

Pick One: God or Money

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[0 : 00] Welcome again, and let's turn to the scriptures.! Let's open up to Matthew 6, verses 19-24. Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word.

! Heavenly Father, this passage which you have spoken to us, have preserved in your word for us, is a matter of eternal consequence.

And you say in your word that you are jealous for your spirit that is within us, and that you command and you demand exclusive allegiance to you.

You call us to love you with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Lord, right at the onset, Lord, we confess the poverty of our affections, the deficiency of our love.

We ask that you would expose that and convict that, but that you would go beyond that also to comfort us with the mercy and grace that is found in Jesus Christ, and that by his grace you would transform us to treasure you above all things.

[1 : 30] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you're able, please stand so that we can honor God as we read from his word.

I'm going to read Matthew 6, verses 19-24. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The eye is the lamp of the body, so if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

[2 : 40] You cannot serve God and money. This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. Whether you are an atheist, or an agnostic, or an adherent of organized religion, everyone worships something.

Sure, you might not make an altar before which you bow down and make sacrifices, but if you're still worshipping something, because Jesus teaches us in this passage that worship ultimately is about what we treasure above all else.

When you treasure something, you are preoccupied with that thing. You prioritize it above other things in your life. When you treasure relational and social status, for example, you do anything. You'd pay any price. You'd make any sacrifice to save face and to avoid shame and to be accepted and popular. For some people, that treasure is power or prestige.

They do anything, pay any price, and make sacrifices, sacrifice even their own integrity and the needs of their own family members to climb that ladder of success to be perceived as successful, to gain power.

[4 : 08] For some people, that treasure is sex. They pursue the pleasures of sex even at great personal cost to themselves, even if it destroys their marriage, even if it's illicit and includes committing crimes.

For some people, that treasure, as this passage focuses on money, they're consumed with making the greatest amount of money in the shortest amount of time and they're always scheming to acquire more and more and more and their entire life revolves around the pursuit of money.

This passage is, on the surface, about money, but it's also about more than money. I think we know that because in Matthew 12, 34 and 35, Jesus uses the language of treasure again and that time he says, how can you speak good when you are evil?

For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good person, out of his good treasure, brings forth good. And the evil person, out of his evil treasure, brings forth evil. In that passage, Jesus is clearly speaking not about literal treasure, but about figurative treasure. He's speaking of the treasure of the heart. So we need to ask ourselves, when we peel away all of the layers of pretending and posturing and when we peel away our idealized versions of ourselves that we present to others and get down to our real selves at the core, what do we believe?

[5 : 52] What do we value? What do we love? What do we find there in the heart? That is the treasure of the heart. And that's what Jesus is referring to here in Matthew 6, 21, when he says, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Where your treasure is reveals where your heart is. The main point of Jesus' teaching in this passage is simple. Make the God of heaven your supreme treasure.

We're going to first talk about how we should store up our treasures in heaven. And then secondly, about how we should set our eyes on heaven. And then third, about how to serve our master in heaven.

Jesus commands us not to lay up for ourselves treasures on earth. Why? He gives the reason. Moth and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal.

Most modern people keep their wealth in banks and stock markets. Nowadays, there are still people, maybe the wealthier among us, who keep safes in their houses because they have valuable stuff to keep in there, like gold and silver bars and jewelry and maybe watches and heirlooms and collectibles, so on.

[7 : 10] But all of these things are susceptible to decay and corruption. The beautiful silk dress that you have or the stately wool coat that you have or maybe the luxurious fur scarf that you have can all be eaten by moths, literally.

Rolex watches and expensive jewelry rust and corrode. The road salt and the harsh climates and the bad drivers of Boston do not make a distinction between cheap Toyotas and expensive Rolls Royces.

Sorry if you drive a Toyota. I drive a Toyota too. That's okay. Yeah. Rolls Royces get into fender benders. Their suspension system rust and fall off.

Their battery dies. Their tires wear out. It's the same thing that happens to your car happens to that. Even real estate investments are not safe.

Many of the mansions of Hollywood stars were destroyed overnight by the Woolsey fire of 2018. All earthly treasures are susceptible to corrosion and destruction.

