

If you have your Bibles, Matthew 6 is where we will be. Two weeks ago, we asked the question, “Why don’t we long, why don’t we desire, why don’t we pursue Christ with the biblical and historical passion that’s apparent if you study our faith? And last week, we said there might be one answer to that question that plays itself out in two or three different ways. We said one of the things that can happen is we can have a desire, and desires are not inherently evil, but we can close our hand around that desire and make it an idol. And so what ends up happening is we say, “God, You can do whatever You want, be who You are, work in any way that You want, but don’t touch this.” Whatever that thing is, it can be anything, it can be morally neutral, it can be something that’s good, it can be something that’s beautiful, it can be something that’s right, but in the end, if you close your hand around it and you say, “Do whatever You want, God, but don’t touch this,” then you’re guilty of idolatry. And then we moved on from there into pride. And pride is simply thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to. And we talked about how it works itself out in the Evangelical community where we’ve got this thing, we’ve done this thing, we are a tool in the hands of God to right everyone else’s wrongs. And we view ourselves in that circle, even in the Evangelical circles where it’s our job to correct everyone’s theology, it’s our job to tell them how to raise their kids. And in so doing, we neglect our own relationship with Christ, pressing into Christ ourselves, knowing Christ deeply ourselves. Instead, we’re just trying to make sure everyone else is. So for idolatry, we went over to Romans 1. Idolatry gives way to pride. If you have an idol and you close your hand, you almost always justify it with your mind. You become proud and those two things kind of collide and lead to the hardening of the heart. And that’s where God turns you over to your sins and says, “Fine. Chase it. You can have it.” And all of a sudden, the spiritual appetite dies out. Now, we kind of ended on God hardening our hearts idea, a wildly popular, joy giving idea. And then I asked what do we do with this because it’s all over the Bible? And so, how can we really know what’s going on in our heart? How can we know if we have idolatry in our hearts? How can we know if we have pride going on in our hearts? Some of us knew right away. The Holy Spirit kind of quickened in our hearts and slapped the hand and said, “Let go of that.” But then I said what we’re really going to do for the rest of this month is just kind of dive headlong into all the kind of tests that the Scriptures give us to see really what’s going on in our hearts. And so with all of that said, we set out to answer the questions: Why don’t we have more of a hunger for God than we do? Why is it that we don’t burn with a passion for Him and a longing to be near Him and a willingness to forsake all to know Him deeply? Why does that seem to be absent from most Evangelicals? And is the reason pride, idolatry or hardening of heart? Those are the questions we’ve asked, and tonight we take step one in trying to solve it.

So let’s go to Matthew 6, we’ll pick it up in verse 19. “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal,…” Now, I don’t think He’s being revolutionary here. And I don’t think He is pressing any buttons that you don’t want Him to press. He’s actually being honest to how the universe is wired and how He created it to be. And here’s what I mean by that. Everything that you possess and all that you’re currently chasing is one day going to be in a landfill. It does not matter how much you love on it or how much you polish it or whether or not you name it. It does not matter if you wash it on the gentle cycle and don’t put it in the dryer. Everything that you have and all that you’re currently pursuing is on its way to the junkyard. And if it’s not on its way there, then the Scriptures say rust is then going to get it or some weird animal’s going to eat it up. So He’s just going, “Hey listen, you can get this stuff if you want, but in the end, it’s going to be trash.” In the end, the nicest of gear, the most beautiful of cars, the most amazing of homes ends up being a place or something that nobody wants. Eventually it’s going to be trash, junk. The first car that my parents let me drive was a ‘78 Datsun Maxima. It was before even Nissan. It was kind of this pale yellow with this spot of rust on it. And so Dad primed the right side of it basically. It wasn’t really a car that

got you the ladies if you're walking with me. It would backfire in school zones, kids would hit the ground and shimmy to bushes. It was really just a bad deal. But here's the thing about that car. At one time, that car was awesome. I never got in that car and was like, "I am the man." I always went, "Please don't explode." There was never this, "Oh yeah! Wassup?" I had to roll down the windows so people could see me. There was never any of that, but at one point, there was. At one point, somebody drove that off the lot with the windows down, "Look at this thing. Datsun! Look at that Datsun. Woohoo!" Yeah, everything you have is on it's way to the junkyard. Everything you have will one day no longer be desirable. And all the things that you're planning for and pursuing that you currently don't have, it's just a matter of time. Rust will get them. Some random animal will eat it. Somebody will steal it from you. We haven't even talked about that one. But in the end, it's all on its way to being buried somewhere.

