

Matthew 6:19-34 (NKJV)

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

***22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.**

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

24 "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

25 "Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

28 So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin;

29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, *will He* not much more *clothe* you, O you of little faith?

31 Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'

32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day *is* its own trouble.

Last week we talked about the division of our text.

It is all about **trusting God** in opposition to **wrong views of stuff**.

The **first** we see in vs19-24 We see the evil of **Lust for gaining** the world's stuff. Treasure gained for pleasure.

The **second** we see in vs25-34 We see the evil of **Worry for the lack** of the world's stuff.

We are left with two alternatives.

1 Lay up temporary treasures.

2 Lay up permanent treasures.

This morning I hope to at least look at verses 21-23.

What we find here are the problems of **the straying heart** and the problem of **the wrong perspective**.

²¹ **For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

^{*22} **"The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.**

We talked about this last week. We talked about how we determine if our heart is fixated on earthly things. To the degree that they are, those things **own** our hearts. You cannot have an idol that does not affect your heart. Idols **own** our hearts to the degree that we focus upon them.

And idols are always in direct competition with God for our hearts.

Jesus will go on to say that you cannot serve God and mammon or money. You can serve God and **possess** money. But you cannot serve God and **serve money**. God will not accept competition.

So we must guard our hearts against competing loves.

Do we need some help with this? Ask yourself, what do you really really really want? If core desire is not God, we are in serious danger of sin.

I have said before that this passage is not really four topics.

Treasure, Perspective, Masters and Trust. What we are talking about is one thing. It is about **a heart that trusts the Father**. I think the headings in our Bible actually distract us from the meaning in this case.

Jesus warns us about the alternatives always open to us. He reasons with us to choose wisely with the choices open to us.

We are open to choosing treasures **on earth** or treasures **in heaven**.

We are open to seeing things **faithfully** or seeing things **wrongly**.

We are open to serving **God** as Master or **things** as Master.

And we are open to **worrying about our provision** or **trusting God for our provision**.

We are doing one or the other all the time. We cannot opt out. Humans do this stuff. It is part of who they are. There is an **either-or ness** about us.

Children of God choose one way. Children of the devil choose another.

But all the parts in our text fit together. These texts are looking at the same kind of process from many different perspectives. They are looking at our relationship to God.

Now let's look at the text.

***22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.**

23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

I have always approached this text with a **vague sense** of what it was saying.

But I don't ever remember clarifying exactly what I think it means.

Have you ever done that, read over something a bunch of times but never really take the time to clarify what it means?

Now let's start by taking it literally.

***22 "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.**

If this is literal, it means that our **eyeball** somehow puts light into the cells of our body. So there would be **light in our cells** put there by the eye. And a blind person would not have light in their cells because they do not have good eyes.

I think we can opt out of that interpretation for a couple of reasons. First I am not aware of such a thing happening in the human body. I don't think the cells of a blind person have any less light in them than the cells of a seeing person. Second, interpreting it this way would not fit with the flow of the text. It would not fit the context.

So what is Jesus saying? It is important that we know because ultimately it is the difference between us being **godly** or **ungodly**.

Let's look at the words.

The lamp of the body is the eye.

The word for **lamp** is a thing that illuminates.

So the thing that **illuminates** the body is the eye.

Now what is **the body**? The word used means the **physical us**. It is a fitting translation to say "**the us that lives in our body**". I think in this case it would mean our personhood. While Eli has a body and when we look at Eli's body we think of it as Eli, Eli also exists as a person inside his body. I believe in context **that inner part** must be what is being talked about.

Why? Well the Bible does not say that the physical body has the capacity to be **made better spiritually**. We can increase its **physical** health. But we cannot make our arm or foot more spiritual. And whatever this eye is doing, it is making the body either **lighter** or **darker**. So the concept must apply to

something that can be morally **improved** or **made worse**. So I think it has to be the part of us that is **IN** the body.

So this is what we have so far.

The thing that illuminates who we are is the eye.

Now what is **the eye**?

Again, it cannot mean the physical eyeball. A lot of evil people have perfectly good eyesight. Well what does a physical eyeball do? The eyeball focuses on images in our surroundings and communicates those images to the brain.

Then the brain decides what to do with those images.

What Jesus is talking about cannot be as simple as simply **taking in the image**. Again, seeing the image does nothing moral. It has no moral force.

The power of good and evil is in **how we interpret the images**. It is in how we **perceive** them. It is in how we **process** them.

So the eye must be **the method** in which we **process** and **interpret** our surroundings.

So the thing that illuminates who we are is the method with which we process our surroundings. It is how we **SEE LIFE**.

We have a new kitten in the Zeigler's household. And for public record the owner of that kitten is Carla Zeigler, not Jon Zeigler.

The other day the older cat had jumped up in my lap and I was petting her. That was a perfectly common occurrence that we were both content with, although the cat got the better end of the bargain.

But on this day the older cat became **highly agitated**. Why? Because the new kitten was in the same room as she was.