[8 : 31] And not only do moths and rust destroy, the thieves also break in and steal. In 2016, Kim Kardashian was robbed of 10 million in jewelry by armed thieves during the Paris Fashion Week.

I don't know why she had to bring 10 million dollars worth of jewelry to that. In 2019, Tamara Ecclestone, who is a daughter of Formula One mogul Bernie Ecclestone, had an estimated 30 plus million dollars in jewelry stolen by burglars from the Kensington Mansion.

All earthly, I mean, you would imagine they would have intense security for those things. And I'm sure they did. And even then, thieves break in and steal. All earthly treasures that we possess can also be dispossessed of them.

And it can happen just like that. On October 29, 1929, the history calls Black Tuesday, right? It's not Black Friday.

It's not good. U.S. stock market crashed after years of reckless speculation and inflated stock prices. That triggered a collapse in public confidence in the market, which sparked a chain reaction that led to the Great Depression.

[9 : 45] Investors started panic selling all their stock because it kept plummeting in value. They didn't want to lose any more money. And when they did that, some of the banks failed because their investments also took a nosedive.

And when the business couldn't pay the loans that they'd taken out of the banks, the more and more banks fail. And as the banks fail, the people are afraid that they're going to lose the money that they're keeping in the bank because this was back in the day when the federal government did not insure our bank deposits.

And so they pull all their money out of the bank and then, of course, then the banks lose more money. Even more banks fail. More people lose their money. Over 9,000 U.S. banks failed in three years. An estimate modern equivalent of \$30 billion of people's hard-earned savings were wiped

out.

Millions of people lost their life savings. Millions of people lost their homes. Approximately 15 million people lost their jobs. One in four workers were unemployed at the peak of the Great Depression. The insecurity of wealth is proven in history over and over again.

[10:56] And yet, so many are preoccupied with hoarding up this fleeting, fading wealth. And even if you manage to protect your wealth for the duration of your life from moths and rusts and thieves, you still cannot protect your wealth from one thing.

It is death. In Luke 12, 13 to 21, Jesus tells the parable of the rich fool. After an unusually abundant harvest, this rich fool runs out of room in his barns.

What am I going to do? I have so much wheat to store and I don't have enough barns. Oh, I know what I'm going to do. I'm going to tear down all my barns and then build larger, bigger ones so I can store everything in my barns and then I can say to myself, soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years.

Relax, eat, drink, be merry. But God says to this rich man, fool, this night your soul is required of you and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?

And after telling this parable, Jesus concludes, so is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.

[12:15] None of us know when we're going to die but when that day comes we can be certain that we're not going to take any of our stuff with us. This is the folly of the trending fire movement.

I think Gary told me about this. F-I-R-E, you guys know about this? If you're Gen Z you probably know about it. It stands for Financial Independence Retire Early, F-I-R-E.

And many among the Gen Z apparently, this is what I hear, are practicing extreme frugality and high savings in order to achieve financial independence and retire early. But as we have seen already, earthly wealth is extremely volatile and insecure.

And many of those Gen Zers are going to die before they can retire and enjoy their savings. I often see a funeral procession because there are several funeral homes in East Cambridge.

I often see a funeral procession of cars going by, going from the funeral home to the grave site. It's usually led by a funeral coach, also known as a hearse, which is typically a Lincoln or a Cadillac that's been modified to fit the long casket in the back.

[13:29] And I don't know if you noticed, but I have never seen a hearse with a U-Haul cargo trailer hitched behind it. Why?

Because nobody takes anything to the grave. Nobody takes any of their stuff to the life thereafter.

And these pitfalls apply not only to material goods and wealth, but also to all earthly treasures.

Social status and fame are also fleeting. According to researchers from Google, eBay, and UC Berkeley, viral fame that so many young people aspire to usually lasts seven days.

It's not quite as short as the proverbial 15 minutes of fame, but that's pretty close, isn't it? That's because of the oversaturation of the internet.

Every minute, 48 hours of video is uploaded to YouTube and you think that you can keep up with that? Our attention spans are getting ever shorter and the fickle audience, they easily fatigue and move on from what they saw.

[14:47] There are 27 million paid content creators in the U.S., 200 million globally. And according to Linktree, 72% of all content creators full-time and part-time make less than \$500 a year.

