

- PRAY
- READ Matthew 6:19-34

Theme of Matthew: “Behold your King is coming to you” (Zech.9:9; Mt.21:4-5)
Theme of the Sermon on the Mount: Life Styles of the Rich and Famous

CHARTING THE COURSE FOR THIS EVENING:

- Review
- Lead us not into temptation
- Storing up treasure & anxiety

STORING UP TREASURES & ANXIETY (Matthew 6:19-34; James 5:2; 1 Timothy 6:17-19)

What are treasures on earth? (v.19)

Why shouldn't we store up for ourselves treasures on earth? (v.19)

When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus (Matthew 27:57).

Where should we store up treasure? (v.20)

Is Jesus saying that we should renounce all belongings?

Americans and Western Europeans today live better than 99.4 percent of all human beings who have ever existed.

Citation: Gregg Easterbrook, New Republic senior editor in the book, *The Progress Paradox*

How do we accumulate treasures in heaven? (v.20)

What is moth and rust?

What is the moth and rust of today's wealth? (vv.19-21)

One thing you can count on: when you invest, a lot of the people you trust are going to cheat. Billions of investor dollars whirl through the system. It's all too easy for insiders to stick their hands into that current and grab. We're not talking about a bad apple here and there. Cheating runs through Wall Street's very seams—even in sainted mutual funds. Citation: Jane Bryant Quinn; “Mutual Funds' Greed Machine”; Newsweek; November 24 issue; <http://www.msnbc.com/news/994163.asp>

Is Jesus making a case for earthly poverty?

Many Christians critique the affluence of our culture. But what should they really be critiquing?

1 Timothy 6:17-19

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.

18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share,

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.

BOTTOM LINE: Wealthy Christians need to be instructed to be generous and ready to share. But so do poor Christians (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:1-3)! And the entire church needs to be instructed in prayer, fasting, and keeping the Law of God (Matthew 5:17-20; 28:18-20).

- ✓ Life expectancy has nearly doubled in the past century and continues to increase.
- ✓ Real per-capita income has doubled since 1960. But even that understates the rise in income, since the price of food and many durable goods keeps falling.
- ✓ In the period following World War II, the average new American home was 1,100 square feet; today it's 2,300.
- ✓ By any measure of affluence—health care, leisure, technology—the average American enjoys a quality of life beyond anyone's wildest dreams even a few decades ago.
- ✓ The percentage of Americans who characterize themselves as "happy" hasn't changed since the 1950s, and the percentage of those describing themselves as "very happy" is down and continues to decline.
- ✓ Since the 1950s, the percentage of Americans and Europeans who suffer a bout of depression has climbed to 25 percent and shows no signs of abating. An estimated 7 percent of all Americans suffer at least one incidence of major, debilitating depression a year. (Citation: Charles Colson, "Miserable in the Midst of Plenty")

[E]vangelical ministries to the poor claim that forty thousand people die of starvation and malnutrition daily. That means roughly twenty-seven a minute, twenty of whom are children under five years old. (This represents a loss of life roughly equivalent to the first atom bomb being dropped again—every three days.)

Keener, C. S. *Matthew* (Mt 6:22).

clear/single eye (v.22; cf. Psalm 25:15; Prov.4:25) –A clear/single eye can refer to two things: (1) generosity (Romans 12:8; 2 Cor.8:2; 9:11,13; James 1:5). This fits in with the immediate theme of greed and is the opposite of “evil eye” (see below); or (2) single-minded resolve and devotion in the pursuit of the kingdom (cf. Matthew 5:17-20,48; 6:24,33; 7:3-5; 18:9; Eph.6:5; Col.3:22; 2 Cor.11:3). Clear/single eye is another way of talking about the pure in heart (Mt.5:8).

NOTE: The LXX uses the word translated “single/evil” to translate the Hebrew word for “perfect” (פֶּרֶף or פֶּרֶף; [2 Samuel 15:11; Job 22:3]).

ILLUSTRATION: Driving at night requires a “single eye” on the white and yellow lines! When driving at night it is dangerous to look at the lights of oncoming traffic, especially around corners!

evil eye (v.23; **Deuteronomy 15:9; Proverbs 23:6**; Matthew 20:15; cf. **1 Timothy 6:9-11**) – One who is self-seeking and does not fix their eye on things above.

Why can't a person serve two masters? (Matthew 6:24)

What does it mean to "hate" (Matthew 6:24; cf. Luke 14:26)?

What does unchecked worry lead to?

What should worry lead to? (Philippians 4:6; 1 Peter 5:7)

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you (v.33; Psalm 24:6; 27:4, 8; 34:14; 63:1; 69:6, 32; 70:4; 119:45; 122:6–9; **Prov.2:4–5; 8:17; Isa.55:6; Jer.29:13; Zeph.2:3**) – See Matthew 5:20 where Jesus says our righteousness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees. “In this verse the word *first* is the Greek word *protos*. This word not only means first in sequence or chronological order, but it also carries the idea of “foremost in importance.”” (R.C. Sproul, *Before the face of God : Book One: A daily guide for living from the book of Romans*)

“Jesus does not condemn ambition or aspiration; he merely changes the values to which they are attached: “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant to all”” (Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers* p.111).

FOR NEXT TIME: READ MATTHEW 7

What does Jesus mean, “Do not judge”?

What is the holy and what are the pearls? (Matthew 7:6)

Who are the dogs and the swine? (Matthew 7:6)

In 1956 Jacques Lowe was assigned to photograph Robert F. Kennedy, who at the time was a young Washington lawyer. Robert Kennedy's father, Joseph, was so impressed that he asked Lowe to photograph John F. Kennedy and his wife. Three years later, Lowe became the official photographer of Kennedy's presidential campaign and after Kennedy was elected, Lowe became his personal photographer. Lowe was a very meticulous photographer and his pictures helped create and sustain the myth of Camelot.

Lowe had an estimated 40,000 negatives of images of John F. Kennedy and his family and only 300 or 400 photographs had been made public. While he was alive, Lowe watchfully monitored the use of his pictures. When a publication or museum wanted prints, he personally took the negatives to the lab for printing. When the job was done, he retrieved them himself. Lowe's daughter, Thomasina, said, "He was being more prudent than most. He really believed they were as safe as they could ever be," she said. "He chose to have them there because he was six blocks away from them and he felt psychologically (as if) they were under his bed." All 40,000 negatives were kept in a safe-deposit vault at the JP Morgan Chase bank branch at 5 World Trade Center, a nine-story building that was heavily damaged in the attack that destroyed center's twin towers. A team of engineers, a 100-ton crane, forklifts, ironworkers and flatbed and dump trucks were brought in as part of a plan to move the vault from the second floor.

But workers found major fire damage in the vault area, and basically ashes in several dozen randomly opened safe-deposit boxes. The only thing that would have survived was metal or stone. September 11 serves as an important reminder that earthly treasures are subject to moth, rust, thieves and fire. The only lasting treasure that we can store up is in heaven (Matthew 6:19-21).

Citations:

Frank Eltman, "**Nation: John F. Kennedy negatives feared lost in Trade Center**" December 6, 2001; http://www.sptimes.com/News/120601/Worldandnation/Negatives_of_JFK_year.shtml; accessed 1/2/2002

Derek Rose, "JFK Pix Lost at Ground Zero" <http://www.voy.com/45481/7268.html>; accessed 1/2/2002

Christopher Noble, "Lost Kennedy Photos Spark Industry Reflection"

Dec. 13, 2001; <http://www.azcentral.com/news/reuters/stories/ENTERTAINMENT-ATTACK-PHOTOS-DC.shtml>; accessed 1/2/2002