The Scriptures are saturated with this idea. Let me show you something. Go over to 2 Corinthians 4. I make the pastors here at the Village read this whole chapter about every other month. It's going to be further insight into this idea that everything you have and everything you're pursuing really in the end is going to be in a junkyard somewhere if not buried with dirty diapers. 2 Corinthians 4, we'll pick it up in verse 16, "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day." Here's a further idea of there being a visible world and an invisible world. And He says even your physical body is a testimony that something bad is happening, that outwardly, day by day, we're wasting away. And if you're under 30, you probably don't have that yet, you probably don't understand that yet. Over 30, you're starting to get hints of it, and soon you'll know it fully, like when random stuff starts breaking on you and you don't know what you were doing to make that happen. You're like, "What happened to my arm?" "What were you doing?" "Drinking! I was drinking and blew a ligament." This is "outwardly we're wasting away, but inwardly something eternal, the soul, we're being renewed day by day." And He'll get into why this is shortly. "For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as 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." Okay so look around you, look at your watch, your shirt, your rings, your shoes. Check it out. Drink it deep. Because it's on its way to destruction. Everything that is seen is transient, here for a moment and gone, everything. But here's the good news. There are some things unseen that are eternal. That means they're not transient, they're not somewhere, they will always be.

Now, let's go over to Psalms 49. We'll pick it up in verse 16. "Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases." Now, I don't ever want to sugarcoat anything. What He's saying is that with wealth there comes honor. With wealth there is a glory attached to wealth. "For when he dies he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him." There is a measure of glory and a measure of honor that a monetary wealth gets you here on earth. It gets you access to certain places, it gets you access to certain things and it gets you a certain glory. I don't just drive a piece of trash car. I have a 2001 Chevy Impala. It's nice, it drives well, the air works. I've never pulled up at a restaurant or Starbucks and had anybody go, "Where'd you get that? Whooo! Let me drive it, man. Come on, just around the block." That's never happened to me, ever. That never happened with the Datsun. But there are certain rides that people can pull up in and everybody goes, "Oh man, look at that. Can I drive it?" Okay so there's this glory here. But here's what He says, "That doesn't foll you post-death." I mean, you don't get into heaven and have God go, "That Maserati was hot. I'm not going to lie to you. There's a special place you have access to. Let me introduce you to the apostle Paul. Come on. Or Peter? You want to meet Peter? Come on in. There's Peter. Peter, rich guy. This guy had a car when he was on earth, whooo!" So don't worry about it when this glory increases for man because of his stuff because in the end, it's all staying here. It will be his kid's glory.

Let's go one more. And all I'm trying to prove is that we live in a transient world, that everything that you see is going away. Go to Proverbs 23. I just love the imagery in this. We'll pick it up in verse 4, "Do not toil to acquire wealth; be discerning enough to desist." So He goes, "At least pay attention to life enough to make that not the soul pursuit of

your life." Why? "When your eyes light on it, it is gone, for suddenly it sprouts wings, flying like an eagle toward heaven." Once again, He's saying, "Hey listen, it's transient. You think you have it, it's this elusive deal that you never seem to get enough of." And the idea is, if you're pursuing wealth and you're chasing wealth and you're after wealth and you make a million, then you want two million. And then if you get two million, you two million is not enough and you want four million. And when you get to four million... To me, I think a great, vivid picture of what it is is a quarterback who is willing to make \$90 million a year and make so much money that he can't have a decent offensive line to protect him so he's getting destroyed out there and they're losing games, but he won't give up any of that cash to get some protection. Do you realize how crazy that is? Winning money even means more than being able to play five extra years because you had your spine blown out. I mean, this is what it is. You just can't get enough. It's elusive. It flies away. You're going, "If I can get to \$5 million, I can retire." And then you get \$5 million, but then you want \$10 million. And you get to \$10 million and it's \$15 million. At \$15 million, it's \$20 million, and you've always got to be chasing it because as soon as you get there, it flies away. And so, here's what He's saying. Maybe we shouldn't spend all of our time and all of our energy and all of our efforts pursuing things that are transient, going to end up in the trash can and not follow us into the next life. And here's why I think this can be so devastating. If you could control how you were viewed by the world around you, would you do it? Well the answer is, "Yes, you can control it, and yes, we do do it." Here's what I mean. Earthly treasures, they're stressful. They're stressful because they're transient, and so something's always breaking and always needs to be repaired. And yet, they also can define us and make us who we are, at least to how other people view us. And so what ends up happening is that the car we drive impacts the way people view us. And what we wear impacts the way people view us. And where we live impacts the way people view us. And what we do here, what we do there, what our education level is or where we are in the business community, it affects how people view us. And so, when you begin to use those things to control how you're viewed, you get what I believe is a lot of our culture, which is chasing this imagery that all is well and all is right and we're put together and we're successful, even if that's not the case. And so, we're going to drive the right car, I'm going to have the right wife, I'm going to have our kids in the right things and we want them to do well and we want them do dominate the soccer fields or the football fields, softball fields, baseball fields, you name it.