Even if you become the rare person that finds enduring fame throughout your life, you will one day die and then you will be forgotten. Even if you are immortalized, quote-unquote, with a statue inducted into the Hall of Fame, have a building named after you in your honor at a college campus, someday, someone will take your name down, raise that building and build a new one named after someone else.

Someone will take that statue down as the values of the culture changes. What is it that you treasure in this life? All pleasures fade.

All loved ones die. All the treasures of earth are by nature fleeting. D. Martin Luther Jones puts it helpfully.

He says, your most beautiful flower is beginning to die immediately. You pluck it. You will soon have to throw it away. That is true of everything in this life and world.

[16:11] It does not matter what it is. It is passing. It is all fading away. Everything that has life is, as the result of sin, subject to this process. Moth and rust doth corrupt.

Things develop holes and become useless, and at the end, they are gone and become utterly corrupt. The most perfect physique will eventually give way and break down and die. The most beautiful countenance will in a sense become ugly when the process of corruption has got going. The brightest gifts tend to fade. Your great genius may be seen gibbering in delirium as a result of disease. However wonderful and beautiful and glorious things may be, they all perish. It is foolish, therefore, to store up our treasures on earth, to make treasures of the perishable things of earth. Instead, Jesus says in verse 20, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Matthew uses the word heaven more than any other author in the Bible, Old and New Testament. And in Matthew 5, 34, Jesus told us exactly what he means by heaven when he commended us not to take an oath by heaven for it is the throne of God.

[17:33] That's how Jesus himself defined heaven in the Gospel of Matthew. Heaven is the throne of God. It's a place from which God rules. And that's why the word heaven is most often associated in the Gospel of Matthew with expressions like kingdom of heaven or our Father who is in heaven.

So what then are the treasures in heaven? What does it mean to lay up, store up treasures in heaven? It means, as it says in verse 33, to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Rather than being preoccupied with earthly and worldly concerns, to lay up treasures in heaven then means to make the God of heaven our supreme treasure.

to live for his heavenly purposes and his heavenly priorities rather than our own earthly purposes and priorities. It's similar to what Jesus said in John 6, 27.

Do not work for the food that perishes but for the food that endures to eternal life which the Son of Man will give to you. Life is about so much more than making money and then spending money and eating food and ingesting food that you digested and working and then vacationing.

[19:02] We are people with eternal destinies. And God wants us to prepare for that reality. If we take such care of ourselves here and now when our life is only 70 to 80 years long how much more than should we provide for and take care for our eternal life?

Are you preparing for eternal life? Do you care about the salvation of the eternal souls of your children? Do you care about the salvation of the eternal souls of your neighbors around you?

This contrast between earthly treasures and heavenly treasures is undoubtedly connected to the principle that has dominated chapter 6 up to this point. Jesus said early in verse 4 that we should give to the needy in secret so that our Father who sees in secret will reward us.

He said in verse 6 that we should pray in secret so that our Father who sees in secret will reward us. And again in verse 18 Jesus said we should fast in secret so that our Father who sees in secret will reward us.

Repeatedly we have been taught not to practice our righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them for then we will have no reward from our Father in heaven who is in heaven.

[20:33] The same idea I think is present in this passage. If all that we care about are treasures on earth things you can see and touch and hold and show off to others if that's all that you care about the treasures on earth earthly recognition!

and acclaimed by men then it betrays where our heart actually is. That we are not citizens of the kingdom of heaven but citizens of the kingdom of earth.

That our Master is not the God of heaven but mammon money. That our Father is not the Father in heaven but the ruler of this world. Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4.18 we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen for the things that are seen are transient but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Immediately after that Paul goes on to talk about our eternal heavenly dwellings. So what do you treasure? Do you treasure things that are seen or things that are unseen?

In verse 21 Jesus shifts this is from the using the second person plural pronoun to using the singular second person pronoun. You just have to take my word for it because you can't tell it in English because you and you are the same in singular and plural.

[22:02] plural. But in Greek that's distinct and I think Jesus makes that shift to single each of us out. Talks about treasures in heaven but then now he turns to asking what do you treasure?

