

Matthew 6:19-21

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Preacher: TJ Fisher

[0:00] Thank you, Alex and the band. If you notice, there might be a theme throughout our songs this morning! And I'll let you do that homework. Please turn with me to Matthew chapter 6.

! Matthew chapter 6, we will be looking at verses 19 to 21. 19 to 21.

There your heart will be also. On my shelf at home, there is a book titled Jonathan Edwards Encyclopedia.

It's a one-volume encyclopedia. Don't worry, it's not multi-volume. But it has many interesting entries in it. And me having this book does not communicate anything about me or my personality. But every once in a while, I'll crack it open when I'm studying for something and seeing if there's an entry. And as you know, if you know anything about Jonathan Edwards, a big theme in his ministry, his life, was heaven.

[1:40] He meditated on heaven a lot. You may know him. He was just before the American Revolution. He died in the 1750s.

He's a pastor in New England. But you may know him from his Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God sermon, maybe. But also for Heaven is a World of Love sermon.

If you want to know more about Jonathan Edwards, I would... That's the first two things I would get you to read if you want to know. They're worth your time in reading. But he meditated a lot on heaven.

And so if you crack this open, this encyclopedia, as I did, the first line in the entry on heaven is worthy of our consideration.

The author of the entry begins by saying, Jonathan Edwards was so heavenly-minded that he accomplished much earthly good.

[2:41] Jonathan Edwards was so heavenly-minded that he accomplished much earthly good. Would that not be said of us also at the end of our life?

What an epitaph that would be. He... This person can say this about Jonathan Edwards because he lived a life according to our text today.

He meditated on this text, Jonathan Edwards, and he lived it. And that's... Let that be our prayer today also. Based on his understanding and application of the text like our text today, Matthew 6, 19 to 21.

So, as we begin, pray with me. Father, as we open your word to the words for where our treasure is, there our hearts will be also.

Help us who know you, who trust in you, to have your son as our treasure. That we would have Christ as our treasure.

[3:52] Help us, for those this morning who know you, who trust in you, to apply these words specifically to our lives.

From parenting, to work, to family, to every sphere of influence that you've given us. Help us to apply these words. As we look at your word and look inward to our hearts, help us to look outward for those around us, that we would live out these words for your glory.

For those who may not know or trust you, or may know you but not trust you yet, we pray that you would give them ears to hear, eyes to see, and hearts to understand the truth as, in the words, Christ can be their treasure.

That there is only heavenly treasure that matters. And help them to see that, to save their souls through your word. And we pray for this, for your glory.

Amen. In the Bible, there are lots of contrasts. If you think about, this is a major device that the Bible uses.

[5:11] And think about Proverbs, like Proverbs 9, where you have wisdom, you have folly, personified in a woman, over and over again through the book. You have Old Testament prophets.

That, if you didn't know, sounds like Jesus' parables. But Jesus is just doing what the prophets have always done. And here is the Sermon on the Mount.

And he's doing just that. He's contrasting. He's giving contrast to make a point. So, in the Sermon on the Mount, think, there are a couple of words and themes that we can say that are contrasts.

So, we'll dive in deeper into these in a moment. But, think hypocrites. And then, disciples, on the other hand.

Earth, earthly. Or heaven, heavenly. And one of the major themes in the Sermon on the Mount is righteousness. So, we could say, broadly, that there is a lesser righteousness contrasted to what we could call a greater righteousness that Jesus is calling us to through the Sermon on the Mount.

[6:25] And, going back to our first contrast, there's this hypocrisy on one side. And what we will call wholeheartedness on this other side.

Hypocrisy being half-hearted. But we are called to be full-hearted. So, when we see themes, you see treasure in our text.

But, if you look in the first 18 verses of our chapter, you see reward. So, I'm going to be using the terms treasure, reward, and value.

They're all going to be related terms. And I think there's a reason that he switches from reward.

That he, Jesus, from the first 18 verses of this chapter, says reward, reward, reward.

And, in our text today, he changes to treasure. More on that later. But, this begs the question, forces the question upon us as we read this text.

[7:31] What do you value? What do you value? So, that's the major question that this text is demanding of us.

