

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.

Remember last week we talked about the evil eye? And we talked about the evil eye being an expression of greed, of wanting more money? We generalized the concepts about darkness to include **any kind of perspective**

replacing **God's perspective**, God's **light** in our lives. And I believe what I said was true. **Darkness** is the **lack** of God's perspective in our thinking. **Light** is the **presence** of God's perspective in our thinking.

Remember our 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.

Now I think it is very likely that the listeners hearing Jesus would not have perceived our text this morning as big of a **jump in topic** as we do. I think this speech would have flowed for them.

Jesus was talking about **intentionally living in such a way** that we prioritize **eternal reward** over **temporary reward**. And the whole passage we are dealing with seems to be about how **a Christian should think** about **all** of the world's **resources**, all of its **stuff**, some of which is **vital** for our own physical **survival**, some of which we are to go to work to **earn** every day.

So Jesus flows from a discussion about how **we process our surroundings**, how we **include** light, or the view of life from **God's perspective**, to stuff. Our text this morning is just an extension of what Christ has already said. It flows. It is not so much a **change in topic** as it is and **additional truth** about the topic.

Everyone has a **good eye** or an **evil eye**. In this case the evil expresses itself in a continual desire to have more stuff. And Jesus said just how bad it is when the thing we depend upon for truth is really a lie. That is deep deception.

Now he tells us the **reality of our selves**. It is impossible to have **both** world views. It is impossible to straddle a fence here. Just as we cannot fixate on treasure **here** and treasure in **heaven**, just as we cannot hold **God's perspective** and the **world's perspective** on our lives at the same time, in that same way we cannot serve **two** masters. This all is describing the same truth about life from different perspectives.

***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.**

Right now I can ask you, how much do you depend upon money in a way that is wrong. And it is likely we can very honestly say that it is not much of a problem for us. Maybe you are different. Maybe you are aware of it being a struggle with you. But this is the kind of thing that can really be an ongoing issue. It can be an issue but we don't **know** it is an issue. We just don't see it. Why. Because we have **adequate** money.

But that is easy to fix.

Imagine tomorrow the government took all your income and all your possessions.

Now what is revealed? How much do you **really trust God** and how much do you **really trust money**? How much do you trust God's **love** and **care** and **provision** for you? And how much do you trust your own provision for yourself?

How much would your world **collapse**? Or how much would it go on with you trusting God **just like you always did**?

What Jesus takes the time in these 15 verses to talk about is the **heart dependency**. He is talking about what is **really** Lord of our lives. He is talking about what we **really** trust. In our heart of hearts, what do we really trust? What stays the same when our bank account is full and when it is absolutely empty? What does not change?

Have you noticed, now that we see it is one continuous topic, how much ink Jesus has devoted to **our relationship to what we possess** and what **we want**? 15 verses is more than the beatitudes. It is the same as the Lord's prayer. Are we getting this? Jesus is teaching us how to regard possessions and wealth and desire for stuff in this life. And He is giving it equal importance to teaching us how to pray. Why would that be?

I think it is because **this is** so hard **FOR** us. And it is so dangerous **TO** us. And it is so revealing **OF** us. The pursuit of money, sex and power are said to be the three greatest things that the world lives for. And at least one of them is probably our greatest temptation as a Christian. Jesus here is talking about the **money** sense of the equation.

***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.**

What is a master? This is clearly talking about a master of a slave. This is different than being employed. Sometimes we can make some applications of these kinds of verses to our **employment**, but not here. A person can work for **many** employers and be **loyal** to all of them. He can serve all of them. But that is not true for a slave to a master.

Why? Because slavery has to do with **ownership**. It has to do with being dedicated to the welfare of the Master's household. It has to do with seeing **one's identity** to being of **service to the Master**. It is about who you are and whose you are.

In scripture it would be similar to a **bride** having **two husbands** at the same time. It is unheard of. It would not work, at least not by the Biblical model of marriage. She would find it impossible to submit to two men who are living different lives and needing different things in their mate.

It is interesting that this is not talking about the dilemma from the slave **owner's** perspective. It is talking about the problem from the **slave's** perspective. It is an **impossible position** to maintain. He simply cannot wholeheartedly serve two people who each see themselves as having **absolute authority** over the person. There would be a continual fight in the slave until one master was regarded as the one to serve and the other was seen as the one to resist.