Now what do you all treasure? What do you as an individual treasure in your life? Because the point is not that we should accumulate many rewards in heaven although other passages of scripture do speak of that and there's a place for that.

In this passage the point is not that you should accumulate many treasures in heaven but that you should have one singular treasure namely God.

Jesus saying that we should work for the food that endures to eternal life. The treasures of heaven in this passage are figurative for the eternal life that Jesus speaks of elsewhere.

Later in Matthew 19 29 Jesus says everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for my name's sake will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life.

[23 : 21] Again in Matthew 16 25 to 26 for whoever would save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?

Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? This is not a choice between greater sanctification and lesser sanctification or greater obedience and lesser obedience.

It is the contrast that Jesus is presenting to us here is the stark ultimate choice between God and money. You cannot serve both God and money.

It's a question of ultimate spiritual allegiance. 1 Timothy 6 17 to 19 it is asked for the rich in this present age charge them not to be haughty nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches but on God who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.

They are to do good to be rich in good works to be generous and ready to share thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.

[24 : 38] So here is a sure way to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven. One way to do that is by giving away our money. riches are uncertain anyway.

It could disappear in a flash anyway so why hoard up uncertain riches when you can instead lean on and depend on the certainty of a God who provides for his children.

Being rich in this life does us no eternal good but being rich in good works does do us eternal good. Whenever we are generous toward others our earthly wealth decreases that's true but our heavenly wealth increases.

In a sense the only money we get to keep is the money that we give away. And that's an unfairly advantageous trade for us because we get to exchange expiring currency which is worldly money for eternal currency.

And we should make that trade as often as possible and use earthly wealth as much as we can for heavenly causes for the cause of Christ for the sake of his kingdom. That Jesus says is a worthwhile investment.

[26 : 06] Storing up treasure for ourselves in heaven it says in 1 Timothy 6 17 lays a good foundation salvation for the future so that we may take hold of that which is truly life.

It paves the way for eternal life. not because we are saved by our charitable deeds or by almsgiving.

No we are saved by the grace of God alone through faith in Jesus Christ alone but because storing up treasures in heaven is the way we guard and keep our hearts from idolatry.

Proverbs 4 23 says keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flows the springs of life. that's what we're doing when we store up treasures in heaven. Jesus will say later on in Matthew 19 24 that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Why? He explains in Matthew 13 22 that when the word of God the gospel of Jesus Christ is sown as a seed into people's hearts sometimes it's like a seed that grows among thorns and is choked up by the thorns so that it doesn't grow.

[27 : 23] And Jesus explains that the deceitfulness of riches choke the word and it proves unfruitful. If you are preoccupied with storing up treasures on earth you are surrounding yourself you're the gospel seed that you have heard with choking suffocating thorns thorns.

Is that what you really want? No we should hack away at those thorns. Store up treasures in heaven and give the word of God in our lives room to breathe room to grow and bear fruit.

So continuing on in that same passage that I read earlier 1 Timothy 6 9 to 11 it warns us sharply those who desire to be rich fall to the fall into temptation into a snare into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction for the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils.

It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. If any Christian loves money and desires to be rich this warning should be a splash of cold water in our faces to wake us up.

Those who desire to be rich it says fall into temptation into a snare into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. People do not fall into a pit because they want to.

[29 : 01] Animals don't get caught in a snare because they want to. They are caught unawares. The seductive power of money is subtle. It is gradual.

It is camouflaged. It can ensnare you and ruin you. So if you have ever had the thought in your mind you know I want to become a millionaire.

I want to become a billionaire so that I can do all these good things that I want to do in my mind. Be warned.

Your temptation isn't merely in the future when you are rich. No your temptation is now when you desire to be rich.

Take heed lest you fall for where your treasure is there your heart will be also. In his sermon on this passage D.

[30 : 09] Martin Lloyd-Jones relays an illustration that he once heard another preacher use in his sermon and now I'm relaying that to you third hand. Here's the it's the story of a farmer who one day went happily and you know and with great joy in his heart to report to his wife that his most healthy best cow has just given birth to twin calves.

Amazing. It could change your fortunes if you're a farmer to have a twin calves. One was a red calf and the other one was a white calf and he said you know I feel so blessed by God and I have this sudden feeling I feel like God is calling me.

