's the eye that's trying to live for both worlds. And I want to give the Lord first place in my life, but my, it's a comfortable feeling to know that I have those thousands salted away for a rainy day. I want to trust God at the bank of New South Wales.

It's really what it boils down to. That's the evil eye in the context. And he says, If your eye is evil, your whole body shall be full of darkness.

That is, your whole life, you'll lack illumination in life. And he says, If the light that's in you is darkness, how great is the darkness thereof? That is, if God has given me a measure of light with regard to this, and I see that only the things that are eternal really count, and I see that I'm called to a life of faith in the living God, and if I reject that light that he's given me, then my whole life is flooded with darkness and there's no darkness greater than that. No darkness greater than the darkness that comes from light having been rejected.

Light rejected is light denied. Now once again in the next verse, it seems that the Lord is changing the subject. He says, No man can serve two masters, but it's the same subject.

This man who tries to serve two masters is the same as the evil eye in the preceding verse. He says, No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Moral, you cannot serve God and material things.

It's amazing, isn't it? Yet we know it's true. I've been in businesses where they tried to make one stenographer work for two different men, and immediately there was a tension set up. To which of those men was her first loyalty in work? I mean, five o'clock comes along and it's time to quit, and on this particular day, both of those men have a letter that they want to get out right away at five o'clock.

Which one is she going to do? Very difficult to know. No man can serve two masters. He will love the one and hate the other, or cling to the one and despise the other.

The Lord says, This is it. You can't live for material things and live for me. It's the same time.

It's a case of divided loyalty, and how true that is, and how true it is especially in life today, where the big corporations want to extract the very lifeblood from a man. Money is no consideration. If they can hold the golden apple before the man and lure him on, they'll do it, and extract the very life from him until at sixty he's like this.

Then they give him the golden handshake. You cannot serve God and man. Then the Lord Jesus takes up this very radical teaching, which I'm sure many of us tonight will say, He can't mean that.

Whatever He means, He can't mean that. He says, Therefore I say to you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Don't be anxious about this.

What's he speaking about? Well, he's speaking about our future. He's speaking about our future. And really the thought in the passage is this, as I see it.

God knows that if I have to make the future my concern, then I'll have no time left for him. That's true. For me, right now, to sit down and think, alright, now, how much food and how much clothing will I need in my future? I'd better start saving for it right now.

How much will I need? And I start to figure. I face some tremendous imponderables. I face the question, first of all, how long are you going to live? I don't know.

Live to be a hundred? I hope not. Well, how much will a dollar be worth when you're eighty? I have no idea. Maybe we'll have inflation, then.

It won't be worth it. Well, that's possible. Maybe you'd better save a few more, then, in that case.

How much will be enough? Actually, there's no way of answering that question. There's not a human being in the world that can answer that question, how much will be enough? Well, the Lord knows that. He knows that if I have to make the future my concern, then that's my life.

It'll take all my time all the rest of my life providing for my future, and I won't have any time to serve him or to represent his interests down here. So he says here, flatly, therefore take no thought for the morrow, for your life, what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body what ye shall put on. Now, the first reason he gives here is, is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment? In other words, this really isn't the main thing in life.

And you know, that's true. It's wonderful how simply you can live. It really is.

And you know, in our country, people are building luxurious homes with all the latest appliances and automatic gadgets and gimmicks, and spending enormous amounts of money on the carpeting and drapes and furniture, and they get it all finished, and they go out in the backyard and grill some hamburgers. It seems so ridiculous, but that's what they do. Why? Well, because in the human heart there is really a desire to live simply.

And because they realize when it's all finished that material things don't bring happiness. And life really is more than food and clothing, when you stop to think. Of course, you wouldn't get that impression from Sydney tonight, because if you make a survey of the stores in Sydney tonight, I think you'd find that most of them sell either food or clothing.

Most of them. Which means that as far as the people of the world are concerned, this is what really counts. It's the body that's important, not the soul.

There aren't very many stores selling Bibles in your neighborhood. Not many. But there are an awful lot selling food and clothing.