Or they want them to be academic all-Americans. We start making them read at age one and a half, and if they don't, we're frustrated and we take them to these little shops that help them read quicker. And we want to compare their grades to other people's grades, because they've got to do right and they've got to do well and they've got to succeed here. And we've got to have the right house to make us successful. And what gets lost in all of it is the truth. And listen, I think the astronomical debt issue in the United States goes back to this idea of trying to play the part that's not really our part, but we can control how others view us and how others see us by sheer purchasing power. And I'll tell you this. I believe that if you're spending money that you do not have on things that you honestly do not need, your treasure is here. It's here. Where else is it?

Let's go back to Matthew 6. "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,..." Okay, so treasures are not an issue and the longing for treasure is not an issue, because God just commanded that you do so. That's pretty interesting. "...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal." So it looks there's two ways of seeing reality. There is the accumulation of stuff here on earth, treasures here on earth, and that's one way of seeing. And there's another way of seeing where we do life in such a way that our desire is to store up treasures same as the first, but the treasures we want to store up, we want to store them up in heaven. But let's not ambiguous here, because I've read this a thousand times and I think for five years, I had no idea what He's talking about. You're like, "Treasures in heaven," but not really knowing what that looks like or how to do that how to walk in that. The great news is that Jesus isn't going to leave us hanging here. He's going to teach us exactly how to store up treasures in heaven. Let's go to Luke 12. Let's pick it up in verse 32, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." I love that verse. That is a great verse. I wish I could preach on it, but I've got to go. "Fear not,

little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In other words, worldly possessions have been given to you and me to distribute in such a way that honors Christ and builds the kingdom. He says here, "Sell what you have and give it to the poor. Let your moneybags not grow old. What you've been given has been given to give out." Now, let me tell you something very interesting about this. I want you to visualize what's taking place here, because what He says is not, "Whatever you have over and beyond what you need to spend on you, give away." That's not what He says. He said that in order for this cat to give to a need, he had to sell something. He spots a need and he wants to meet it, but he's broke. And so, he goes, "Man, that's a brother or sister of mine. That's someone hurting and in need. That's someone who has nothing. Alright, I'm selling my boat. I'm getting rid of Direct TV. I'm getting rid of my TiVo." I mean, can you fathom this kind of heart? Is there a better example of open-handedness? When it's not, "Hey, I have some extra. Let's give it," but just, "I see a need in this moment where I have no extra, but my reward is not here, my comfort is not here, my safety is not here. My reward is somewhere else, and I will make a deposit into that treasure in the future economy by getting rid of these things now." And so, He sells something in order to bless and give and help.

Okay, let's look at another one just in case you think that one's random. Go over to Luke 14. We'll look at verse 13-14. "But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you." Alright, so this isn't networking. This is not, "I want to be known and help the covenant community." This is "Give to, love on, extend mercy to people who will never be able to repay you in any way." Why? Once again, you're going to find this idea of future economy. Look at verse 14. "...and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just." At the resurrection of the dead, at the resurrection of the just, that's when we're repaid. And I want to be careful here. I want to walk on this line as best I can. There are these times and I think there are these places where I've been and I've felt a leading of the Spirit to give something to someone where I thought that maybe in doing it, I might be taking advantage of or maybe even enabling them. But when does wisdom in that arena need to be laid aside? When the Holy Spirit says, "That in the end is My job. I'm telling you to give." "Well, if you do that, you're going to enable them." Well, I don't see that that's my part of the deal. That seems like it's God. Now, I'm not talking about reckless abandonment. I think you need to be wise. But more than you need to be wise, you need to listen to the Holy Spirit inside of you. Joshua was told by God, "Take the band and march on Jericho." Would we agree that it's probably not a great idea to attack a fortified position with a band? Anyone want to dispute that? Anyone want to say, "You know what Marcus needs to do on the first Friday night game? Let the football players play the instruments and let the band get out there and get after them." Now, could we agree that it's going to be catastrophic? Yeah, okay. So we can all agree that wisdom isn't always the, "Oh, this isn't smart, this isn't wise." I'm not talking smart and wise, I'm talking obedience. Sometimes the two are different. Sometimes they are the same, but sometimes they are different. Has anyone ever been asked by the Lord to do something absurd? You're not listening then. Because God's always about His name, and a way He can make His name high is to make yours a little lower. And so, He'll always ask you to do something foolish. I think this is one of the reasons why the spiritual gifts don't flourish. People aren't wanting to look foolish. They're like, "What if I say that and that's not true? I don't want to look like a..." "A what? A sinner? A loser? Um, in the eternal, universal scope of things, that's kind of what you are. Just obey Me here. I'm going to look great in this. Let's go."