So, before we dive in, why this text? Why this text today? Well, one, Nathan asked me to preach. So, that's part of it. But, this text, I think there's a broad reason. And then there's a more specific reason. So, if we think about the church more broadly, Big C Church here, there's a warning here for the church broadly.

And it's hypocrisy. But, hypocrisy, we could say, has a specific form today in our context.

And that's called cultural Christianity. Hypocrisy, cultural Christianity. This is a warning against that, this text.

[8:38] It's similarly to the term lukewarmness. Being lukewarm. So, this should, you should recall the church at Laodicea in Revelation 3.

The Spirit writes to the church at Laodicea. I know your works. You are neither cold nor hot.

Would that you were either cold or hot. So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth.

Strong words for those who are lukewarm. I would say half-hearted. Hypocritical. You see all these related terms.

This half-heartedness leads to lukewarmness. So, there's a warning there. There's a warning not to be hypocritical. Half-hearted.

[9:39] Lukewarm. You cannot be one person at work, another at church, another at home. That is half-hearted. This text is calling us to a, something greater.

But, let's not be careful to look to others before ourselves. It's easy to say they, isn't it? Instead of us or me.

So, going a little more specific reason here. Why this text for the local church, us. It's easy for us to point out cultural Christianity.

But, for us, there's a warning for those who might be younger in years. There's a warning for us who are younger. But, there's an encouragement here for those who are older.

First, older. Being heavenly minded is something that, when you are a believer, it becomes more and more apparent as you get older. And, if you are older here with us, know that we younger members see that and we are encouraged that you are so heavenly minded.

[10:53] And, you are naturally bending more and more towards heaven. Your soul is bending towards there. More and more. And, that is so encouraging to us.

So, just hear that. Thank you for your example. For the youngers, there is a warning. That, there's a warning for us who are in what we would call a busy season.

Some have the season short. Some of us long. Sometimes, maybe, depends on how many kids you have. But, when focusing on so much earthly good.

Think what might be good. It will be easy for us to skip on the heavenly perspective in life. It is tempting to, we don't really do this actively.

But, I'm going to say passively. That's our temptation here in our context. It is tempting to passively allow what we believe are treasures in heaven. To be replaced over time by treasures on earth.

[12:04] Let us actively fight against the inner man. Who, I would say, in our context, we have to be. It's the passivity or the passively desires to what Romans 1.

To exchange the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man. Let that be a warning to us.

This text helps us fight for the heavenly perspective in the day-to-day earthly good. What we value, especially in busy seasons, like a lot of us have found ourselves in, for good.

What we value, especially in a busy season, reveals our hearts. Reveals not only what we love most, but also reveals the very essence of our person.

So, the stakes are high on how you answer, what do you value? So, especially in a busy season.

[13:09] And what a biblical counseling book I read once said, in the heat of life. And if you're married, you know exactly what he means by heat. When you are in the heat of the moment of struggling with sin or spouse's sin or children.

What do you value most affects how you will respond to those moments. So, here's the main point. I'll give you the main point here.

We'll revisit it later at the end. But I'll give you the main point, Jesus' exhortation here. And then we'll dig deep, come back up, remind you of the main point.

And then we'll go and do likewise. This is Jesus' exhortation to us. The main point is not merely what you value, but it is much more than that.

This text reveals that it is much more. What you value is who you really are as a person. What you value is who you really are as a person.

[14:15] This is based on the biblical understanding of heart in our text. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The biblical understanding of a heart is not merely emotions. But it consists of a combination of heart functions.

How the heart responds in the heat of life. So, what I mean by that, briefly, we'll come back to this. But there are three functions. The heart responds to life in three functions. Think to have the categories, three categories. It's a triad.

Think of a Venn diagram. Three circles intersecting. Beliefs, desires, and choices.

[15:16] The heart responds in beliefs, desires, and choices. We'll come back to this later. But it's a more dynamic understanding of the heart.

It's not just merely emotions or whatever comes first to mind when you think of heart. Think heart. Think beliefs, desires, and choices.

The choices you choose, the desires you want, the beliefs you interpret the world through. So, what kind of person are you is the question that Jesus is asking.