Some people think that's what counts in life, and Jesus says it isn't. It's not the life more than food, and the body more than clothing. Then he says, all nature is preaching to us day by day, and we don't even hear it.

You sit there at your breakfast table, and you're eating your toast and drinking your coffee, and outside the sparrows are there. And there they go, chirping merrily along and picking up little grains of food from the ground that is happy as the day is long, and not one of them is suffering from ulcers. Not one of them is worrying about the future.

And the Lord Jesus says to us, if you only hear what they're saying to you. They're saying, why do you mortals spend your lives worrying about the future? We live from day to day. We scratch around for today's supplies, and we let it go at that.

And that's an interesting thing. You can make a study of the nests that birds build, and if you study a sparrow's nest in Australia, and study a sparrow's nest in the United States, you'll find they're both the same. And the same with robins.

They build a characteristic nest. The same with blue jays. Everywhere, somewhere or other, they build the same kind of a nest.

But you never find a nest anywhere in the world where a bird builds a silo or a barn next to its nest. Never. Why? Because they live on a day-by-day basis, and God provides for their needs.

That's a wonderful thing, and it's a touching thing. And when I watch the little birds, I think, isn't it wonderful? God caring for all these little feathered creatures all over the world. And he does, too.

It's a marvelous program of logistics, that God can provide food for so many creatures, I get weary just to think of the number of them. God is caring for them. And as dear Dr. Reinstein said once, God attends the funeral of every sparrow, and he really does.

He's there when everyone falls to the ground. He really cares. Isn't that wonderful? Of course, the moral is, why worry about the future? God cares for sparrows like that.

The odd sparrow, which is worth nothing on the market, which is thrown in free, how much does he care for you, O you of little faith? And that's what he says in the next verse, he says, Behold, the fowls of the air, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, no barns, next to their nests, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? They don't take anxious thought for the morrow. And then the Lord says something very interesting in verse 27, and this thrills me.

He says, Which of you by taking thought, that is, which of you by being anxious, can add one cubit unto his stature? Interesting verse. A cubit, sometimes in the Bible a cubit is supposed to be 18 inches from the tip of your finger to your elbow. But let's just think of a cubit here as an inch for the purpose of the illustration.

The word stature there in some Bibles is translated length of life. It doesn't make any difference whether you think of it as your height or your length of life. We're going to try and experiment.

Sitting in the meeting tonight, let's all think anxiously in an endeavor to add an inch to our height. Think hard now, and see if we can grow by just being anxious. Don't be ridiculous.

How ridiculous can you be, Mr. MacDonald? That's what it says. It says, Which of you by being anxious can add, let's say, an inch to his height? The argument is this. Here the Lord argues from the lesser to the greater.

He says, that's easy compared to providing for your future. And he says, if you can't do that which is least, how do you think you're going to do something that's really difficult? What an argument, eh? And it's true, too. It's true.

It would be far easier for me to grow an inch by taking anxious thought than it would be to provide for my future. When you put the things on a comparable level. And Jesus, if you can't do the easy one, why are you trying to do the hard one? And then he says, and why do you take anxious thought for clothing? He said, look, you're going through the fields, and there are the wild anemones growing in profusion on the hillsides of Palestine there.

And he said, just look at them. And just remember this, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of those. And they really are beautiful.

I was in a home not long ago where the young man of the house was working with a new microscope. I'm sorry I've forgotten the name of it. It was very, very powerful.

A real help in medical science. And they had some flowers in the middle of their table, but unfortunately those flowers were artificial. And I said to him, they're beautiful.

I said, they look just like real flowers. He said, yes. He said, but don't look at the artificial ones under a microscope.

He said, they really don't stand up to the test under a microscope. He said, if you want to look at something beautiful, he said, take one of these and put it under a microscope. He said, then it looks really beautiful.

That's interesting, isn't it? The artificial kind just didn't stand the test, but God's kind did. And that's what he says here. The Lord Jesus said, Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.

Well, you know, I believe in taking the Bible literally, and I just believe that, literally. But Solomon's most gorgeous, regal garments weren't in it as far as the flowers are concerned. And he said, that's a remarkable thing.