I know this is what God wants me to do. I'm going to give one of these calves to the Lord. And then the wife asks the sensible question which one are you going to give to the Lord?

And he said oh no no you don't have to decide that now because we're going to treat them and love them the same way and they're going to grow up and as soon as we're ready I'll make the call and then we'll sell one and give all the proceeds to the Lord.

And then sometime later he came back to his wife from his farm despondent and he said to her I am sad to report this bad news but the Lord's calf is dead.

[31 : 40] And the wife is smart. Wait a minute but you never picked which one was the Lord's calf.

How do you know that the Lord's calf is dead? Oh yeah yeah but you know I had always decided in my own head that it was going to be the white one and it was the white one that died. So the Lord's calf died.

Why does it seem that it's always the Lord's calf that dies? Why does it seem that when our times are hard and budgets are squeezed that it's always the tithes and offerings that are first to be on the chopping block?

Choose your heart to treasure carefully. Make the God of heaven your supreme treasure. For where your treasure is there your heart will be also. And then in verses 22 to 23 Jesus pivots to make another related point.

He says the eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness how great is the darkness?

[33 : 07] Having spoken of the heart now he speaks of the eye. At first glance this seems kind of random. What's the connection here? But in the Bible the eye and the heart are often linked together.

The eye sees what the heart seeks. The eye looks at what the heart loves. the heart's affections and the eye's attentions go hand in hand.

For example when Solomon builds the temple and dedicates to the Lord the Lord says of this temple in 1 Kings 9 3 my eyes and my heart will be there for all time. Why will God's eyes be on that temple?

Because his heart is there. Psalm 19 7 to 8 makes the connection between the soul the heart and the eyes. There's a law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul.

The precepts of the Lord are right rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure enlightening the eyes. The word of the Lord enlightens the eyes and rejoices our hearts is referring

to the same thing.

[34 : 16] They go hand in hand. Similarly Psalm 119 36 to 37 says incline my heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain. Turn my eyes not turn my eyes from looking at worthless things and give me life in your ways.

The direction of the eyes always follows the orientation of the heart. The haughty eyes and the proud heart go together.

Proverbs 21 4 says. Psalm 131 1 says the same thing. The preacher of Ecclesiastes 11 9 counsels a young man to rejoice in the days of his youth and he tells him walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes but know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment.

In John 12 40 Jesus speaks of how God has blinded people's eyes and hardened their heart lest they see with their eyes and understand with their heart and turn and I would heal them.

All that to say Jesus is using the word eye in a figurative sense here. Blind eyes and hardened hearts go together. Which is why Paul prays for the Ephesian church in Ephesians 1 18 that God would enlighten the eyes of their hearts.

[35 : 38] hearts. This is why Jesus is saying the eye is the lamp of the body. The eye is the organ the sensory organ through which we receive life through which we receive sight and in that sense it is accurate that the eye is in a sense the window to our souls.

For this reason if your eye is healthy your whole body will be full of light but if your eye is bad your whole body will be full of darkness. The word healthy in this passage is actually the word that normally means single, sincere, without guile, straightforward, not having a hidden agenda.

The ESV rendered it healthy to fit with the metaphor better but in doing so I think they actually made the verse more difficult to understand. Do you remember the sixth beatitude of Matthew 5.8?

Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God. The heart is the organ of spiritual sight and only those who are pure in heart see God.

And what do we say is the meaning of being pure in heart? James 4.8 commands cleanse your hands you sinners and purify your hearts you double-minded.

[36 : 59] Being double-minded is the opposite of being impure in heart. That means to be pure in heart is to be single-minded. Instead of having two minds, two wills, what God wants and then what I want, what God wants and what these people want, what God wants and what the devil wants.

Instead of that, have single will. As David prays in Psalm 86, unite my heart to fear your name. Give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name.

The purity of heart is to will one thing, as Soren Kierkegaard said. I think that means, so then to have a single eye is to have a pure heart.

To will one thing, namely to please God. A person with a single eye does not try to serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other, or will he be devoted to the one and despise the other.