He does this by pointing to the hypocrites. So, what kind of person are you? What do you treasure up in your heart? By Jesus calling out the hypocrites in this chapter before our text, he's saying that they, the hypocrites, valued outward, or we could say earthly, righteousness.

And he gives three examples. But the followers of Jesus, true disciples, are called to value a higher, wholehearted, whole person devotion to a heavenly or greater righteousness.

[16:39] Followers of Jesus are called to value a higher, wholehearted, whole person devotion to a greater heavenly righteousness. So, look with me, not in chapter 6, but the last verse of chapter 5.

This is connected to our verse today, this text today. So, chapter 5, verse 48. You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

So, this goes back. When you see perfect, particularly in the New Testament, especially in Hebrews, for sure, this is a big word. When you see the word perfect, in the ESV, at least, read perfect as complete.

There's a completeness aspect to that. Not that this is wrong, but just don't think perfect in our cultural understanding. The biblical idea behind perfect, it's the teleos, telos word group, which is so prevalent in the New Testament.

Think it is finished. Comes from this word. It is complete. That makes a lot more sense. Not, it is perfect. But you, therefore, must be complete as your heavenly Father is complete.

[18:11] And, how do you do this? Well, this is our text today. So, let's dive in into the structure.

And then we'll take a few specific words. And then we'll dive into the text. So, with that in mind, how do you be complete or perfect? Well, he says, verse 1, which is the intro to our text, really.

Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them. It's a warning. For then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

See this reward? Thinking about treasure in our text. So, this is another greater righteousness theme. So, we are in the body of the Sermon on the Mount here.

The core. And we have found ourselves here almost at the pinnacle of the Sermon on the Mount. Think the climax of the great sermon.

[19:16] So, in three parts. The body is really in three parts. And I'll give it to you. Greater righteousness. As one commentator has helpfully divided this.

Greater righteousness in relation to God's laws. Which comes before. Ends in 48. Chapter 5, 48. And then it's greater righteousness and piety toward God.

That's our section of the text here. From 6.1 to 21. And then after. It's greater righteousness in relation to the world. And so, what's so fascinating is our text.

19, 20, and 21. Acts not only as the conclusion of chapter 6.1 to 21. The conclusion is also the introduction to that last third part from 6.19 to 7.12.

That greater righteousness in relation to the world. So, there really could be two sermons that could be preached on this one text. One looking what comes before.

[20:28] And then using it on the next week, maybe. I'm not. But using it as an introduction to what comes after. So, I've chosen the former instead of the latter.

And so, here he is making a specific point about hypocrites. And contrasting them to the true disciples of Christ.

And how to do that. So, zooming in, we can see some symmetry here. And this is actually the thing that brought my attention to this text.

19, 20, and 21. There's a symmetry here. That is really beautiful. And we have seen it in John with the chiasmic structures.

But Matthew does this to, and John and the biblical writers do this, to make specific points. To make you draw your attention towards the point.

[21:28] So, instead of giving you the pattern from 6.1 to 6.21, let's go backwards. Let's take our text today. Our main text. 19, 20, and 21.

There's a pattern here I want to show you. And this pattern actually is throughout the entire chapter. So, when you have, you have verse 19.

Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth. Where moth and rust to destroy. And where thieves break in and steal. We could say that this is a negative instruction.

It's an instruction that is in the negative. So, verse 20. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Where neither moth nor rust destroys.

And where thieves do not break in and steal. This we could categorize as a positive instruction. It's an instruction that is in the positive. His statement.

[22:32] Verse 21. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. So, this is a statement of reward. See what I'm doing there?

Equating treasure with reward. But you have negative instruction. Then a positive instruction. And then a statement of reward. Now, go to the beginning of chapter 6.

And this pattern is found in all three examples. So, he says, as an intro. He says, Jesus says, Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people.

In order to be seen by them. For then you will have no reward from your father who is in heaven. It's a warning here. But, verse 2. This is, he does three.

Gives three examples of. Do not be like the hypocrites. But be those who practice. Verse 20. Be those who lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.

[23:38] The three examples are giving. Then prayer. Then fasting. And then, the conclusion. The concluding exhortation. Is our text.