Now it was the same house, with the same cat food. I was sitting in the same chair petting her the same way as I always did. The kitten was too far away to be any nuisance. And even if he wanted to be a nuisance, the older cat is 10 times her weight.

So what changed?

What changed is how the cat perceived her world. Her way of seeing became focused on nothing but that little black ball of fur. This made me think about our text. **That** is what the text is talking about. It is about how we choose to process our surroundings. It is about how we **think about** what is happening in our lives. It is not just **seeing** those things that are happening, but it is **how we process them**.

Have you ever been in a state of being that you thought would take forever to change, and then something else happens and you find your state of being totally changed? That is the power of **perspective**. The power of perspective has more power in our lives than **all of life's situations combined**.

And we are totally responsible for it. How we process life's events does not **happen to us**. The **temptation** to process it wrongly might happen to us. The **temptation** to think wrongly may come upon us unwelcomed. But what we finally decide is **our responsibility**. We are free to choose and we DO choose.

Here we see that the **good eye** will do something very different than the **bad eye**.

Before we go on we should note that it was a very common saying in Jesus's time for a person to have an evil eye. The evil eye was a greedy eye. That is not how I normally think of that expression. I normally think of it as a parent shooting a glance to a child. The glance warns the child of **impending doom** if the present behavior does not change. While there is really no evil in that look, I think of it as an "evil eye" due to its menace.

But in Jesus day an evil eye was a greedy eye. It was a person who looked at his surrounding, never satisfied with the amount of money he had. Always wanting more, always wanting what someone else has.

This fits very well with the context. The greedy eye was a **way of seeing**, a way of **perceiving and interpreting** his surroundings.

Now how can we make sense of light and darkness? Immediately I would guess all of would know that **light is good** and **dark is bad**. So we would know that we should be **full of light** and **not full of darkness**.

But what is it? What is this **light** we should be full of. If we define **what the light is**, I think what the darkness is will take care of itself.

So what is the light?

Well Jesus said **He** was the light. He said **He** was the light of the world. And what was He?

Among other things Christ is the **full presence of God's revelation**. Christ could say, if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father.

John 1:1-5 (NKJV)

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

Colossians 1:15-19 (NKJV)

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.

18 And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

19 For it pleased *the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell,*

We human beings are created in the image of God. We have some similar characteristics of God that the animals do not share. We are capable of complex reason. We sense beauty. We understand that some things are evil, even if we cannot define it accurately. Every tribe discovered has even had a concept of God. So humans have **the capacity** to understand that **there is a god**. They even have a desire to honor some kind of god. But what they **do not know** and are not **capable of discovering** is what that God is like.

Creation provides some clues. But the creation will not fully reveal God.

Creation will not provide a person a way to be saved.

No matter how much a man thinks about God **on his own**, he will never know God. He is destined to create a god **in his own image**. He cannot help it. We simply do not have the capacity, in and of our own capabilities, to discover who God is. We may discover things **about Him**. But it would never be enough to meet our need.

So we **have a need**. And it is a need that **only God can meet**. **God must reveal Himself**. God must expose Himself to mankind in a way that we can understand it. And Christ was that **full revelation of God**. Christ was God interpreted into human language and experience. He was the essential **LIGHT**. So if we want to know what Light is, we start there. Jesus was God's revelation of Himself to mankind.

Let's look at a little more.

How does this translate into our day to day lives, into our processing our day to day experiences?

Psalm 36:9 (NKJV)

9 For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light.

That is an interesting way of putting it. When we receive the revelation that You are, we can truly see our lives as they truly are. Your light allows us to see clearly. The revelation of you to us allow us to see all of life the way it really is.

Proverbs 6:23 (NKJV)

²³ For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light; Reproofs of instruction are the way of life,

The commandments are things that God has said. These were not ideas of men. They were concepts revealed by a Holy God. They are words. It is a **message** that **has content**. And what effect do those words of God have? They are **light**. They are the revelation of God, who God is and what God wants.

So light is **the presence of God's revelation**. It is the revelation of a thing along with God's perspective on that thing. To walk in the light is to walk under God's exposure.

Now we know that a person can be **full of light** or be **full of darkness**. What makes the difference?

Let's go back to our paraphrase again.

The thing that illuminates (the lamp) who we are (the body) is the method with which we process our surroundings. (the eye)

Then we continue with our paraphrase-

If therefore your method with which you process your surroundings (the eye) eye is good, your whole body will be full of the revelation of God (light).

²³ But if your method with which you process your surroundings (the eye) is bad, your whole self (body) will be full of a lack of revelation of God (darkness).

What we see is that everyone has a way of processing their surroundings. Everyone has a way of making sense of their lives. We all do it. With some people you may scratch your head and wonder how in the world they think **they** are doing it. But they are using an eye of sorts. They are processing their surroundings.

What is the difference between those full of light and those full of darkness? The Revelation of God.

