

Light and Darkness in the Heart

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Bible Text: Matthew 6:21-23

Preached on: Sunday, February 9, 2014

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Let us pray.

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy Lord, I pray now in this hour for thy presence to be felt, thy presence to be known, that, Lord, you would show us thy Spirit which is couched in the letter of thy word. I ask, O Lord, this day that thou would take us deeper, that, Lord, in this hour thy Spirit would give us liberty in thy word, that thou would be with me, Lord, and thy knowest that this hour the thoughts of my mind and the easiness of my heart to pray and ask for thy presence, for thy power, for thy guidance through thy word, that, Lord, it would glorify thee that your name would be high and lifted up and, Lord, that thy truth would be understood and made clear this day to the glory of thee. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.

There are some passages in the word of God that are harder for me than other passages. I don't say that because I don't understand the passage, I say that because I do understand the passage. When the Lord leads you to them and brings them back over and over in your life, I know that he always has something to say in them. One of the places, if not the whole word of God, is very dear to me but I love to see those red words in the Bible. I love to see where the Lord spoke because I know that the child of God, every single child of God, must hear from him, must hear his words to their soul.

From time-to-time the Lord has led me to the Sermon on the Mount to speak in various areas and in that sermon, there are some very, very deep and troublesome passages and it's not troublesome because, as I said, we don't understand what they mean, it's troublesome because he delivered this message, preaching to his people and the whole message, of course, the tenor of it is the union that we have in Christ. In that union that we have in Christ and seeing how Christ works in his people and seeing the fruit of that union which the Spirit brings forth from his children, it causes me to mourn when those things aren't present in my life or haven't been present for a while. That's what makes the words a little more difficult. We have such a passage like that this morning.

It all started for me probably a month or so ago. I was reading a sermon by Poppum and the sermon wasn't on this passage but in passing he said those words. He said, "For you know that the Lord said for where your treasure is there will your heart be also." It seems like just a trite little statement but I want to go there this morning, I want to read the

passage. We have three verses for our passage this morning, our main focal verses and they begin right there in Matthew 6 and it does begin with that one, Matthew 6:21,

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

As I said, we keep this mind this morning, he preached these words to his children. It's so easy for us as we get caught up in this world and caught up in lines of demarcation that we put in our lives. We mark things and we put them in this box or that's for these people, this is for these people and God is saying this to them on the outside and the ones over here are nice and safe and secure but the word of God, when applied by the blessed Spirit, all of the pages testify of Christ. All of them, as Paul said to Timothy, they're either for reproof, for doctrine, for instruction or for correction. I believe as we walk in this life and we get polluted by this life and the things of this world, when we come to a passage like this, I tell you, just the first part, just 21, when I read that I've had it echoed in my mind now, like I said, for about a month. I've stayed away from it because I know in the depths of my soul there is some pretty deep stuff here, “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”

There have been times in my life that I've lived and I've been brought to the end of a day and I'll be sitting at my desk or sitting in my chair and have my Bible open or be reading or praying and sometimes I'm examined that way. I don't know if you are. I hope we have kinship in this but sometimes I'm examined by my Lord to ask me how I experienced him in that day. I might have had a good day; I may have gone somewhere; I may have partaken of whatever activity it was with my children or family here or whatever it is. Sometimes the Lord just drops that question down to my soul: where was I in that? Where did you experience me in that? Of course, as that troubles my soul, I try to easily explain it away to my Lord and say, “Well, you know, it was a blessed time I had,” or “look at the fun that was there,” and “look at how we enjoyed that time.” Then the Lord reminds me once again that all of those graces of the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit being: joy and peace and love and faith and all those things are counterfeited in this life.

That's a deep saying to me. It's a deep thought to me that joy, even having joy that you can joy in things that Christ is not in. As I said, it's a deeper understanding. It's not coming through the letter of the word and just looking at the treasure and looking up at verses 19 and 20 and putting it into categories because I don't believe that was the tenor of the Lord's message. In 19 and 20, he tells us what not to treasure up or treasure for yourselves. I want you to understand the Greek for “lay up” is “treasure.” That's the Greek word. Early in my life as I was in the Arminian churches, they would always tell me what I had to do. That's what this meant: you lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven and you do that by your good works and you do that by being nice and you do that by being kind and you do that... That's not what the Lord said. He's talking about the

heart and that's the whole tenor of verse 21 is where your treasures, there will your heart be also.