19, 20, and 21. So, verse 2. Is the negative. Instruction. Verse 3. Is the positive instruction. I'm not going to read them through.

But just look down in your text. And you can follow along. And then, verse 4. Is the statement of reward. That's giving. That's the giving statement. Or example.

And then, when it comes to prayer. You have verse 5. Is the negative. Verse 6a. The positive. 6b. Is the statement of reward. See this pattern?

Now. Now. You might be thinking. There's a real big elephant in the room. It's the Lord's Prayer. And it is. But. It is almost an excursus.

[24 : 33] Or an aside. On prayer. And forgiveness. But. This isn't about the Lord's Prayer. But. I want you to. Think about. Think about this context.

Where Matthew. Has placed the Lord's. The Lord's Prayer in. This model prayer. It has something to do with. What we're talking about. With the theme. Of value.

So. I'll just keep that there. And you can think about it later. Now. And then. Fasting. Is the third. And final. Example. Verse 16. Is the negative. 17. Is the positive.

Instruction. And verse 18. Is the. Statement of reward. You see. The pattern. That's found in our text. Is the pattern. That's leading up.

To that statement. And. The statement. For where your treasure is. There your heart. Will be also. So.

[25 : 30] There's some specific words. That I would like to draw your attention to. As we. Dig a little deeper. Together. And there's some words. That come before our text. And there's some words. In our text.

That's one. Draw your attention to. So. One. In verse 48. Of chapter 5. We've already seen. The perfect.

And the complete. So when you read. Perfect. Think. Completeness. And then reward. You can count. How many times. Reward. Is repeated. In the first 18 verses.

Of this chapter. And it's connected. To treasure. As we've. Said before. And then. Hypocrites. Hypocrite. As. We know what a hypocrite. Hypocrite is. But if you. Have any children. Or young children around. You just use words. And they're like. What's that mean? And you're like. You should know what that means. But. We just know it. Because of cultural connotations. But.

[26 : 23] It's a Greek word. It's a translation. Which means. Somehow. Now. The translators. Throughout. History. Have just. Transferred. Hypocrites.

Into English. But it's really a Greek word. That they just transferred over. So. In classical Greek times. It's related. To.

Acting. Or actors. On a stage. Which. Kind of makes sense. If you think about it. In New Testament usage. It's really. About those. Who are. As we're saying.

Are half-hearted. Are. Say one thing. Don't do it. Say it. And do something else. As a major theme. Especially in the Sermon on the Mount. And it's.

Jesus is using the hypocrites. In that specific word. To be contrary. To those. Who practice. Two verses. And it's. Beginning. And the end.

[27 : 16] Here. Like. Bookends. Here. So. It's first. Those who practice. As in contrary. To the hypocrites. Those who practice.

You must be perfect. As your heavenly father. Is perfect. And then at the end. Those who practice. Laying up for yourselves. Treasures. In heaven. Those two things.

And he's saying. Do these things. Don't be like the hypocrites. So in our text. If you look at. 19, 20, and 21. There's specific words. They're. Very important.

Like. Earth. And heaven. Think realms. And spheres. Heaven. Being the dwelling place. Of God. And then. Treasure. As we've said.

Is the. Related term. Reward. Here. Throughout chapter six. And with heart. I want to go back to. The perfect. And the complete idea. Heart.

[28 : 12] Goes back to. You therefore. Must be perfect. As your heavenly. Father. Is perfect. And the. Perfectness. The completeness. The completeness. Goes alongside.

Heart. Because heart. Like we said. Is a whole. Being. Whole person. Idea. Which. Really goes back to. The warning. Beware.

Practicing your righteousness. Before other people. In order to be seen by them. For then. You will have no reward. From. Your father. Who is in heaven. That's the warning. And. The remedy.

Are those two verses. So. Look at. With me. 19 and 20. With me. 19 and 20. Are. Extremely.

Similar. Except. One's negative. Like we've. Pointed out. And one's positive. One's. Upon. Or. On. Earth.

[29:07] And then. Verse 20. In. Heaven. You have the negative instruction. Then positive. The beautiful symmetry here.

