

Matthew 6E

- Today, we reach the last of Jesus' four examples of how we should practice our righteousness before men
 - Jesus gave us these examples to expose the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and to encourage us to live differently
 - His first example was giving to the poor, and Jesus said don't give to be noticed by others, but instead, give in secret
 - His second example was praying, and Jesus said don't pray using repetitious mantra, but instead, engage in meaningful conversation with God
 - Because when we give to be noticed, or pray using meaningless repetition, we're hypocrites because we pretend to be serving God, when in reality, we're serving our own interests
 - And last week, we looked at Jesus' third example of fasting
 - Jesus said that when we fast, if we exaggerate our suffering so that others witness our self-denial and admire us for it, then we're being hypocrites again
 - That kind of hypocritical piety will gain us no reward apart from those earthly admirers, Jesus says
 - Instead, Jesus commanded us to fast in secret, so that only our Father in Heaven may know of our sacrifice and reward us
- Last week, we also looked at Jesus' instructions on forgiveness
 - He said confess our sin to the Father, seeking His forgiveness, He will be faithful and just to forgive us in an earthly, temporal sense
 - He is prepared to spare us from some or all of the earthly consequences of our mistakes
 - And He may withhold His discipline from us as well
 - Furthermore, He will forgive us in this way, to the degree we are willing to forgive others around us
 - As I taught on this principle last week, I quoted from a passage in the Gospel of Luke

- And in this well-known passage, Jesus says that God's willingness to extend us forgiveness is overflowing

[Luke 6:36](#) "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

[Luke 6:37](#) "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; pardon, and you will be pardoned.

[Luke 6:38](#) "Give, and it will be given to you. They will pour into your lap a good measure – pressed down, shaken together, and running over. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return."

- Jesus says don't judge others (that is, don't hold others' sins against them)...pardon them for their mistakes
- And if we are willing to pardon others, then the Father will be willing to pardon us for our mistakes here and now
- In fact, Jesus says in v.38, that they will pour "it" into your lap until "it" is running over, so to speak
 - The "it" in that statement, refers to the pardoning Jesus mentioned in v.37
 - So the Lord promises to deliver us forgiveness and reconciliation with our adversaries, if we would forgive them
 - He uses our standard of forgiveness in providing pardon to us for the earthly, temporal consequences of our sins
- When I mentioned this passage, I also commented that there are voices in the Church today deceiving believers concerning the true meaning of this passage
 - A good number of pastors and teachers claim that in this passage, the "it" Jesus was talking about was money
 - They claim Jesus was promising that if we give money, God will respond by giving us an abundance of wealth
 - But as we've seen, Jesus wasn't talking about money at all
 - So in order to come to their conclusion, these false teachers must ignore the original context of Jesus' words
 - They pluck these verses out of the context of Luke 6, so we won't notice that Jesus' original topic was forgiveness, not money

- And if we don't return to the context and check for ourselves, we get fooled
- Some teachers have taught this error simply because they too have been fooled or are not skilled at dividing the Word rightly themselves
 - But others propagate this lie because they are false teachers preoccupied with obtaining money for themselves
 - So they willingly manipulate Scripture to make themselves and their churches wealthy
 - As Paul warned would happen

1Tim. 6:9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

1Tim. 6:10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

- This leads us directly into Jesus' final example in this chapter of living-out righteousness: wealth (or we might say, the accumulation of treasure)
 - Now perhaps you've never considered that the way you accumulate treasure is a spiritual issue, similar to praying or fasting
 - But this is a central teaching in the New Testament
 - In fact, there is no topic more frequently mentioned in all the New Testament than the subject of accumulating treasure
 - You might be surprised to know that the Bible encourages believers to seek after treasure
 - BUT, of course, what the Bible means when it tells us to store up treasure is vastly different than what the world means
 - And it's also very different than what we hear in certain corners today, as men preach that God wants to make us rich
 - That's far from the truth...it's just evidence of how the Church has adopted Pharisaical thinking, rather than biblical thinking
 - So let's look at what Jesus actually says about accumulating wealth

[Matt. 6:19](#) “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

[Matt. 6:20](#) “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal;

[Matt. 6:21](#) for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

[Matt. 6:22](#) “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light.