And the depth of that verse is that the Lord is the only one who can look on the heart. You and I like to judge the hearts of those around us that we love. I find myself doing that a lot. We think we can look at fruit or not having fruit and we can make a judgment of the heart of that person, whatever they're doing, but it's the Lord that looks on the heart. In this verse, if you understand that, if the Lord speaks to your soul now in this hour and says that it's I that looks on the heart, then you being the child of God, understands and knows that there is nowhere we can run, nowhere we can go that the Lord is not looking upon our heart.

So, that takes this verse to a much deeper understanding. Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Of course, that causes us – I hope it does – to ask ourselves what is our treasure? I say to you today that we could easily get up here and talk about riches. We can talk about health. We can talk about knowledge. We can talk about family. We can talk about all the things that we put in those nice little tiny boxes of our lives and say, “This is how I compartmentalize everything. This is a treasure. This isn't.”

But there's a troublesome passage that Paul said at the end of Romans 14. He said, “Whatsoever not of faith is sin.” I don't know how you define that. I don't know what that means to you. I don't know if you think you have a switch that you just turn on and you can have faith and go here and go there and do this and do that and that's what's acceptable to God. I look at that and I say, “Well, how do I define where my heart is? Where my soul is? What is it that my soul treasures?” And that's what the Lord said to me, “What did I give my apostle?” It's whatsoever is not of faith is sin and that tells me something, that the same apostle said, “I live by the faith of the Son of God,” and if that faith is not given in any situation that we're in that we treasure and, dear ones, we treasure them. You don't go anywhere you don't want to go. You don't. We don't. We don't do things we don't want to do. Keep that in mind.

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” It's not just putting things and saying, “Okay, this is a worldly thing and this isn't and this is faith and this is peace and love.” That's what he means in 20 when he says, “Treasure for yourselves the things in heaven.” Listen, that's where he lies, that's where he sits, that's where he's reigning. Treasure for yourselves what's in heaven because I'm going to take you to a place here in just a minute in Proverbs, where Solomon, we've been studying Proverbs in school and we've seen that everything Solomon ever wrote about, the power of the Holy Ghost, was about life in Christ, the excellency of Christ over everything else. The same in Ecclesiastes: everything compared to Christ is vanity. Same in Song of Solomon: Christ in the church. The loneliness, what is life like without Christ. Proverbs is no different.

We come to a passage like this and like I said, it just keeps going deeper and deeper into my soul and deeper and deeper and deeper and it brings trouble. It brings trouble when I'm left there to define what my treasure is, that I could easily start listing treasures. Yeah, it's a little more than just physical and spiritual because even those things that we

deem to be spiritual can become false treasures. Believe me, we deem a lot of things to be spiritual and I'm not casting any stones here. I'm looking right here. I think a lot. I don't know if that's a curse or a blessing but I do, I think a lot. Everything that I do, things that I say, the Lord has given me a heart to look and examine those things. There are a lot of times I don't like what I see and I know that if the Lord's faith is not present, if the Lord's presence is not present, I'm not going to like what I see because I'm left to explore my own depravity. I'm left to explore my own way that I look and I view things. We just walk through this life. I see it every day. I see it in my children, I see it in those that I love, that each day we have like a proper schedule in it. Mondays bring this, Tuesdays bring this, Wednesdays bring this, Thursdays bring this, Fridays bring this and I often wonder how much has the Lord met us in that day.

I can't answer that for anybody in here. All of us have different revelations of Christ when he's pleased to do it in the places he's pleased to meet us. As I said, I don't have an answer for you in here. I don't have a feel-good story for you to say this is how you can treasure Christ more. I hope you're like me and you understand that you're thrown right at the feet of Christ. You are thrown upon his mercy. You're thrown upon the one who, and we're going to see that today, we're going to see who authors this in us. Who can make Christ a treasure to us. It's not us.

We're left here to look just as I said, at this verse because the other two most assuredly go with 21 but where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. I want you to hold your finger there and I want you to turn back with me, I mentioned it earlier, but look at Proverbs 23 with me for a minute. This might astound you. A lot of religious people, they look at the things of this world and they look at the riches of this world and they tell you that they're all from Satan. You know, Satan put all those things out there. Listen to what Solomon says here, the Holy Spirit says, in Proverbs 23. We're going to begin in verse 4,

“Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom.” There is a lot to be said in that with earthly mindedness and that's kind of the tenor of our message goes today is how much of our mind is caught up in this earth, how much of our daily walk and all the things that we do is caught up in this earth, “in the life” that we live. But he exhorts us here, “Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own understanding.”