Those with the light **incorporate the revelation of God**, that has been supernaturally revealed by God. They are learning not to trust their natural reactions. They become suspicious of their perceptions. They are constantly asking, but what does God say about this. Those in darkness **do not** incorporate that which has been supernaturally revealed by God. They trust their perceptions. They believe only what they see.

What does this look like?

Let's use the economic collapse illustration. We could choose thousands but this one will suffice.

Let's suppose that all the experts agree that our economy is going to collapse. When it does we will have no electricity, no fuel, etc.

Life as we know it will end.

Let's assume for the sake of the illustration that this is a fact.

This is our surrounding.

Now what is the difference between a good eye and a bad eye, between a person who will be filled with darkness and a person who will be filled with light.

Let's assume both people know the same information. They are looking at the same facts. They are both seeing the same logical implications. They are both processing the same environment.

What is the difference?

How does God's revelation make any difference to the person with a good seer, a good looker, a good eye?

The bad eye can only **take in** what this world **can tell it**. It has nothing else. It can see the same facts, but it cannot see God's perspective on those facts. It cannot see God's revelation about Himself in the midst of those facts. It is left with only the **world's resources** to deal with the **world's problems**.

So what is the bad eye likely to result in? Despair. Worry. Fear. Dread. Dismay. Panic. The responses will be varied, but few responses would be **constructive** and none would be **light**. They can't be. It is the **world's reaction** to the **world's circumstances**. And ultimately that will logically lead a person to despair.

Now what about the **good eye**? Does that good eye not see the consequences of the collapse or the inevitability of it? No. The good eye does not see less truth. It sees **more** truth. It sees the world's circumstances through the revelation of God. It asks the question, "Has God not spoken?" And then it looks for the relevant revelation. It asks "What has God promised to His people?" "What is God's attitude toward His people?" "What will the end result be for His people?"

Isaiah 41:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Fear not, for I am with you; Be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, Yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.'

Isaiah 54:10

"For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you."

Phil 4:19

“And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

Psalms 50:15,

“Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me.”

Rom 8:28

“And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.”

Mat 6:31-33

“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things (provision) will be added to you.”

Romans 8:16-17

“The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.”

Revelation 22:12

“Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done”

These are just a sample of what **good eyes** see that **bad eyes don't**. It is the **revelation of God's truth** in the world of our circumstances. And it is based on a profound trust in the character of God. That is the foundation of faith. The believer trusts the **personhood of God** to carry out **the Word of God**. It is a deep and abiding trust. That **trust in God** coupled with **the knowledge of the word of God** is the difference between darkness and light.

And this is not only true in the difference between a person **characterized by light- a Christian** and one **characterized by darkness- an unbeliever**. It is also true of areas of darkness in our lives as believers. A **good eye** chooses to incorporate revelation in **all** of its thoughts. It does not react to the world's circumstances **the way the world reacts** because it **sees truth** that **the world cannot see**. And it believes the God who spoke that truth.

This is the renewing of the mind that Romans tells us is **the process of sanctification**. Jesus simply says it in a different way here. And when we are able to paraphrase the passage in a way that makes sense to us, we can see how perfectly it fits into the context of what Jesus is speaking about. This is **how to live faithfully in the presence of the Father**.

Let's quickly finish out the last portion of the text.

If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

I think what Jesus is saying here is if that which you **depend upon to be revelation of truth** is **not God's** revelation, your darkness is utter darkness. You have no way of **escaping** it. You have no way in you to **see** the light. You are effectively **blind** but you **think you can see**. If you are depending upon something you think God said, but He really didn't say it, you are in big trouble. I think this may have been a warning to those who were not going to be convinced that Christ, the very revelation of God to man, was truly the Messiah. Their way of defining truth had errors. Their eye was bad. If you don't get **who Christ is** right, you won't **get anything** right. In that state, there is no light available. That eye is as bad as an eye can get.

I think too this applies to our fellow humans who interpret their world based only on **what they can see**, what can be **proven by science**. These people assume that there is no God. With an **assumption** like that, with an **eye** like that, those folks are destined to view the Christian teachings with disdain or hostility or even pity. They cannot help it. Their light is bad. Their eye is bad. It will affect their whole self. And apart from a miracle of God, their blindness is incurable. They are not capable of fixing it. We can tell them about the revelation of God. We can reveal that truth. We can shine that light. But it is like a dog trying to read. Something has to change about **the nature of the dog** before he could read. We are told to shine that light. But we are also told to depend upon a miracle for that person's blindness to be removed.

If a person's light, what they perceive as truth, is really lies, how bad is their state. Their whole life will be based upon falsehood.

As we close, may we not allow our thoughts to be without light. May God's word be the final verdict on every thought we think. May our light be true light. And may it guide us in every step. Here is the final paraphrase.

The thing that illuminates who we are is the method with which we process our surroundings.

If therefore the method with which we process our surroundings is good, our whole self will be full of the revelation of God.

But if our method with which we process our surroundings is bad, our whole self will be full of that absence of God's revelation. And if we believe the LACK of revelation as if it IS revelation, how great is that deficit of truth.