[Matt. 6:23](#) “But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

- Like his previous examples, Jesus says there is a hypocritical way to accumulate treasure and a Godly way
 - In this example, Jesus says the hypocritical manner is to store up treasure on earth
 - Instead, He says we should store up treasure in Heaven
 - And His reasoning is obvious enough
 - Things on earth don't last...somehow, sooner or later, anything we accumulate here will be taken from us
 - Either something will destroy it (like moth or rust)
 - Or someone else will deny us use of it by stealing it or breaking it
 - Or at the very least, when we die, we leave it to someone else
 - But regardless of the cause, sooner or later, we will be without it
 - But, our treasure in Heaven is protected from such harm
 - Neither moth nor rust nor thieves can destroy a treasure reserved for us in Heaven
 - No one can steal it, and it won't break or run out of batteries
 - It's out of reach of earthly dangers
 - And it's waiting for us in a future, perfect world
 - Which leads us to the second major advantage of Heaven treasure...it's ours forever

- Unlike earthly treasure, we won't leave our Heavenly treasure behind when we die
- We get to keep it, to enjoy it into eternity
- Now at this point, it would be helpful to clarify what Jesus means when He describes our treasure in Heaven...starting with the concept of Heaven itself
 - First, the Bible says that the spirits of those who put their trust in Jesus will be welcomed into the Heavenly realm after our body dies
 - Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:8, that to be absent the body (meaning to have died) is to be at home with the Lord (meaning in His presence)
 - In other words, when we die, our spirit is ushered into the presence of the Lord, Who is seated at the right hand of the Father in God's Heavenly throne room
 - That will be Heaven for us – but only for a short time, because God's throne room is *not* our permanent Heavenly home
 - God created human beings to live in a physical body, on a physical earth, and so that's where we eventually return again
 - In 1 Corinthians 15, Paul tells us that believers will one day be resurrected into a new glorified, physical body intended for life on a physical earth
 - Revelation 19 tells us all believers return to this earth with Jesus Christ at His Second Coming to live and reign in His Kingdom
 - When that happens, "Heaven" moves with Jesus from God's throne room to the Kingdom on earth
 - In a sense, we can say Heaven is wherever Jesus is
 - That's why Jesus told the thief on the cross that "today you will shall be with Me in Paradise"
 - The thief would be in Paradise (Heaven) because he was going where Jesus was going
- When we come into the Kingdom with Jesus, the Bible says the world will be an unimaginably better place than the one we know now
 - It will be a world of peace and joy, without war or conflict, Isaiah says

- Revelation says our new physical body will never suffer pain or illness or death
- We will finally enjoy the world in the way Adam enjoyed the Garden
- But this Kingdom is a “real” place with real life
 - Every morning, we rise to spend our day working, playing, eating, worshipping, and generally enjoying all that God has made for us
 - Which means we will need a place to live, a home and provision in that world
 - The Bible calls the provision we receive in that coming Kingdom our Heavenly reward
- Throughout this chapter, Jesus has made mention of reward (a total of seven times)
 - He’s said repeatedly, that we ought not seek for our reward here and now, but rather wait for our Father in Heaven to reward us
 - That reward is our future allotment in the Kingdom
- Paul says that our allotment in the Kingdom will be awarded to us by Christ at a moment called the Judgment Seat of Christ

2 Cor. 5:8 we are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.

2 Cor. 5:9 Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.

2 Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

- Paul says every Christian would rather be absent from the body and at home with the Lord in Heaven, than to remain here a day longer
 - But since we know we will one day be called home to be with the Lord, we must have as our ambition now, pleasing Christ
 - We must seek to please Christ, because we know we must face Him sooner or later for a judgment