So brothers and sisters, I want to ask you, is your eye single this morning? Let's ask ourselves, where do our eyes tend to wander?

[38 : 15] Whether that's literally or figuratively. If our eyes constantly wander to beautiful women and handsome men on the streets and on the web, then it betrays the lusts of our hearts.

If our eyes are always straying toward the next big thing, the next promotion, the next job, the next rung on the ladder of success, it betrays the worldly selfish ambitions in our hearts.

If our eyes are fixated on the next trip, the next vacation, and if that's your great hope in life, it betrays a heart that is distracted by the pleasures and the rest that this world offers, and not the pleasures and the rest that God offers in Christ.

Brothers and sisters, where is your attention? The attention of the eye reflects the affections of the heart. So let us set our eyes on heaven.

Have a single eye for God and his kingdom. Set your minds. Seek the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.

[39 : 38] For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. Colossians 3, 1, 2, 3. Jesus continues in verse 23, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness. If the eye, which is the lamp of the body, is itself evil, then that person is full of darkness and evil.

Through and through. The single eye is contrasted with the bad eye or the evil eye. And that expression evil eye comes up again in Matthew 20, verse 15, where Jesus describes those who are stingy and begrudging of God the Father's generosity and grace as having an evil eye.

The ESV doesn't translate that literally either. So if you want to find the translation evil eye, you'll need to look at the King James version. So then a bad eye or an evil eye is a double eye of being of two mind.

It is stingy because on the one hand, it sees the plight of the needy. But on the other hand, it's calculating costs and personal loss.

[41 : 00] That might be why varying forms of the word single used here in the single eye is translated elsewhere in Romans 12, 8, 2 Corinthians 8, 2, 9, 11, James 1, 5 as generosity.

Because a generous person is a person who has a single eye, who is open-handed, guileless, sincere, gracious, and generous because they're not thinking of themselves but only thinking of the other person.

That's how Jesus is commanding us to seek the righteousness and the kingdom of God above all else.

That brings us to my final point. Serve your master in heaven. Jesus says in verse 24, no one can serve two masters for either he will hate the one and love the other or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other.

You cannot serve God and money. Notice how Jesus personifies money in this verse. He describes money as a master that someone can serve and please and love.

[42 : 14] Jesus is using this literary device to highlight the conflict and the necessity of making a choice. In one sense, people serve more than one masters all the time, right?

Some of you work two jobs, two part-time jobs. However, what Jesus has in view here is a relationship not of that kind of division of work and allegiances but of a relationship between a master and his slave.

No man should be a slave of another man. No man is fit to be a master because they are sinful. But our Lord and God is the one person to whom we owe that kind of allegiance. In his book, *Slave of Christ*, Murray Harris writes about slavery, what that image entails when it's used in scripture. And he said a slave is someone whose person and service belong wholly to another. We are possessed by God in the sense we are Christ's movable property.

[43 : 37] Slavery to Christ entails humble submission to the person of Christ, unquestioning obedience to the master's will, and an exclusive preoccupation with pleasing Christ.

Because you cannot be a slave of one person and have the interests of another master in mind. This is why we cannot pledge our allegiance to money and at the same time pledge allegiance to Christ.

Christ, we can only have one master. I'm not saying that Christians are never distracted or derailed sometimes in their service to the Lord. Of course we are.

But still, for every true Christian, their true and highest goal in life is to please their master. If your overriding goal in this life, your greatest goal in this life is to get rich, then you cannot be a Christian. If your greatest desire in life is fame and fortune, then you cannot desire God as your supreme treasure. And that's what it means to be a Christian. 19th century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche was wrong about many things.

[45 : 00] But he was also insightful and prescient about a few things. And in his book, *The Dawn of Day*, he predicted that the growing void created in Western culture by the displacement of God would be increasingly filled, he predicted, with money.

He wrote, What induces one man to use false weights, another to set his house on fire after having insured it for more than its value, while three-fourths of our upper classes indulge in legalized fraud?

What gives rise to all this? It is not real want, for their existence is by no means precarious, but they are urged on day and night by a terrible impatience at seeing their wealth pile up so slowly, and by an equally terrible longing and love for these heaps of gold.