And there's. Some words of note. The warning for rust. You may have a different translation. When you see rust. Think. The main idea is consuming. I don't want to get into the details of that. But it's an interesting word choice there.

But. Think. Consuming. And what's rust do? It consumes. Something. The idea of eating.

Corrosion. It's consuming. The process of.

Causing. Deterioration. By consuming. And one thing. Destroy. Where. Where moth. And rust. Destroy.

And where. Bees. Break in. And steal. This. Destroy. Word. Also comes back. From. Verse 16. And when you fast. Do not look gloomy.

[30:02] Like the hypocrites. For they disfigure. Their faces. It's the same word. Disfigure their faces. So. There's a connection there. He's making. He wants you to. Recall back.

Even. More clearly. The hypocrites. So. In over translation. I'm all about over translating. I get some points across. Do not. Treasure.

Up. Treasures. On earth. There's this double treasure. Language here. Do not treasure up.

Treasures. On earth. But treasure up. Treasures. In heaven. The treasuring.

Aspect. The main idea here. Look with me at. Verse 21. For where your treasure is. There your heart.

Will be also. Notice the where. Leads into the there. Treasure. There. Your heart. Will be also. It's a because.

[30:59] Clause. For. Forever. And what that means is. Jesus followers. Followers. Must store up. Treasures. In heaven. And not on earth. Because people's treasures. Capture their allegiance.

That's what's at stake. Capturing their allegiance. So. Let's look about. Look. Look closer. At the word. Heart. Let's come back to that. That dynamic. Understanding.

Of the heart. So. He chooses hard. And. It's not merely. Emotions. Feelings. Etc. Whatever you think of.

First. It's not just one thing. It's not one dimensional. It's three dimensional. It's much more dynamic. I like that word. There's three functions.

Of the heart. In scripture. And I would. Encourage you to go to. As you read scripture. Particularly the psalms. Throughout the new testament. Even the prophets.

[31:54] Think when there's heart. Language here. Think. Beliefs. Desires. And choices. There are fancy terms to this.

I'll give you. For all the nerds out there. That don't like fancy terms. There's cognitive. Which is the beliefs. Aspect. The affective. Which is the desiring. Aspect.

And the volitional. Which. Is more on the choices. Spectrum. Choosing. But. I'm going to just say. Beliefs. Desires.

Choices. That. Is the human heart. And. That is a whole. Person. Mentality. So. All these. Are. Interwoven.

And overlapping. Particularly. In. Relationships. And that's why. Human. Relationships. In marriage. With friendships. With children. Are. So.

[32:50] Complicated. Your wife. Is more. It may. She may be. Feeling. Something. But that's not all. She's feeling.

There's. There's. Beliefs. Behind it. There's a desire. There. To. And that's the key. To asking. Good questions. And think about your children.

If your children. Does something dumb. They're choosing. Something dumb. And instead of saying. Don't do that. Or why'd you do that. Which is a temptation.

Just know. That there are. There are. A whole person. There are. There were desires. There. In this situation. There were. Beliefs. Maybe.

They. The belief. That they could. Make that jump. And. They really believed it. And. They. Wanted to. Show off to their friends. So they chose.

[33:45] To jump. Which. Ended up in. The hospital. And so now you're. Mad. And why'd you choose that? Well. You know. That's a.

Clear example of. There's a lot more than just choosing. And. Choosing the wrong thing. Your children. Your wife. Your spouse. Your friends. Your family. They're whole. Dynamic persons. There's more than that. Don't. I encourage you not to. Relate to. These people. As one dimensional. But they are whole.

Dynamic persons. This. Has a lot. Of applications. I'll let you. Work those applications out. On your own. But this dynamic heart. Gives the idea. In our text here.

Where. Jesus says. For where your treasure is. Connecting the treasure. Here. There. Your heart. Will be also. This dynamic idea. Gives us the whole hearted. Or whole person perspective.

[34 : 43] On connecting the where. For treasure. And the there. For heart. I hope you. Get that. There's a lot packed into. Heart.

What you value. Is who you really. Are. As a person. Not just a part of you. That's separated from another sphere. Of your life.