Verse 5 is the one that I want to get to, “Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings,” and how true that is. That's the same thing the Lord just said about the moth and the rust and the things of this earth and how they easily get corrupted. But look at the end of this verse, “They make themselves wings and they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.” I want you to understand that: they don't fly toward hell because all of those things that we do receive, we receive from our Lord. Understand that, that in his providence, that in his great mercy. I'm not up here preaching against the gifts of God and what he gives his people whether they're monetary or not. That's what treasure is: it's accumulated wealth by definition. Wealth of what?

Notice how Solomon says they take flight because they're temporal, they're carnal, they're of this earth and that's what they're for, that's the purpose of them. It would be easy for us

just to sit there and say, “Well, this is Satan's tool. He's bringing this into our life again,” and “he did it and if we just get rid of Satan and we don't listen to him, we're not going to be caught up in these things.” That just, once again, I bring this out, Lord help me, I pray that the Holy Spirit brings this out to show us that what comes from the Lord's hand is pure. When we speak of the Lord and the essence of the Lord, he's pure and he's holy. What you and I do with those things that he gives is our sin, is our corruption, is our pollution. I'm certainly not standing up here today telling you to go lock yourselves up and give every penny away that you get because that's the secret to life in Christ as you go penniless or you give all the treasures that you have away. In fact, I read that quote this morning. I read a quote from someone who said that very thing and that quote said that: every dollar that I've ever gotten, I try to give it away as quickly as I can and I do that because I know the evil that lies in that dollar and I keep myself from that evil. Do you know who said that? John Wesley.

That tells me something. We can easily get caught up in life that way and say, “Well, we're going to save ourselves from it and we're going to be some monk or something. We're just going to climb up somewhere,” but you're never going to shut yourself out of that room. You're never going to shut yourself out of that place wherever you go to be by yourself. Your corrupt nature is there with you. Sin is there with you. So what are we saying today? I don't know.

“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” I leave that to the Holy Spirit to examine our hearts today and not to compartmentalize because as I said, you know, I look across everybody in here and I see a lot of love. A lot of love. A lot of love for family. A lot of love for one another. Can that be a treasure? Can that be something you experience without Christ? Yeah. It can. That's the danger. That's the subtlety. That's the beacon, the burden the Lord has given me this morning and if there's nothing else you understand and nothing else that I pray the Lord makes clear this morning, it's that very thing. It's not only without him we can do nothing but without him and everything that's done, it's sin. Without his faith, it's sin. Without the Lord's faith and the Lord's love and the Lord's peace and all these things that he gives, they become a false treasure, they become something that is corrupted, that will be taken away.

Oh my gosh, how much do we put stock or work so hard to cultivate those things. I find that sometimes in this life because I have four children, it becomes quite a stumbling block to me sometimes trying to make them happy. Trying so hard to fill their days with things that make them happy. I even try to justify it by saying, “Well, I did something like that when I was young, too.” Or, “I did that. I was allowed to do that. I did this and that.” But, I didn't have Christ when I was young. I have to be careful. The Lord stops me sometimes and says, “You know, is it my faith leading you here?” Because if it isn't, really my soul doesn't want any part of it. If it's a worldly thing. I don't want the world to raise my children. The world has had enough of a hand in my life that's corrupted me. If Christ is the treasure, that's where I desire my heart to be. My life in this life and, of course, the life to come. The life to come, I don't have to worry about my old man. I don't have to worry about sin. I don't have to worry about darkness is what we're getting to here. There is a lot of rest there.

But now we come to verse 22. In verse 22, the first light that we see is the Greek word for “lamp” so it's a little different than the light that we got at the end of the verse. The light at the end of the verse is actually the word “light.” So, “The lamp of the body is the eye.” You know how true that is. How true that is. We take everything in by our eyes. Whatever we see, that then communicates to us a desire. The eye is our understanding. It's our judgment. It's a consciousness in our soul. That's what it is. It's how we understand things. Sometimes our eyes deceive us. Yes, but the lamp of the body is the eye. I hope we can all understand that. That's how we see. That's how we comprehend. That's how we know and take the knowledge that we see and it's in our minds and then we, if we're led of the Spirit, we pray about those things. If we're not, we then act on those things.

“The lamp of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single.” Now, I'll tell you something: you're never going to give yourself a single eye. Right now at this very moment, there are those in here that are looking out the window, that are thinking about what they're going to eat, that are thinking about the day that they have ahead of them, the excitement in the day. Whatever it is: something they've seen, something they've read. Maybe it's work, whatever it is. How do we get a single eye? The writer of Hebrews said, “But we see Jesus.” How do we get there? Well, one thing, I hope you know by now, the Lord has shown me that it has nothing to do with the creature. The creature will never get there.