Back to Matthew 6. I want to tell you why this is so important to understand. There is a way to do life and a view of life where you increase earthly treasures, and then there is a way to do it where you view past the present into a future economy. And I want to explain to you why this is so big tonight and why we prayed very hard. In fact, there was a large group of women that just prayed all over this campus before you came in here. It's just so important for you to hear this, grasp this and understand this. Let's look back at Matthew 6. "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." Here's why it's so unbelievably huge for you to wrestle with this tonight. "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Here's why it's so important to know where your treasure is. Because there your heart is, your affection is, your emotions are, your discipline is. I never really fell in love with a girl until I met Lauren. I think I had a little crush that broke my heart back in the day, but when I met Lauren, something weird happened to me. Like, I was just always the guy making fun of the other dudes. I was like, "Man, I ain't going to see no Jennifer Aniston movie. People are going to die in the movies we go to when I'm dating." That literally used to be a joke. And then I met Lauren, and I think one of the first things we did was saw a Jennifer Aniston movie. She was in Longview at the time, I was in Abilene. That's about 5-6 hours from each other, depending in if you're sinful when driving. Man, I didn't care. I'm making the run. And I drove that thing and drove that thing and drove that thing, a '91 Pontiac Sunbird, no air. I drove that thing. I would finish preaching at some youth deal at like 10:00 at night, and I'd hop in my car and drive 5-6 hours, I'd hang out with her for 24, get back in the car and drive all the way to Abilene and be back at church by Sunday. And it never felt hard or bad to me, never. I never had to go, "How can I, with great discipline, pour into this relationship? You know what I need to do? We need some face to face time." No, I just went, "I need some sunflower seeds and some really bad coffee and I'm getting after it." And I made the drive. Why? My heart was there. Discipline is easy when your heart's there. So why is this so big? Because the heart, the emotions, the affections, they're at stake. And let me tell you why that's so big. Let's keep reading. "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!" So let me try to explain how this happens. Whatever your treasure is, wherever your heart is, wherever your affections are leads to how you view the world, where your mind is, how you think, how you see the world around you. And so, if your affections are on earthly things, then your mind will justify a life that focuses on those things, idolatry will lead to pride which will lead to the hardening of your heart and the death of spiritual things in your life. And what happens in that moment is God ceases to be an all knowing, sovereign God to whom we say, "Let me see Your will. Let me do Your will." And instead, He becomes our waiter to fetch us what we want. Why? "Because this is my treasure, and I'm justified with my mind, with my eye, I have justified this affection." It's catastrophic. It just kills our ability to hear and respond. Because remember what happens? Anytime we try to press into God, what does He want to discuss before He wants to discuss direction? Idolatry...Ezekiel 14. "I'm not talking with you about whether you should go left or right, whether you should marry or not marry, whether you should take this job or not take that job. I want to talk about how tightly your hand is wrapped around that.

Let's keep reading, because I think we make a big mistake here. Here's the mistake we make. We start talking money and we live in a society where we have a lot of it. We really do. And so the thing is, when you talk about money and God, you say, "Yes Matt, but what about chasing both? Because if we have a lot of money, think of all we could do in the kingdom." I'd say be careful there. God has never needed an ATM machine, never needed a credit line, ever. God has never counted the cost Himself, ever. He can always pay. He never needs to go, "Do I have enough for this?" He just gets what He wants. So the mistake that I think we make is "Why don't we then pursue both?" Alright, He's going to help us with that, because the thing about the Holy Spirit imparting the Scriptures to us is He kind of knows us. 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." There is something about God and money that lends itself to mastery. So here's what happens. Either God masters us and in God's mastery of us, we see everything we own and all that we have, our business, our time, our money, our talents, our workplace, our neighborhood under the umbrella of God. And so, God has mastered us and everything else that is has been given to us by God, for God. And so our love for people and things becomes a means of which to make the gospel known. Or money masters us, and God then becomes a means in which to get more money. But you can't chase both.

