

OUTLINE: "THE WEALTHY LIFE"

TEXT: Matthew 6: 19 - 24.

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. A Florida newspaper, in an effort to boost its circulation....
- B. This treasure hunt is symbolic.....
- C. Our Lord knew this to be so.....He gave a great deal of
- D. In the Sermon on the Mount, he deals with the subject....
 - 1. he warns....
 - 2. He appeals..
 - 3. And Jesus knew....
 - 4. "For where your treasure is....."
- E. One of the most familiar verses....most neglected. It is well for us to think about.....

II. THE THINGS WE LIVE FOR DETERMINE THE DIRECTION OF OUR LIVES.

- A. Spinoza: riches, fame, satisfaction of lust.
Mencken: "To be happy....(1) Well fed...(2) Full of a comfort...
(3) Delicately and unceasingly amused according...
- B. Are these the real goals of Life? Are these the things...
But the fact remains.....
- C. Someone has written this little paragraph about.....
- D. The point is this - that we're tempted.....
- E. Now the problem with most of us is this - it's not the piling...
- F. There are other things besides riches.....
 - 1. George Washington Carver....
- G. And so it is that each of us is controlled.....

III. EARTHLY TREASURE ALONE IS AN INSECURE BASIS FOR PERSONAL SECURITY.

- A. Text: In the time of Jesus many of the goods of life.....
- B. Recently I read in one of our papers about an 84 year old....
- C. Alexander Dumas was the world's most prolific author...
- D. And so it is that all human experience bears witness.....
- E. The average family.....
 - 1. One half own automobiles.
 - 2. Three out of ten - TV
 - 3. Nine out of ten - refrigerators.
 - 4. However.....the fact remains.
- F. Greed for gold....greed for gold.....These are the modern....

IV. TRUE WEALTH LIES IN SPIRITUAL TREASURE.

- A. All of us can store up things of these things of the spirit.
True wealth: love, service. It grows....The really wealthy
live - rich of soul, spacious of mind. Generous in judgment
of others. Invests....performs.....these are the things...

B. Edwinn Markham.....

Prayer: Simply. live for important things.

"THE WEALTHY LIFE"

TEXT: "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Matthew 6:19 - 24

A Florida newspaper, in an effort to boost its circulation, once ran a series of daily clues to a treasure of two hundred dollars it had buried in the St. Petersburg area. On the day that the final clue was to be printed in the newspaper, two thousand people gathered in front of the newspaper plant in order to get the first edition as it came from the press. Twenty-five minutes later the treasure had been found on Snell Island. In the mad scramble that took place several things happened. Six people were injured in automobile accidents. Several women fainted in the crowd that gathered in front of the newspaper plant. Four people had to be dragged out of waist deep mud. But the newspaper staff all agreed that the stunt had been a huge success. In fact, the circulation of the newspaper had been upped five percent.

This treasure hunt is symbolic of a popular attitude of mind. The lure of gold can become a haunting dream. The effort to get something for nothing is a popular pastime. The search for treasure has become the controlling interest in the lives of many people.

Our Lord knew this to be so. He gave a great deal of attention in his teachings to the relationship between a man and the goods of life. It wasn't an economic interest, but rather a religious interest that captured his attention. For he saw many people losing their souls by trying to depend on things to bring them happiness.

In the Sermon on the Mount, he deals with the subject in a very plain and direct fashion. He warns his listeners that if they put their trust in earthly treasure, they will likely lose it. He appeals to them to put their faith in spiritual values rather than material things. And Jesus knew that their lives would take the direction of their chief interest. And it was their lives above all else that he was interested in.

"For where your treasure is
there will your heart be
also....."

Certainly this is one of the most familiar verses in the New Testament, and yet it is one of the most neglected teachings of our faith. It is well for us to think about this observation made by Jesus, and as we do I think we'll discover that he's trying to tell us three things.....

**FIRST: THE THINGS WE LIVE FOR
DETERMINE THE DIRECTION OF OUR
LIVES.**

First: the things that we live
for determine the direction of
our lives.

The philosopher Spinoza once said that the three things that men want most are riches, fame, and the satisfaction of lust. And the late H. L. Mencken once added his idea of the objectives of living when he said:

"To be happy, I must be: (1) Well fed, unhounded by sordid cares. (2) Full of a comfortable feeling of superiority to the masses of my fellow men. (3) Delicately and unceasingly amused according to my taste."

