**“Life in the Kingdom: Where is My Treasure?”**

Matthew 6:19-24; Luke 12:16-21

(Notes based on the sermon by Pastor Steve Massey, Hayden Bible Church, 3/19/23)

 Jesus used His Sermon on the Mount to speak strongly against those who are outwardly religious, but inwardly self-centered. Today’s scripture continues that theme, with Jesus’ warning against idolatry. A worldly heart is a heart distracted by the things of this world (see 1John 2:15-17), not focused on the Giver of Gifts. (Q1) A worldly heart worships the gifts instead of the Giver. When good things from God crowd out the pursuit of God’s best, we know we are on the wrong track. Our attitudes about material things gives us a measure of where our heart really is. It takes a work of grace to break the chains that bind us to materialism. And it takes ongoing grace to keep us from exchanging Kingdom priorities for what is only earthbound, temporary, and unsecured.

 Jesus is speaking the words of Matt. 6:19-24 to those already in His Kingdom; He is NOT saying how to get into the Kingdom. The riches of Christ’s righteousness are given to all who repent, believe, and follow Jesus Christ. Christians hold on loosely to earthly things as stewards of God’s good gifts. God rewards His people’s faithful stewardship with eternal rewards. (Q2)

 Christ-followers have a real righteousness from God. This righteousness progressively changes our disposition to earthly things: money, houses, land, reputation, influence. These are all good things, but they can become idols. The human heart is designed to only have one throne. Has allegiance to Christ unclenched your fists from earthly things?

 We will store up treasures for eternity, either good (1Peter 1:3-5) or bad (Rom. 2:5-6). Apart from the grace of Christ, the unrepentant sinner is storing up wrath every day. For believers, our sin has already been put upon Christ’s shoulders. Our judgment has to do with rewards, not salvation. Christians always swim against the strong current of materialism. Material things distract us from that which is eternal. Earthly wealth is inherently temporary, corruptible, and insecure.

 How do I loosen my clutch on earthly things? Here’s a hint: don’t wait for your heart to change! Instead, change where you put your treasure and your heart will follow! (Example: Support an orphan in India or Kenya. See what that does to your prayers!) Paul David Tripp put it another way: “Whatever important thing rules your heart also shapes your words and behavior.” (New Morning Mercies, March 14) Jesus is NOT saying that He loves poor people more than rich people, or vice versa. Money is neutral: it can be an idol or a tool. It is good for us to work hard for money so we will not be a burden to others and so we can help those in need. Material things are good gifts from God, meant to be enjoyed and shared, but not meant to become idols. 1Tim. 6:17-19 presents the right way to look at it. Jesus is not condemning the accumulation of wealth; He is condemning the selfish accumulation of wealth.

 Worldliness blinds God’s people to spiritual realities. The clear eye has an eternal perspective, without an obsession with what is earthbound. Good things (like your service, your interpretation of the Bible, your prayer life) can be clouded, just like an eye is clouded by a cataract. If obedience to the Word of God is hindered by something in your life, that thing is an idol. Worldliness blinds people to God’s spiritual realities. Worldliness can even keep someone from entering God’s Kingdom (Judas, the rich, young ruler, Demas (2Tim. 4:10)).

 Matt. 6:24 says that you cannot serve two masters. “You cannot serve God and wealth” means that you cannot have an undue attachment to money. Believers, you really are slaves of a kind, benevolent Master. A master demands complete ownership. Your Master will not share the throne of your heart.

 Worldliness turns God’s people toward idolatry, but the believer is meant to be thinking of an eternal future. We are meant to use the treasures of this life to invest in eternal treasures. Let our allegiance to God loosen our grasp on earthly things. Let our joy be what gives Him joy! (Q3) (Q4) (Q5)

**QUESTIONS**:

1. The distractions listed in 1John 2:15-17 are “the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the boastful pride of life.” Give examples of each and how they can become idols.
2. What eternal rewards can you look forward to?
3. What gives God joy? (for one thing, read Heb. 12:2!!!)
4. What attitudes and priorities does God delight to reward?
5. What are some of the ways people invest in this world? What are some ways to invest in God’s Kingdom?

“Wonderful Grace of Jesus” (Lillenas)

Wonderful grace of Jesus,
Greater than all my sin;
How shall my tongue describe it,
Where shall its praise begin?
Taking away my burden,
Setting my spirit free;
For the wonderful grace of Jesus reaches me.

* + Refrain:
	Wonderful the matchless grace of Jesus,
	Deeper than the mighty rolling sea;
	Higher than the mountain, sparkling like a fountain,
	All-sufficient grace for even me!
	Broader than the scope of my transgressions,
	Greater far than all my sin and shame;
	Oh, magnify the precious Name of Jesus,
	Praise His Name!