“If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” I want to take you to two places. Keep your finger there and we're going to go to two places: the first one, probably you've already thought of and that's John 1. John 1 is going to define for us what that light is, the singleness of the light that the child of God, remember this is the Lord preaching a sermon to his people speaking about union, speaking about what light is and in John 1 we're just going to look at the top and go through verse 5, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” There is the singleness and the light. In Christ is the life of men. “In him was life; and the life was the light of men.” That's where that light is. The light is Christ himself.

Now look at this in verse 5 because this is the tenor of the whole message today. It comes from this right here, “And the light shineth in darkness.” The light shines in darkness. Now the question is: does it mix? That's where that question is: where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. That's where that becomes a whole other understanding and a whole other depth of meaning because right here “the light shines in darkness and the darkness comprehends it not.” There is no mixture in Christ. None. I pray the Holy Spirit speaks those words to you right now that in the light of Christ there is no mixture of darkness so we can't take the light of Christ, walk out into this world or walk out into our vocation or walk out into the life, whatever it is, we can't take this light, walk into darkness and expect that darkness to take over that light.

Light does not mix with darkness. Not the light of Christ. I was raised the opposite. I was raised to believe that's exactly what you're supposed to do. You take your light that is Christ in you and you go door-to-door and you talk to as many people as you can and you persuade them of Christ and that light you're putting in them and it's going to push their darkness out by your testimony.

Listen again, "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." There is no way that the darkness of this world and the darkness in any situation, the darkness in any treasure, can comprehend the light of Christ. Remember how we defined at the beginning: whatsoever not of faith is sin. It's darkness. If it is of Christ, it must lead to Christ, it must be Christ infused and it must be of his faith. There is no faith meter that we can walk around and see where Christ's faith is. It's a gift of God to the soul of the child of God at his appointed time.

"And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not." So, in our text today, the singleness of the eye, the singleness that's being talked about by the Lord himself, is himself. I am the light. When your eye is single, that is the life and the faith of the Son of God, it points and leads to Christ. Christ in everything. As I was musing a few minutes ago of the things sometimes I don't know whether Christ was in them or not, you know what? He wasn't if I can't see it. Faith reveals Christ. It doesn't reveal feelings. It doesn't reveal emotions. Faith reveals Christ. As I said, this is deep. It's not a surface thought here. "And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."

Now I want you to turn over to 2 Corinthians 4 with me. Look at verse 6, "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness." You and I know that we've been dead in trespasses and sins and the Lord's light, the Lord's grace, the Lord's presence is the only thing that's ever going to bring light into your soul. For us, I hope, a child of God can understand this. That's right. That's the only way light is ever going to be there. Well, dear ones, it's the same thing in every situation we walk through in this life. That light must be from him. That light must be illumined by him.

"For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." There is the purpose of the light of Christ, to reveal the face of Christ. When I think of the face of Christ, I think of a benevolent, loving, peaceful face that he shines upon his children. I think of my Savior as one who takes me in his arms like a lamb and he holds me tight. I think of my Savior as one who keeps me on a path that is glorifying to him because I'm not going to choose that path in and of myself. I'm going to be that wandering sheep. I'm going to go toward that darkness.

But "God commanded the light to shine out of darkness and it shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." Here's the key: "But we have this treasure," this gospel, this light of Christ, what we have it in is "an earthen vessels." That is a corrupted vessel. We all know that. We know that that light is in us but there is darkness in us too and it throws me, once again, "Lord, what can I do? I

can't. Lord, I need you. I need that light to command that darkness to get away, to be put down, to be mortified, to be killed, to be slain." Whichever way you want to look at it.

"But we have this treasure in earthen vessels," here's why creatures that want to exalt themselves, I hope not. It's the thorn in the flesh. It's what the Lord has given us to say, "that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." The light that's talked about in verse 22 and the singleness of eye is all of him and that's the whole tenor of this passage. Where is your heart? Where is your treasure? And as treasure is defined, the Lord takes his children a little bit deeper and says, "Really, if you're going to put it all in a little box, let's go on." The singleness of your eye and what you take in and all these things, look at all these beautiful things. Look at everything. Look at the beautiful trees. Look at nature that we love to be in. Look at the fresh air that we love to be in. Guess what, if Christ is not shining at that time, that's corrupted. It's all going to be going back to dust.