Are these the real goals of life? Are these the things that we work so hard for and struggle so long to achieve? In our better moments, we won't admit that they are. But the fact remains, however, that for the most part men set great store on money as the central goal of life. And too often we revolve all of our living around the golden little treasure.

Someone has written this little paragraph about stationery on the stock exchange:

"The market opened with Marking Inks a black spot, while gums and adhesives were rather sticky. There was an absorbing interest in Blotting Papers, and Rubber stamps created a good impression. The prices on Rubber bands were rather elastic. Christmas, Wedding and Birthday cards were all cheerful, but Funeral cards were dull. Diaries and calendars showed a slight change over yesterday. Numbering machines continued to alter, but notepapers remained stationery. Embossing presses made a good yearly impression while sealing wax held tight to previous gains. Account books were a ruling feature while stapling presses held firm. Loose leaf notebooks were holding together very well."

The point is this - that we're tempted to interpret all of life in terms of income and markets, prices and trends, and profits and losses. When we measure the affairs of every day in terms of their monetary value alone, we are lost in a sticky maze of black spots. When our treasure is invested in rubber bands and blotting paper or their equivalent, our hearts are likely to be elastic and absorbent objects of pettiness and greed.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also....."

Now the problem with most of us, I'm sure, is not the piling up of treasure. We find it hard enough to pay our bills, and taxes, and keep up with our obligations to family and community. However, this doesn't excuse us from the point of Jesus' message. He's not interested in the money we have. He's much more interested in the direction of our lives and their quality. He recognizes that the attitude we have toward material things, regardless of the amount we possess, determines the set of our souls and the richness of our lives. The emphasis of Jesus is not upon poverty or wealth, but upon stinginess and generosity. And this is a key to life itself. The generous view of money and material things makes life rich and full. And the grasping, niggardly outlook upon things makes us hard of heart and poor of spirit.

There are other things besides riches, fame, and lust for which we can live. We can choose to live for service - for love - for freedom - for a better world. We don't have to be grubby, self-centered slaves to gold. The choice is there before us. George Washington Carver was once offered \$100,000 dollars a year by Henry Ford and the best laboratory that money could buy if he would come and work for him. But George Washington Carver chose to live on \$1,500 a year at Tuskegee Institute, studying peanuts. He chose to bless mankind.

And so it is that each of us is controlled by some central, basic aim and drive. A person must decide for himself what this is to be. But Jesus reminds us to mark well the decision, for upon it depends the direction and the character of our lives.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also...."

SECOND: EARTHLY TREASURE
ALONE IS AN INSECURE BASIS FOR
PERSONAL SECURITY.

The second thought that our Lord is trying to have us understand is that earthly treasure alone is an insecure basis for personal

security.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break through and steal.."

In the time of Jesus many of the goods of life were made of fabric - rugs, hangings, and clothing. Vermin constantly threatened these things when they were stored. Durable goods were not safe from thieves behind the mud walls of the houses of that time. The hoarding of wealth was a difficult thing in those days. And it's just as difficult today. It's just as dangerous too, in spite of the protection of steel vaults and insured bank accounts. These things are no protection against the inroads of warped judgment and barrenness of soul that rust and corrupt those who put their trust in gold.

Recently I read in the newspaper about an eighty four year old rag-picker who was buried in a pauper's grave here in New York after he had died in the surroundings of poverty. City authorities later found a fortune of \$500,000 in a warehouse vault belonging to the old man. His name was Henry Smith. He was a graduate of Harvard and had been a class mate of Robert Frost and a friend of Henry James. Of such can be the futility of gold.

Alexander Dumas was the world's most prolific author. He produced scores of plays, and wrote close to eleven hundred books. He was the first writer to make five million dollars. And yet the author of such immortal works as "The Count of Monte Cristo" and the "Three Musketeers" died without a cent. Not only that, but he ended his brilliant career by compiling an ordinary cookbook.

As so it is that all human experience bears witness to the deceptiveness and insecurity of fame and fortune. When men depend on money alone for security, life has a way of folding up, no matter what the level of income.

The average family in the United States has an income of \$3,000 a year. One half of all the families own cars. Three out of ten have TV sets. Six out of ten have telephones. Nine out of ten have refrigerators.

We need to be grateful for such a high standard of living among our people. However, the fact remains that a man can be just as much of a materialist with a \$3,000 a year salary as with a \$20,000 a year income. A car in the garage and a TV set in the living room are no guarantee of the good life. And when a bigger car and a better TV set in a larger home or apartment become the sole objects of worship and worry, we have, in a real sense, sold our souls for a mess of pottage. Any man who trades his health and peace of mind for ulcers and a coronary disorder in a mad race for a place in the sun will someday live to regret it. Greed for gold makes men cheats, thieves, and drunkards. Greed for gold is one of the greatest causes of worry and ill health. These are the modern day moths that corrupt and the thieves that break through our best defenses and steal away our treasure.