There they are, these flowers that they're waving in the breeze on the hillside, and never anxious, and God takes care of them. Why take he thought for clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow, they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

And should I spend my life worrying about what I'm going to wear twenty years from today, it is wherefore if God so clothed the grass of the field which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little sight? Now the Lord says to us, look, just don't worry about the future. That isn't your concern, that's my concern. That's true, isn't it? I have nothing to do with tomorrow.

The Savior will make that his care. And the Lord is saying to me in this passage of Scripture, McDonald, I want you, and I want your life, and I want you to be able to serve me without care, and so I want to make an agreement with you. And the agreement is this.

You serve me day by day. You work hard for the supply of your current needs, and for the needs of your family, if you have one. Put everything above that in the work of the Lord, and trust me for your future, and I'll promise you that you'll never lack the necessities of life.

Let me say that again. Work hard for the supply of your current needs, and the needs of your family. Put everything above that in the work of the Lord, and trust me for the future.

And if you do that, I'll guarantee you that you'll never lack the necessities of life. He says in verse 31, Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? For after all these things do the Gentiles seek. And we've already seen that.

This is what the nations live for. The ungodly people of the world, they live for these things. This is what's important to them, of all these things.

Well, that's a comforting thought, isn't it? He says, But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. I like to underline that word, first, and the word God. First, God.

And there I think you have the basic teaching of the passage. This is the way our Bible begins, isn't it? In the beginning, God. God first.

Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. So there's God's promise to every one of us. Now our unbelieving hearts are such that most of the time we would rather see balance in the bank, in the bank book, than to have the promise of God to supply all our needs according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

And so we spend our lives in caring for a future that doesn't belong to us, and what it really means is that God is robbed of the service for which we were made. And I think we really need a fresh awakening to this today. Because I feel that in so many cases our lives go by, and there's been such social pressure to conform, especially with younger people today, such pressure to conform, and to get ahead in the world, that we spend our lives really for the unworthy world, and miss out upon what is of first priority.

Jesus says, Take therefore no thought for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. And there again he reiterates what we've already said.

The morrow has its own cares, you can't anticipate them, you can't live tomorrow, today. Today's problems are sufficient for today. Face the day, live today for the hilt, to the hilt for God, and let God take care of tomorrow, he will.

But somebody might be saying to me, Yes, but how would it work practically? Well really, in a way that isn't our concern, is it? I mean, if God makes a promise, faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. If God promises to take care of my future, well that's it. It's already taken care of, isn't it? So yeah, but practically, how would it ever work? Well of course the answer is, in a practical sense, that God would use his people to care for one another.

This is the ideal. We are a fellowship, and God's will for us is that we care for one another. Now actually, we rob ourselves of a blessing by being too clever with all our financial schemes today, and in a sense some of us are too independent, and we don't want to be cared for by others.

But the thought of this passage is, here's a man or a woman, this man has lived his life for God, he's lived sacrificially for the spread of the gospel, he hasn't worried about his future, he's lived today in an honorable way, worked hard and served the Lord, and now the time comes in his life when he's no longer able to work, what's going to happen to him? Well there's one answer in the scripture that is, first of all, his own family should take care of him, and if they won't, the church should. Isn't that right? That's why we have those instructions in Paul's writing to Timothy concerning the care of widows. That's exactly the point.

And this is exactly the way it worked in the early days of the church. Nobody felt that the things that he had were his own, but that's really what fellowship means. It means holding all things in common.

If there was a need, the money flowed to meet that need. It was just that precious. Most of us are afraid of a blessing, afraid of a blessing, and just too clever for our own good.

In this passage of scripture, the Lord is saying to us, look, I am your security for the future. Come to think of it, you couldn't have a better security than the Lord himself. Everything else will change, values decrease, kingdoms rise and fall, but God is the same, and his word is true.

And he makes this covenant with every one of us in this passage of the word of God. Work hard to the supply of your current needs, but everything above that, in the work of the Lord, trust me for your future, and I'll guarantee you, you'll never lack the necessities of life.

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