- When we die, we will be held to account by Christ for how we served Him
 - Paul calls that moment the judgment seat of Christ, and in that judgment, each one of us will be recompensed (or paid) by Christ for the deeds we did in this body, whether good or bad
 - This judgment doesn't consider our sin at all, and it doesn't involve punishment either
 - Our sin debt was cancelled on the cross and Jesus bore all our punishment
- Rather, this judgment is an examination of our deeds done in this body in service to Christ
 - So the question Jesus asks at that judgment is, what deeds did we do in service to Christ?
 - Did we spend our time serving ourselves or serving Him?
- For example, did we give to the poor so that we could receive praise from our friends, or did we give to serve God's interests?
 - Did we pray just to hear our own voice or to impress others, or did we engage in a meaningful conversation with our Father?
 - Did we fast to be admired by others, or to discipline our flesh so we might become a more obedient disciple of Jesus?
- And now the question for tonight, do we store up our treasure here, where it burns up in the end, or do we live with eyes for eternity, waiting for our reward in the Kingdom?
 - Storing up earthly treasure means being hypocrites
 - Because it's hypocritical to claim we're looking forward to the Kingdom, yet live as if this world is all that matters to us
 - That's what the Pharisees did...they pretended to live austere lives, forsaking the world for the promise of the Kingdom
 - And yet, they secretly loved money, the Bible says, and schemed to become rich by abusing their positions
 - It's the same thing we see happening today with prosperity preachers
 - They claim to be helping you receive great riches from God

- And then, they tell you to send your money to them so that God may reward you
- Now I ask you...who gets rich in that kind of scheme?
- And what does that tell you about their true heart?
- In v.21, Jesus says that kind hypocrisy is easy to spot...just follow the money
 - He says that we can know a person's heart by noting where they store up their treasure
 - Because where your treasure is, there your heart is also
 - And what do we notice about the false prosperity preachers?
 - They dress in \$5,000 suits, wear \$25,000 watches, live in million dollar homes and fly around the world in \$50M private jets
 - That's their treasure, so where is their heart?
 - Jesus says, we should be wise and see them for who they truly are...
 - And in v.22, Jesus uses a metaphor to make His point
 - He says the eye is the lamp of the body, so if the eye is clear, then the body is full of light
 - Conversely, if the eye is bad, the whole body is full of darkness
 - This is where I get one of my favorite sayings, "living with eyes for eternity," because essentially, that's what Jesus is saying here
 - Your eye, which is to say your focus in life, dictates where your body goes, that is where your life will lead you
 - If you are focused on the right things, on eternal things, then your entire life will be full of light...reflecting the glory of God
 - You will direct your life in ways that maximize your eternal reward, not your earthly gain
 - Every decision you make, every priority in your life, will turn on what pleases Christ the most now
 - But if your eye is dark, if your focus is on this world and what it offers, your life will be full of darkness
 - You squander your time and energy pursuing passing things

- Over time, we become weighed down by various impulses, lusts, distractions and wasted pursuits
- Jesus asks, if the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!
 - He's saying that if the born-again child of God, the one who has come to know the glory of Christ...
 - If the one God appointed to be light to this dying world chooses to seek after the darkness of the world, how great is that darkness!
 - How great is their shame, how great is their loss, how great is that tragedy! They, of all people, should know better
 - Our salvation is never at risk, which is why we're supposed to focus our attention on protecting our testimony
 - And the godly disciple of Christ protects their testimony by recognizing there is an opportunity cost for pursuing the wrong things
 - The Lord gives us only so much time to live on this earth
 - And we have only so much energy, only so many resources
 - When it's spent, it's gone
 - Furthermore, the godly disciple recognizes that his or her place in the Kingdom is riding on how they spend the time God has given them
 - So they seek to spend it wisely, living with eyes for eternity
 - They organize the pursuits of their life to maximize their eternal reward, not their earthly treasure
 - Of course, we still have to earn a living, we still need money, we still need to save for retirement
 - And we still have to buy what we need, including houses and cars and the like
 - But the godly disciple isn't focused on *accumulating* these things
 - In fact, he or she will readily set these things aside, if Christ requires, so they might serve Him better
 - Paul expresses it this way

[1 Tim. 6:17](#) Instruct those who are rich in this present world not to be conceited or to fix their hope on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy.