Now, it's imperative, it's of utmost importance that right now you don't forget what we're talking about, what questions we're trying to answer. Because do you know what my big fear is tonight? My big fear is that you are going to think I'm talking about money. But I'm only talking about money inasmuch as it reveals what's really going on in your heart. I'm not taking an offering. There's no plates going around this room. I'm not making a plea for a building. I don't like cuff links. I'm not judging anybody, I just don't like them. I'm not trying to buy anything new. Baby does not need a new pair of shoes. She's got plenty, both the girls. I'm not trying to get a raise. I'm not trying to get a rise for our staff. I'm not asking you for money. If you're a skeptic in here tonight and you're like, "I knew this was what church was about," buy yourself something transient. I don't want it. This isn't about money. It's only about money and where you land in that reveals what you truly value regardless of what flies out of your lips. So the question tonight is not, "Should you tithe or should you not tithe?" We're not talking that stuff. The answer is yes. You should. But even then, that's entry level stuff. I'm asking what you really value. I'm asking what's really going on in that heart of yours. Because where your treasure is, that's where your heart is. And where your heart is, that's where your affections beat. And where your affections beat, you'll view the world through those lenses. And I have to wonder if we're trying with all our might to serve two masters but just attach God's name to it. And can I say this. There's this really weird thing that's happened here. I chuckle at it all the time to keep from crying. If you have a lot of money and you have a lot of nice stuff, you're not a sinner. What ends up happening is, people who don't have as much or they haven't bought this car or this size of house or this deal, they like to be the hyper-spiritual guy. But the irony of that is, the reason you can't hear God is because of your fat-headed pride, sitting in judgment of everyone else. It's a weird little pendulum swing.

Where's your heart? Where's your treasure? Where are you investing? It's a legitimate question. Where are you investing? Here? It's transient, it's going away, no matter what it is. Or are you investing in where moth and thieves and rust can never take? How do you see the world? Do you see it as you're here for a season, so you should enjoy, you should take, you should drink deeply, you should eat, drink and be merry as it's written? Or rather, do you see all that you have in the world around you as you being entrusted with what belongs to God for the business and purpose of the kingdom of God? Those are two ways of seeing. They really are. It's not wrong for you to have a nice car. It's not wrong for you to have house. Praise God for those things. They're pretty cool, huh? But if the mind's attention and the heart's affections are set on transient things over eternal things, we have an idolatry problem and maybe a pride problem. Because for most people, it's kind of a combination of those two things. It's the "You can't take these things from me because I earned them or I did..." See how idolatry is kind of a downhill roll?

Alright, why don't we hear Him? Why don't we chase Him? Why don't we pursue Him? Why are we not captivated by Him? Where's your treasure? Where's your affection? Where's your emotion? Where's your mind? Those are hard questions but necessary ones. I think we're going to be really surprised in heaven. There are going to be these people we've never heard of. Like we're all going, "Billy Graham, he's going to be sitting at the left hand." Maybe, but maybe it's just some ol' boy in South Dakota who viewed every day of his life as a gift and all he was given as given to him to steward for the kingdom. I guarantee it's going to be filled with very powerful men and women in heaven that we've never heard of who have never written a book, have never preached a sermon, aren't very impressive to look at. So, may we wrestle with our hearts and sow deeply into the future economy.

Let's pray, "Father, I thank You a night where we can come together and open the Scriptures. I thank You for it every week. My hope and my prayer is that You would speak to us and that we would look deeply into our hearts. What does stir our affections? What does create happiness in our heart? Is it stuff and trinkets and things that gives us energy? Or is it You and the pursuit of You and giving so that others can have? I pray that You would teach us the joys of seeing the world like this. And I pray that when all is said and done forty years from now here at the Village that this place would just be filled with men and women who would just love to sell something. Father, I pray against any kind of impulsive giving tonight, as if that solves the issue. But rather, I pray for a deep wrestling over what we really value. I pray that

maybe we would go home and look at the checkbook or look at the credit card statement or think through the last time we opened up our hand in terms of our money, opened up our hands in terms of our wealth, gave away, maybe even gave away until it stung a little. We love You. Thank You for a beautiful, beautiful day. Amen.”

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