This is not the only place we read about slavery of the will in scripture.

Romans 6:16-22 (NKJV) is very insightful

Ro 6:16 **Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?** ¹⁷

Paul lays out the condition of human beings. We are **all** in a condition of **slavery**, a **position of slavery**. We do not have the option of whether we want to be a slave or free. We only have an option of **whose slave we are** and to what we are **enslaved to** and **freed from**.

Here Paul is letting us know that the choices about **what we do** reveal what master we are serving. If we are continually submitting ourselves to fleshly desires and impulses, we are showing who our **master** is and what our **destination** is.

If we are continually obeying what **Christ** says and what **scripture** says, it reveals who our master is and what our destination is.

This is not talking about a process where we are determining which master we have. It is talking about the nature of behavior, the nature of spirituality. We reveal our master by our choices, by our behavior.

But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. ¹⁸ **And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.** ¹⁹

Basically this is saying, Thank God that something happened to you that caused you to have a **real heart change**. You were placed under a different master than you were under previously. And that change was displayed by

obedience. Where previously you **had to** sin, you had no power **not to**. It did not matter if you did the evil thing you felt like doing or not, the whole heart attitude toward God was one of **not wanting** to be told what to do. It was one of resistance to God at the deepest level.

But a believer was delivered to a **different** heart attitude. Positionally we were freed from sin and enslaved to Christ. By being enslaved to Christ we became slaves to righteousness. We may sometimes act hypocritically. We may sometimes choose to do evil things. But it is no longer because **we must**. It no longer represents our **spiritual identity**. The devil is no longer our master. Sin is no longer our default setting. Christ is now our master. And obedience is our spiritual default setting.

I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness.

Paul here lets us know that there is still **a problem** for the Christian. We live in flesh. And this is not so much talking about a physical body but a person who has **sinful muscle memory**. We have habits of thinking that are wrong. We have reactions in relationships that are wrong. We have physical habits that are wrong. We are carrying a lot of baggage. And we now have to **fight**. And how is that fight carried out? We must present our members as slaves of righteousness. This is a process of coming continually before our **Master** and surrendering all our fleshly impulses and reactions and instincts **to His desire**. He is, after all, our owner. The one we live to please. So everything becomes a question of **“What does the Master want?”**

This is a willful intentional practice that does not come easily or naturally. But we are driven to it because of our **change of heart**. The process assumes that we do not, by natural proclivity, gravitate toward what the Master wants. We must approach the Master by reading His Word and coming to him in conversation. His will must be revealed to us. Then we bow and present ourselves as servants to God’s will.

Our goal is to act like our **current** Master’s slave and no longer behave like our **prior** master’s slave. We have said over and over that living the Christian life is not something we drum up. It is more a matter of acting congruently. We display on **the outside** what we believe is true on **the inside**, sometimes whether we feel it or not. We live from faith to faith.

²⁰ For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. ²¹ What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. ²² But now

having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.

Our old lives may have provided us things that gave us pleasure, but they did not give us things that **bore good and lasting fruit**. They gave us stuff that was on **the way to death** and **led** to death. We have nothing good to show for it, no matter what the world might say. Paul says they are not even worthy to speak about. They are the things we now despise.

But the new life.... Ah... that is all different. We can look back on every faithful obedience with pleasure. And **those** memories, I am convinced, **will remain with us**. We will have those for eternity. And that is where they lead. To a wonderful eternity.

So Paul has schooled us on the nature of slavery. On the nature of mastery. On the nature of submission of self to God.

Now it is interesting in our text that the choice here is between **God** (the one true real God) and **mammon**. This word seems to be a very carefully chosen word that the crowd Christ was talking to would have understood it as being **money and that which money could buy**.

Now why is it not between God and the devil?