[1 Tim. 6:18](#) Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

[1 Tim. 6:19](#) storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed.

- Notice, Paul didn't tell Timothy that the rich should give their wealth away, or even that it's a sin to be rich
 - But what does Paul say? That those who are rich must not place their hope, their confidence for the future, in their earthly riches
 - If you possess wealth to any degree, don't let your wealth interfere with storing up true riches in the Kingdom
 - Paul says be rich in good works, sharing your earthly wealth generously so as to ensure a strong foundation in the Kingdom
- In the end, our choice is between serving two masters: Christ or wealth
 - The Greek word for wealth is the word *mammon*, which literally means property
 - But the root word means the thing in which we place our confidence
 - So in the matter of wealth, where have you placed your trust for your future security?
 - Are you trusting in the wealth of this world to provide you with security? If so, what happens after you die? What will be your security then?
 - Or are you living with eyes for eternity, placing your trust in the reward God may grant you in the Kingdom?
 - In v.24, Jesus says, these two are like two slave owners, and you can only serve one
 - So you must choose...it's literally impossible to trust in both
 - But some of us sure try to find a way to have both, don't we?

- We say we look forward to the Kingdom and that we want to please Christ and receive a good reward
- Yet we still set our eyes, our focus, on obtaining that shiny object that distracts us from serving Christ
- In that moment, you're trading one master for the other, and Jesus says don't do it...it's a bad trade
- Now perhaps at this point, you're feeling a little conviction over this issue of wealth (hey, join the club)
 - Perhaps the Spirit is speaking to your heart, asking you to make some changes in your life
 - Maybe He's telling you to work fewer hours, so you can spend more time ministering to your family or in the Church body
 - Maybe He's telling you it's time to get out of debt, to stop spending beyond your means, so that you won't be enslaved by these things
 - Maybe that means selling a car you can't afford or a house you can't afford, or ending a hobby that consumes too much time
 - Whatever you're considering, as you contemplate these things the enemy is going to be at work to stop this process
 - He knows how important your obedience is, and he's determined to prevent it
 - So he may whisper to you that if you cut back your hours at work, the boss might be upset or you may lose your position
 - Or if you liquidate your savings to pay off those loans, what happens to your safety net?
 - Or if you sell your expensive house to live within a budget, how will your kids get into the right school district?
 - And what will your friends think when you drop out of the country club, or what will your kids think when you have to cut back on the number of activities in the family life?
 - Jesus knew these concerns might lead us to hesitate to obey, so He ends the chapter reassuring us that your Father in Heaven has your back

[Matt. 6:25](#) “For this reason I say to you, do not be worried about your life, as to what you will eat or what you will drink; nor for your body, as to what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

[Matt. 6:26](#) “Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they?”

[Matt. 6:27](#) “And who of you by being worried can add a single hour to his life?”

[Matt. 6:28](#) “And why are you worried about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin,

[Matt. 6:29](#) yet I say to you that not even Solomon in all his glory clothed himself like one of these.

[Matt. 6:30](#) “But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more clothe you? You of little faith!”

[Matt. 6:31](#) “Do not worry then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’”

[Matt. 6:32](#) “For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

[Matt. 6:33](#) “But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

[Matt. 6:34](#) “So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

- This is a longer passage, and the central thought is simple...yet profound
 - Jesus commands us not to give in to our fears and worries as we transition to pursuing His agenda in our life
 - If you set your mind on serving Christ and obeying Him, then you need not worry about not having enough food or clothes or a home
 - You can obey, confident that your Father, who knows you need these things, will provide them in the course of your work
 - Now, He may not provide them to the same extent you might prefer in your flesh
 - Your address might not be as fancy, your car not as new, your clothes not as fashionable
 - But they will do the job, and as Jesus says, life is more than food and the body is for more than simply showing off clothes