TRUE WEALTH LIES IN
SPIRITUAL TREASURE

All of this leads to the final thought that Jesus is attempting to convey to us and that is that true wealth lies in spiritual treasure.

All of us can store up the things of the spirit. True wealth lies in love and service. It grows as we honor God and give ourselves to some high cause. The really wealthy life is the one that is rich of soul and spacious of mind. A life that is generous in its judgment of others. It invests heavily in forgiveness and understanding. It lifts the fallen and encourages the weary. It performs the duties of life with a ready hand and trusts God when explanations are beyond reach. These are the things that make life rich and abundant. The things of the spirit.

The poet Edwin Markham was once persuaded by some friends to put the savings of a lifetime into some very sound investments. But the investments didn't prove to be as sound as his friends had suggested. One day word came to him that he had lost ~~of~~ all of his money. It was all he possessed. It was all gone. At first he felt very bitter about the matter, but then something happened. His generous Christian spirit seemed to take hold and soon asserted itself. We're told that as he sat at the table thinking about his misfortune, he idly drew two circles on a sheet of paper. Almost before he knew it, ~~the~~ words came into his mind and a poem was created. It's called "Outwitted" - some of you may know it....

"He drew a circle that shut me out....
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.
But love and I had the wit to win.
We drew a circle that took him in....."

It's this kind of a spirit that lays up treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break in and steal. Spiritual treasures are beyond corruption. They cannot be taken away.

"Love and I had the wit to win.
We drew a circle that took him in."

Of such is the wealthy life!

Prayer: Help us to simplify our lives. Help us to live for those values that are really important. Amen.

"LIVING THE WEALTHY LIFE"

A Florida newspaper, in an effort to boost circulation, once ran a series of daily clues to a treasure of two hundred dollars it had buried in the St. Petersburg area. On the day the final clue was printed, two thousand people gathered in front of the newspaper plant to get the first edition as it came from the presses. Twenty-five minutes later the treasure had been found on Snell Island. In the mad scramble several things happened. Six people were injured in auto accidents. Several women fainted in the mob scene in front of the newspaper building. Four people had to be dragged out of waist deep mud. The newspaper people all agreed that the stunt had been a huge success. The Fourth of July circulation had been upped five percent.

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"For where your
treasure is, there
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also....."

This is one of the most familiar yet most neglected teachings of our faith. It would serve us well to think about it.

THE THINGS WE LIVE FOR
DETERMINE THE DIRECTION
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The first
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like to have us consider is that the things we

live for determine the direction of our lives.

The philosopher Spinoza said that the three things men want most are riches, honor and fame, and the satisfaction of lust. The late H. L. Mencken gave his idea of the objectives of living when he said, "To be happy, I must be: (1) Well fed, unhounded by sordid cares. (2) Full of a comfortable feeling of superiority to the masses of my fellow men. (3) Delicately and unceasingly amused according to my taste."

Are these the chief ends of life? Are these the things we work for and struggle so hard to achieve? In our better moments, we won't admit that they are. The fact remains however, that for the most part men set great store on money as the central goal of life. Too often we revolve all of our living around the golden treasure.

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and Birthday cards were all cheerful, but Funeral Cards were dull. Diaries and Calendars showed a slight change over yesterday. Numbering machines continued to alter, but Notepapers remained stationary. Embossing Presses made a good yearly impression while Sealing Wax held tight to previous gains. Account Books were a ruling feature while stapling presses held firm. Loose leaf Books were holding together very well.

The point is, we are tempted to interpret all of life in terms of income and markets, prices and trends, and profits and losses. When we measure the affairs of every day in terms of their monetary value alone, we are lost in a sticky maze of black spots. When our treasure is invested in Rubber Bands and Blotting Paper or their equivalent, our hearts are likely to be elastic and absorbent objects of pettiness and greed.

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message. He's not interested in the money we have. He's much more interested in the direction of our lives and their quality. He recognizes that the attitude we have toward material things, regardless of the amount we possess, determines the set of our souls and the richness of our lives. The emphasis of Jesus is not upon poverty or wealth, but upon stinginess and generosity. This is a key to life itself. The generous view of money and material things makes life rich and full. The grasping, niggardly outlook upon things makes us hard of heart and poor of spirit.