What once was done for the love of God is now done for the love of money, for the love of that which at present affords us the highest feeling of power and a good conscience.

That's the place that it's taken in our culture. Jesus is not telling us that we're supposed to hate money, despise money in an emotional sense and not wanting anything to do with it.

[46 : 23] If that were the case, then we would all have to take a vow of poverty and become itinerant beggars, right? That's not what Jesus is saying. He's using the love-hate duality, which is a common Jewish, Aramaic idiom, to indicate a decisive choice of one over the other between two options.

Instead of expressing an order of preference and priority between two things in terms of differences in degree, which is what we do, I like that more than the other thing. I like that less than this other thing.

Ancient Jews would often express it in terms of categorical contrasts. So when an ancient Jew says, I love God and I hate money, he means I choose God over money.

And that's what Jesus is telling us to do. Jesus says in Matthew 12, 30, whoever is not with me is against me.

Whoever does not gather with me scatters. There are only two spiritual realms. You're either a member of the kingdom of heaven, you're a member of the kingdom of this world. There's no neutral ground in this spiritual war.

[47 : 34] To abstain from making a decision and to abstain from making a commitment is to make a choice against God because you are not choosing to submit to him and to worship him and to follow him as all of his creatures ought to.

Trying to straddle both earth and heaven, one foot on earth and one foot in heaven, is not only inadvisable, it is impossible. Because there is an impassable gap between heaven and earth. And you will fall through the crack if that's what you're trying to do in life. It's hard for us to live this way.

Because I think we don't really believe that the good news that God has given us in Jesus Christ is as good as it really is. This parable, a short parable is helpful in Matthew 13, 44.

Jesus says, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

[48 : 51] If you found that a plot of land had unimaginable riches buried underneath it, trillions upon trillions of dollars worth of treasure buried in that plot of land, no matter how expensive that real estate is, it doesn't compare to the value of that treasure.

And even if it's Cambridge real estate market, and that plot of land is like a million dollars, you will beg for money and take money and earn money.

You'll save everything you can to buy that land. You'll sell everything you have to buy that land because what you find in it more than compensates for everything you have given up.

On our own, we can never hope to have any treasure in heaven. We have sinned against God.

We've rebelled against him. We have made the lesser creatures and the lesser things of earth our supreme treasure.

That is what God calls sin. And it's because of sin that God sent his only son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for our sins, to redeem us from sin, to redeem us from death.

[50 : 12] And then he was raised from the dead so that all of those heavenly riches is promised to those who would simply repent and believe in Jesus Christ.

Do you really believe that all of those heavenly riches are offered to you? Christianity is not about skimping and making sacrifices and settling for lesser treasures because that's just the right thing to do.

No, Christianity is about finding the greatest treasure, the supreme treasure worth giving up everything in your life for so that when you have given it all up and you have pursued it with all of your heart, you find that you have lost nothing.

And isn't that what God has given us in Jesus Christ? In James 1, he says, Every good and perfect gift is from above, from the Father of lights. Everything good that you have ever experienced in life comes from God.

It has its origin in God. And in heaven, in eternal life, in fellowship with him, you have that in infinity. All of our treasures here, everything you value is fleeting and passing away.

[51 : 41] But in heaven, it says in 1 Peter 1, we have an inheritance that is imperishable and undefiled and unfading. We were singing about this.

Better is one day in your house. I would rather be a doorkeeper at the house of my God than to dwell in the luxurious courts of the wicked.

Psalms 27 verse 4 says, The God who gave his only son for us.

Jesus who willingly took that cross and died for our sins to redeem us and save us. Eternal life means union with him. Eternal life means fellowship with the triune God. Eternal life means we get to see God. Know him like we have never known him before. Are you willing to give up the trinkets of this world for that supreme treasure?
[53 : 03] I hope all of your answers are resounding yes.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, I testify this morning before this congregation that when I decided to leave the world to follow you, ever since I've done that, that every single day of my life, it has been worth it.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Life hasn't always been easy, but I've never regretted that decision, Lord.

Lord, won't you give us eyes of faith, a single eye, to take hold of that supreme treasure found in you alone, Father, that we might conform all of our lives to that singular desire.
In Jesus' name we pray, amen.