- In other words, we don't want to make the mistake of thinking that the purpose of our life is found in the accumulation of these things

Luke 12:15 Then He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

- Worry over what we need in this life is the enemy's greatest weapon in keeping us from living with eyes for eternity
 - The irony is, that even when you were working so hard to obtain all these things, it was still the Lord providing for you in the end
 - In other words, your security was never found in a job or a savings account or retirement fund
 - Those things are merely the appearance of security...God has always been your provider
 - And He can remove them from you just as surely as He gave them to you (just read Job)
- And therefore, the key is remembering how much the Father in Heaven loves and protects His children as they obey Him, and that should trigger our obedience
 - And to prove His point, Jesus reminds us of how effortlessly the world around us finds what it needs day after day
 - The Father ensures that birds find food and that even the flowers are dressed in beauty
 - And yet these things count far less to God than you do
 - So what do we conclude about God?
 - Will God provide less for His most important creation than He is willing to do for the trivial things of Creation?
 - You know the answer to that question, yet at times, we still live as if we don't get it...and Jesus says that's living with little faith
 - It's operating out of an assumption, that if we don't do all we can to secure our future now, we may find ourselves destitute in the future

- That's a lack of faith in God, because it suggests we doubt His goodness and His faithfulness to provide
- Jesus says this is another example of living like unbelievers
 - In v.32, He says the Gentiles (meaning unbelievers) live with these worries, asking what will we eat or what will we drink, *etc.*
 - And that makes sense, of course, because unbelievers don't have a relationship with the Father
 - So naturally, they have no reason to trust in His provision; therefore, they focus their life on obtaining what the world offers
- But when a believer spends his or her time worrying about future security, we ruin the days we have now
 - We're needlessly distracted by future concerns, which get in the way of serving Christ today
 - It's the opportunity cost thing again...so ask yourself this:
 - What opportunities for future eternal rewards are being forfeited as you spend time pursuing things that will burn up in the end?
 - That's why Jesus says focus on today...keep your eyes fixed on serving Christ today, and don't get distracted by the what-ifs of tomorrow
- I want to leave you tonight focused on what Jesus says in v.33
 - Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and these other things will be *added* to you
 - This is your Christian priority for life
 - First, seek for Jesus' Kingdom
 - That means seeking to serve the interests of the Kingdom, which is recruiting new citizens through evangelism
 - Putting your eternal reward ahead of anything this world offers
 - And secondly, seek His righteousness
 - That means proving yourself worthy of Christ's trust by demonstrating as much godliness as possible

- Pursue sanctification, so that you might be placed in a higher position of honor in Christ's Kingdom government
- Now both those goals take a lot of time and focus, and if you pursue them earnestly, you won't have as much time to spend on building up your balance sheet
 - You probably won't have as much money, or live in the best zip code, or even have a great retirement savings
 - But Jesus says, if you are focused on serving the Lord in this way, He has your back
- The things you didn't pursue will be added to you
 - Notice the word "added" there
 - It's important, because it tells us two things
- First, it reminds us that these things are given to us by God
 - He adds them...we don't obtain them or earn them...whatever we possess in this life is something God assigns to us
 - So that even when we don't work for them, God may still provide them
- Secondly, and more importantly, these possessions God knows we need, will be added to our Kingdom focus and our pursuit of righteousness
 - So that we will have both eternal reward and the necessities of life now
 - We will be given both a provision now and a greater reward in the Kingdom
 - These things will be added
- On the other hand, the opposite is also true...if we pursue the treasure of this world at the expense of serving Christ, we will ultimately have neither
 - We will lose what we gained here because, in the end, we leave it all behind one way or another
 - And when we stand before Christ, our reward in the Kingdom may be diminished

- Which one does the wise Christian seek? Do not seek your for reward here...wait for the Father's reward in Heaven