Well, it **is**, really. But remember what we learned in Isaiah? True worship is the worship of the one true God. Idolatry is the worship of anything else. The devil rarely tempts us to worship him. A very brief read of his biography would convince us that there is nothing in it for us to serve him. But the **world** now..... There are lots of appealing things there. Walmart and Pro Bass Shops are pretty appealing. The devil does not care if we **call him** our master, as long as we do not **call Christ** our master. He is content to get us deceptively. He does not require loyalty. Just as long as he is the master. He does not care if we are loyal to the pursuit of stuff and the trust of stuff. That is loyalty enough. He does not care if we pray to him wholeheartedly "thy will be done". It isn't like he has any honor. It isn't like he has any honesty. Nope. If we are duped into his service, that is all well and good with him.

***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.**

Now how do we explain what we see? Are there not many people who call themselves Christians, who give to Christian charities, who mouth wonderful words about Christ, but who serve the master of mammon?

How is it true that they are hating Christ and despising Christ?

The expositors Bible Commentary says this:

Attempts at divided loyalty betray, not partial commitment to discipleship, but deep-seated commitment to idolatry.

Expositor's Bible Commentary, The - The Expositor's Bible Commentary - Volume 8: Matthew, Mark, Luke.

James tells us that the doubleminded man is unstable in all he does.

I have watched lots of girls being pursued by multiple suitors. And some were able to make all of the suitors feel that she was enamored with each of them. But the one thing that was sure to end that untenable position was when one of them required an **exclusive** commitment. Then the true colors would come out. That which appeared to be **favor** turns into hatred and despising if the issue was pushed. Or it would turn into **loyalty and love**. And all others would be rejected.

Sometimes the only way to know the true colors is for a choice between loves to be demanded. Those who truly love this world's stuff will chose this world's stuff if the choice is between Jesus and stuff. Remember that the rich young ruler went away sadly. Those who love Jesus will choose Jesus and lose their stuff gladly for His sake. Sometimes we live in flux not really knowing which is which for a while, until the choice is demanded.

But from where God sits, He already knows what is true. Just because the hatred is not yet openly displayed, it sits waiting to be displayed. Even if it is dormant, it is still real. Cancer in remission is still no less cancer.

So what should we shoot for? How can we live in such a way that our Master is clearly God and not stuff.

1 Timothy 6:6-10 (NKJV)

¹Ti 6:6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of* evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Are you content? If God never gave you anything more than the food, clothing and shelter that you need to survive, would you be content? If He stripped everything else away and you had to depend upon Him every day for His provision, would you be satisfied?

It is hard for us to answer that question isn't it. We don't know. But there are clues in our lives. How do we react when stuff does not go the way we want it to in our lives? Do we quickly gravitate to a position of contentment and trust? Or do we cling to how we deserve something much better? We **NEED**

something much better. Do we foster the idea that this God cannot be fully trusted because **if He loved me** He would surely **treat me differently**?

A pursuit of money and stuff always lurks in the background **just waiting** to fill the gap created by our mistrust of God. Our enemy is always offering this as a **“better”** alternative. This fruit of self dependence is taunted as giving us that which God cannot be trusted to provide, just like the original fruit.

And where does it go? It goes where all of the devil’s plans go. **Destruction.** When we go down that path of financial **independence from God**, we find a snare closing in tighter and tighter on our souls. Even our **enjoyment** of the **stuff** we have **is destroyed** because we will never have enough to be satisfied. We will destroy relationships with those people we need and who need us on this alter. While it promises happiness, all it brings is sorrow after sorrow. If Christians are the happy people of a happy God. The devil’s desire is have miserable children of a miserable false God. And the **love of money**, the **dependence upon money to give us what only God can give us**, is at the core of all kinds of evil actions.

We tend to pursue the accumulation of money with the expectation that **it will serve us well**. But when it draws us away from our dependence upon God, what we find is that it is **we are serving it**. Money is a fine servant but a terrible master.

So how are we doing this morning? Are we **content** in God? Can we trustfully accept those conditions He has placed us in this morning? Can we trust Him with the **provisions of stuff we need** and trust that what **we HAVE** is what **we NEED**? Or are we continually **dissatisfied** with what He is providing? Are we content to trust our Master Jesus? Or do we keep hoping for something better?

All masters but Jesus are very dangerous and disappointing. May we approach this week with a **YES LORD** attitude and grow in the appreciation of **WHO HE IS** and what HE **has done** and **will do** for us.