To me, it makes my soul desire for Christ to be seen and to be heard and to be revealed more than I ever experience him now because that's the thing, sometimes I could get to the end of the day and when the Lord says that to me, "Where was I in your day?" I have to sit there and think about it. "Well, I had a pretty good day but when did I commune with my Lord in it? When did he reveal himself in whatever it was that I was doing?" I don't know about you but one of those sides is empty to me. Just going through the motions in this life is empty to me. It's sorrow to me but when Christ is in it, when Christ is there, it's fulfilling. Fulfillment of soul. Light. Singleness of eye.

Hold your finger there in 2 Corinthians 4 because we're going to come back there in a minute. Now we move to verse 23, the last verse, of Matthew 6 because now we've got the other side or is it another side? "But if thine eye be evil," if it be carnal and what's been defined for us, if it's not of faith, "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Why? Because the two do not mix. Man has tried forever to mix grace and his labor and his works. Man has tried to make sheep into goats, goats into sheep. They can't. Man has tried to take the darkness of the world and fit it into the light of Christ and say they co-mingle together but they don't.

"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." If Christ isn't in whatever it is that we've defined as treasure, whatever it is that we do, if the faith of Christ is not there, if Christ himself is not present, it's evil and it's darkness.

Then that last phrase. If that last phrase doesn't send a chill down your spine, I don't know what does. "If therefore the light that is in thee," okay, good. Lord, you're saying I have light in me, "be darkness. If that light in you be darkness, how great is that darkness!" How abominable is that darkness that it's been dressed up to be Christ. How can you dispute this. The devil can be an angel of light. There are false everything in this life. I mean, don't you love that term, you'll be driving around and you see something or you're on some tour or something and the guy goes, "That's a man-made lake." Okay. Well, did man make the water too? Did man make the ground it's in? That's the whole purpose of man. This is what I've done. I've made a lake. I'm going to clone a person. I'm going to do

this. I'm going to do that and all this I'm going to call light. What about you and I today? What is it that we dress up in our own faith and make it to be righteous? How great is that darkness.

Luke said it this way in Luke 11:35, "Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness." That's the way that this passage reads. Take heed. Warning. I know that's why the Lord has led me here today. To warn the precious sheep. Take heed that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

Every time we have the Lord's Supper, the faithfulness of the Lord to lead the pastor to tell us it's time to examine. It's time to examine and you know, that examination is needed every day in this life. Every day. We like manuals. We like things that tell us how. Sometimes I think we desire the Bible to be that, "Just tell me how to do it and I'll do it." Well, you go about that and you'll see how quickly you fail. I hope you see how quickly you fail.

"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness." Now, flip back over to 2 Corinthians 4 real quick. Now we're going to move up a little bit and see what he says there. Look at verse 3. Dear ones, this is experiential. I certainly know there's a lost world out there but I know that sheep can lose their way too. "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost." That's a deep saying. Yeah, there are times that we lose our way. There are times we don't see Christ and in the darkness that we walk in we believe we do. "In whom the god of this world," little "g" and boy, there's many of them, "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." How great is that darkness. How great is that darkness that there are times that we call light.

Lord, examine us today. May he bring us to see first what is treasure. What is treasure, Lord? O Lord, look on my heart today, search my heart. See if there be any wicked way. Lord, lead me to life everlasting in thee. Lord, reveal thy light every day. Every day for each one of thy children because this is a dark and wicked world.

That damnable heresy that's called easy believism, you wouldn't believe how far it infiltrates even to many people we know, times where it may even infiltrate us to believe it's so easy. I can just live above sin. I have light in me all the time. That's true, we do have the seed of Christ but we have a dark nature too. I pray that today the Lord uses his word to take you a little deeper, to what's couched under the letter of it, light and darkness. That he takes you to the depth in your soul to reveal his light because that's the only light that will ever dispel the darkness that we do call light in our souls.

Verse 24 says, "No man can serve two masters." You're never going to serve light and darkness. "For either he will hate," that's a strong word but it needs to be, "he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and wealth," that's what the Greek word is "wealth." We have a wealth of things. What is that treasure?

Dear heavenly Father, most gracious and holy and just Lord, I have been insufficient to explain the depth of this passage. Father, I need thee. I need thy Holy Spirit to search us, to lead us into the truth and the light that is in thy Son. Lord, may you dispel all darkness and reveal it as darkness in the souls of thy children this day. May the goodness of thee give us repentance and may you lead us, Lord, to confess our sins, that thou would show us thy faithfulness and justness and love to forgive our sins. Blessed be thy holy name. May you add thy power, may you add thy clarity for the glory of thy name. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen.