

August 24, 2008

**SOLID INVESTMENTS
MATTHEW 6.19-24**

The judgments we make with regard to our treasures reveal our heart-loyalties and, thus our true conditions as kingdom citizens. Healthy judgments are those that are concerned with that which will endure. Unhealthy judgments are focused only upon the present.

1. SET YOUR HEART ON ACCUMULATING ENDURING TREASURES (19-21)

Treasuring up treasures on earth (19): Jesus is not against savings accounts. Translation: “Do not treasure up for yourselves treasures upon the earth.” Focuses more on miserly hoarding up of money.

Contrast is not between “treasuring up” and “not treasuring up,” but between “on earth” or “in heaven.”

Treasuring up on earth: treasuring up treasures with which you have no purpose or use beyond the present. Little or no motivation for the larger kingdom purposes, only on present gratification.

Connects with the previous section by the fact of rewards now given by men and rewards later given by the Father.

Jesus’ historical situation: “earth” = “land,” i.e., of Israel (see Rev). Fulfillment of Law and Prophets = the land of Israel will give way to greater things. Jews wanted to hold on to the present state of things (Jerusalem & Temple). But that is corruptible; able to be “moth-eaten” and walls “broken through.”

These were only replicas of the heavenly reality. The shadow must give way when the reality comes. Jews are being called to store up treasure in the kingdom of heaven that has drawn near in Jesus himself.

“Moth and ‘eating’” allusion: Possible Isa 50-51. Focus is on the servant of YHWH who will come and suffer. Those who oppose him will be eaten up like a moth eats a garment, like a worm eats wool (50.9; 51.8). The son will be vindicated. The opponents will pass away but YHWH’s righteousness/salvation will endure.

For us today: How do we know if we are “treasuring up treasures” upon the earth? What does it look like to live for the present?

Living concerned only with how my decisions, especially with regards to my possessions, affect me presently. What can I get out of this *now*? It is having little or no regard for greater purposes of my possessions. The difference between being miserly and generous

Treasuring up treasures in heaven (20): contrast is not between “material and immaterial” or even, in one sense, between what is seen and unseen. Not about going up to heaven to retrieve our treasure when we die.

The kingdom itself is the treasure (13.44). It is a treasure for which a man must be willing to give up everything in the present.

Remember the prayer: “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, *on earth* as it is in heaven.” Heaven and earth will be united so that earth will become a heavenly city. Cf. Rev 21-22

Everything on earth will reflect that which is heaven. Only the heavenly treasure that will last.

Jesus Christ: the place where heaven and earth are joined. He is the “heavenly city incarnate.” If we are going to have everlasting treasure, our treasure must be invested in the One in whom heaven and earth are joined in perfect union.

Meaning: our total lives, which must include our money, must be invested in his agenda.

What does it mean, though, to invest our lives in Christ’s agenda? How did Christ invest his life? He expended his life for his people. He did this with the future reward in view, but it cost him poverty, hunger, and suffering in the present.

The earth and all the kingdoms of the world would be his, but they couldn’t be his in their present condition.

How do we lay up heavenly treasure? We invest in others. We invest our possessions in our children, spouses, friends, family in Christ, etc.

Loyalty lies with your treasures (21): “for (in the sense of *because*) wherever your treasure is, there will also be your heart.” Whatever we treasure the most will determine where our loyalties lie. The issue is *absolute and unqualified discipleship*.

What your heart seeks the most reveals where your heart is. What your heart seeks is that which reveals your true character.

2. YOUR JUDGMENTS DETERMINE YOUR HEALTH (22-23)

The eye as a lamp (22a): eyes as instruments of judgment (Gen 1; *passim*); eyes and light (Pro 15.30); dimmed (Gen 27.1; 48.10; Deut 34.7; Lam 5.17); eyes enlightened/brightened (Ezra 9.8); Jesus’ eyes as flame of fire (Rev 1.14)

More light = better judgment. Less light = poorer judgment. Jesus is dealing with how you make judgments regarding money in relationship to the kingdom.

Healthy eye = body full of light (22b): eye is good (NKJ), healthy (ESV), single (AV). Possibly dealing specifically with being generous (in contrast with “evil eye” in v 23).

Broader than that (I believe). A good lamp, a healthy eye, leads you the right way; i.e., to make the proper judgments. Making those proper judgments brings heal to you in all the respects of that word.

“Single” eye = unmixed, not diseased. Unmixed loyalty to a standard of judgment. Leads to greater light. Greater light = salvation because God is light.

Evil eye = body full of darkness (23a): Evil eye, cf. Mt 20.15; = stingy, miserly. Problem is not in the possessions but in the eye.

Walking in darkness and the consequent darkness disease of the body is that of a stingy man, the miser, who lives for himself in the present. He is whole person is full of darkness. If light is to be in the presence of God, darkness is to be cut off from that light.

When darkness is light (23b): Understanding darkness as light and, consequently making judgments according to that “light” is dangerous. Person is self-deceived; unwilling to see his own blindness.

Historical context: Israel is a body (like the church). The “eyes” are the leaders; scribes and Pharisees. But they are “blind guides” (cf. 15.14; 23.16-24). Because they are dark and are making judgments in that “light,” the whole body is dark.

Israel needs a new eye. Jesus, the One whose eyes are a flame of fire, the true lamp, is the healthy eye that the body needs.

The only way that we know that we are healthy is if we are following what he says. We have no light in ourselves to discern these things. We are darkness. In him we are light. We listen to his words, see from his eyes, and that is how we know we are in the light.

3. YOU CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON (24)

Impossible to serve two masters. Love/cling to one and hate/despise the other. These are loyalty responses not primarily emotional responses (e.g., warmth toward one and feelings of anger toward the other).

The words that Jesus uses do not necessarily reflect emotional responses in terms of feelings of anger or warmth. The words reflect more how you respond to a particular master in terms of loyalty.

Mammon = money, possessions. Personified, set up as a rival god who demands loyalty.

Christian discipleship is measured in part by how you handle your money. If you handle it in such a way as to make it into an idol, then you hate the true God. If you serve God, you do not serve possessions.

How does one determine if he is serving mammon? Can I let go of money when I see others in legitimate need? Do I find security in money or, more generally, in that which I possess? Can you be content if God, in his providence, gives you less? Does the thought of financial loss grip you with fear? (To answer this last one: “Am I content right now?”)

1. *Make sure you are investing your resources in things that will last.*

2. *Our commitment to Christ and his kingdom must be absolute loyalty.*