

Matt. 6:19 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; **20** but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matt. 6:22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; **23** but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Matt. 6:24 “No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

Matt. 6:25 “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? **26** Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? **27** And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? **28** And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, **29** yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. **30** But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? **31** Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear?’ **32** For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. **33** But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

Matt. 6:34 “So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

My wife Jill did a special thing probably 15 years ago to the place that was probably the most special place on this planet for her and many in her family. Jill grew up in a parsonage, which means that she never had a home that felt permanent. And then she married me and signed up for even more of that! But there was one place in the world, one place alone, that was theirs. And that was a cottage on a Island in Canada. In many ways it only happened because of some gifts. They had no money to buy much of anything. But from around 1950, they had a place in Canada. And, no matter where the family was moved in the Methodist Church, there was always Canada.

Jill has very solid artistic skills, like her art teacher Mother (who was actually Rev. Kris's art teacher in Massillon). And at one point, Jill bought some paint, and some artist smaller brushes. And she painted Scripture on the wall around a window frame. What were the words? ***“For where your treasure is, there your heart will also be.”*** Why would she put up these words? Well, they do speak the truth. Actually, for Jill the real treasure was being together with her family, in that special place for so many years. So, of course her heart was there. But Jesus says something else in this passage: ***If you treasure something, it is absolutely the case that your heart will surely be there.*** So this leads to the big question for this morning... what is your treasure? What is it that matters more than anything else? Whatever that thing is, whatever it is, your heart ***will be there too.*** Your heart will be there. This means you will live for this whatever it is. So it's do the math... whatever it is that you treasure, it had better be worth it, right? Because it will own you, and control you.

To finish the story about the cottage in Canada, with profound sadness it had to be sold in 2011. So this place, that was absolutely treasured, it is gone. Are our hearts still there? In many ways, yes. But it is clear that all treasures do not last forever. And it is with this thought that Jesus takes us in to this crucial part of his Sermon on the Mount today. He wants us to remember that whatever our treasure might be, that thing will control us in many ways. So what do we treasure?

I have to laugh about a ruckus that I joined back in 2005 or so. My Mom and Dad were down in Florida for the Winter, and they sent me an email (which was a big new thing back then). They

were looking for some guidance: their friends were all enraged and alarmed that a new US \$1 coin was being made, and they were so mad because they were sure that it did not say **IN GOD WE TRUST**. People were furious! So my parents asked me about it. So, I hit **REPLY ALL** and sent back a little message: the new \$1 coin actually did like European coins which have letters cut into the edge of the coin. So, it did say it there. But I made the comment that it was a silly thing to fight about because even though our money says **IN GOD WE TRUST**, it is really our money that we trust and treasure. I think it is outrageous that our money is the actual thing that proclaims this great trust in God, when in fact for most people it is clearly the money that they trust! That is a great place to hide idolatry. Write it on money and pretend that it is true.

Jesus understood this. We as human beings, are by nature “possess-ers.” We like to possess things. We possess our bodies. We are spirits inside of flesh bodies. We are tricked into thinking that our life can extend beyond our bodies into our possessions. We are tricked into believing that *“I am what I possess.”* So some people live for wealth and possessions, and, as these things become the real treasure, people’s hearts are most definitely there with the treasure. Jesus says it bluntly: you cannot love God and money. You cannot serve both. But then Jesus moves to this beautiful lesson about how God provides for the birds of the air, and the lilies of the field, as well as the grass of the field (this is also in Luke’s Gospel). God cares for things, and God surely cares for us. We do not have to let our hearts be controlled by what we will wear, or what we will eat, or where we will live, or what we will own. Jesus tells us that God already knows what we need, and God will provide. And then we

get the best advice: Strive first for the Kingdom of God and God's righteousness, and these other things will be taken care of as well.

If our focus and concern is the righteousness of God and the Kingdom of God, that is where our hearts should be. Jesus says we cannot bluff our way through it and pretend that our heart is with God, when in fact our hearts are focussed upon what we can possess, and all that will make us look important before other people. He says it so clearly: Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth. My goodness, the story of the beloved cottage sadly reminds all of us that things don't last in this world. If you accrue a lot of wealth, it will probably go to someone else anyway. But if we live only to accumulate more and more and more, this will control our hearts. We will end up more concerned about portfolios than the fact that the kids down the road are hungry. Our hearts decide how we will live. They influence all the decisions we make. It is clear, God takes care of his world, and all within it. Do not store up treasures on earth, because they will fade. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness.

I love the little ending this morning. Jesus understands that we will worry. That is a normal human thing. But he says "Don't worry about tomorrow, because today has enough to worry about."

We are blessed today with even more great wisdom from Jesus. We are 3/4ths of the way through this Sermon on the Mount. To wrap up today I would offer a sobering thought that is not actually in the teaching here: they did not have this in the words, but I think to put it in a more modern way, Jesus would remind us of something. Funeral processions and hearses do not pull U-Haul trailers. They just don't. They might put some sweet messages in a

casket, but we cannot take much of anything with us when we leave. So Jesus invites us to store up real treasure where moth and rust cannot destroy. Okay? More great words from Jesus today. IN his honor, and in his name, let's apply them to our living and our thinking. AMEN.