This strikes. At the root. Of cultural Christianity. Doesn't it? You cannot become. A cultural Christian. You would be.

The hypocrites. You would be. In. The hypocritical. Title. That Jesus is using here. But he is calling us. Who know.

And trust the Lord. To be wholehearted. To be wholehearted. And. Knowing that our treasure. Is a heavenly. Treasure.

[35 : 38] And. We cannot be half-hearted. That is impossible. So. Let me. Remind you. Of the main point here.

Jesus is. Exhortation. To us. And in this sermon here. Concluding. In. Verse 21. Is this. The main point. Is not merely. What you value. Is what you love.

But is much. More. What you value. Is who you really are. As a person. This is based on the biblical. Understanding of heart. Like we said.

Not merely emotions. But. Consisting. Consisting. Of beliefs. Desires. And choices. And a combination of those. What kind of person. Are you. Is the question.

And what do you. Treasure up. In your heart. Remember. Jesus pointing out. The hypocrites. They. Valued. Outward.

[36 : 31] Or earthly. Righteousness. Followers. Of Jesus. Are called. To a higher.

Wholeheartedness. Whole person. Devotion. To it.

Verse 20. Be our prayer. To lay up. For yourselves. Treasures. In heaven. I'm going to end.

By. Something. Might be risky. But. In. Your bulletin. You will find. On the next page. Is.

Under the. Silent. Reflective. Moment. Is a. Printing. Of a. Poem. By. George. Herbert. Who died. In 1633.

He was living. In the times. Of Shakespeare. John Donne. Of the like. And he. Died. A. Small church. Country pastor. But he.

[37 : 26] Was a poet. But people. Didn't know it. And. He. Gave. A copy. Of his poems. To a friend. And he said. To his friend.

On his dying. Death. Bed. Burn it. Keep it. I don't care. Well. That book. Has become. One of the. Best. English. Devotional. Poems. Ever. Written. So. I love. George Herbert. He. Has. Shepherded. My soul. Through college. And I have. Revisited him. Now. On this side. Of marriage. And he is. So much. Sweeter. But. Like. Jonathan.

Edwards. Who lived. After him. George Herbert. Understood. The heaven. And earth. Dynamic. Leading. To true. Treasure. And we can see this. In the poem. I provided for you.

[38 : 20] On. In the bulletin. He's. Specifically. Meditating. On Colossians. Three. Three. He's. Thinking about. Paul's words. That read. Our life. Is hid. With Christ. And God. God. But.

You can see. That. He also has. Our text. In mind. As well. There. I know. It's not bolded. Or italicized. But in the word.

In the. If you see. There is a hidden message. That reads. Diagonally. And I wonder. If you could. Maybe you can circle.

The words. On each line. There's one word. Each line. That reads. A message. And I'll give you. The message. And I'll read the. Poem. And. Two things.

Of words. Words. To help you. Deneural. Means. Daytime. Deneural. Daytime. And obliquely. Means. Having a slanted. Or sloping direction.

[39 : 13] Like the hidden message. In the poem. So. I'll give you the hidden message. So you can. See it. As we read it. It's. My. That's the first line. Second line.

Is life. And it goes on. My. Life. Is. Is. Hid. In him. That is. My treasure. My.

Life. Is. Hid. In him. That is. My pleasure. Treasure. I'll read the poem. In closing. My words. And thoughts. Do. Both. Express.

This notion. That life. Hath. With the sun. A double. Motion. The first. Is. Straight. And our. De neural. Friend. The other. Hid. And doth.

Obliquely. Bend. One. Life. Is. Wrapped. In flesh. And tends. To earth. The other. Winds. Towards him. Whose happy. Birth. Taught me.

[40 : 07] To live here. So. That still. One. I. Should. Aim. And shoot. At that. Which is. On high. Quitting. With daily. Labor. All my.

Pleasure. To. Gain. At harvest. An. Eternal. Treasure. The treasure. We. Treasure. Up in heaven. Is only. In Christ.

Which leads. To true. Pleasure. Here. On earth. My life. Is. Hidden. In him. That is. My. Treasure. Pray.

With me.