There are other things besides riches, fame and lust for which we can live. We can choose to live for service, for love, for freedom, for a better world. We don't have to be grubby, self-centered slaves to gold. The choice is there before us.

Someone once asked why South America with all of its natural resources, has lagged so far behind North America in its development. And the answer was given that South America was settled

by the Spanish in search of gold, and that North America was settled by the Pilgrim Fathers in search of God. Gold and God. The things that people live for determine the direction that they shall go.

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well as eleven hundred volumes of novels and historical romances. He was the first writer to make five million dollars. Yet the author of such immortal works as "The Count of Monte Cristo" and "The Three Musketeers" died penniless. Not only that, but he ended his brilliant career by compiling an ordinary cookbook.

All human experience bears witness to the deceptiveness and insecurity of fame and fortune. When men depend on money alone for security, life has a way of folding up, no matter what the level of income. No one can escape the force of the message that we cannot depend on worldly goods alone for our well-being and security.

The average family in the United States has an income of \$3,000 a year. One half of all the families own cars. Three out of ten have TV sets. Six out of ten have telephones. Nine out of ten have refrigerators. We need to be grateful for such a high standard of living among our people. However the fact remains that a man can be just as much of a materialist with a \$3,000 a year salary as with a \$30,000 a year income. A car in the garage and a TV set in the parlor are

no guarantee of the good life. And when a bigger car and a better TV set in a larger house become sole objects of worship and worry, we have sold our souls for a mess of pottage. Any man who trades his health and peace of mind for ulcers and a coronary disorder in a mad race for a place in the sun will live to regret it. Any man who exchanges his family's happiness for a big bank account will wake up some day to the realization that he has made a bad bargain. Greed for gold makes men gamblers, cheats, thieves, and drunkards. It is one of the greatest causes of worry and ill health. These are the moths that corrupt and the thieves that break through our best defenses and steal away our treasure.

TRUE WEALTH LIES IN
SPIRITUAL TREASURES

Few of us ever have
opportunity to store

up worldly goods. All earthly treasure is subject to many risks. And this introduces us to the third thought that Jesus would have us see and that is that true wealth lies in spiritual treasure.

We all may store up the things of the spirit. True wealth lies in love and service to our fellow

man. It grows as we honor God and master ourselves in the interest of some high cause. Jesus was interested in this kind of wealth. His entire ministry was devoted to helping men live ~~in~~ the rich, abundant, and wealthy life.

In the land where Jesus lived there are two lakes, each of which is formed by the widening of the Jordan River. One is the Sea of Galilee. I have seen the Sea of Galilee with flowers blooming on its shores and vineyards flourishing on its hillsides. Fish swim in its sparkling waters. The lake appears always to be clean and wholesome BECAUSE it gets its water only to give it away and let it flow onward through the country to the south

The other lake is the Dead Sea. Its water is so salty that no fish can live in it. No trees or flowers are to be seen on its banks. It has no outlet, but keeps its water to itself and for this reason it is dead and stagnant. These two lakes in the land where Jesus lived underscore his teaching that overflowing generosity is the source of the wealthy life and that selfishness dries up the human soul and make the spirit poor.

The wealthy life is rich of soul and spacious of mind. It is generous in its judgment of others. It invests heavily in love and forgiveness and understanding. It lifts the fallen and encourages the weary. It bears the loads, losses and burdens of life with little complaint. It performs the duties of life with a ready hand and trusts God when explanations are beyond reach. These are the things that make life wealthy, regardless of any limiting circumstance.

The poet Edwin Markham, was once persuaded by some friends to put the savings of a lifetime into some very unsound investments. One day word came to him that he had lost all of his money. It was all he possessed. He felt very bitter over the matter, but not for long. His generous Christian spirit soon asserted itself. He took a sheet of paper and idly drew two circles and then almost before he knew it, he wrote his famous poem, "Outwitted."

He drew a circle that shut me out --
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout,
But love and I had the wit to win:
We drew a circle that took him in.

It is this spirit of love that lays up treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not corrupt and where thieves do not break through and steal. Spiritual treasures are beyond corruption and cannot be stolen.

Jesus is telling us:

- FIRST: The things we live for determine the direction of our lives.
- SECOND: Earthly treasure alone is an insecure basis for personal security.
- THIRD: True wealth lies in spiritual treasures.

Of such is the wealthy life....

LET US PRAY:

Our Heavenly Father, forbid it that our roots become too firmly attached to this earth, that we should fall in love with things.....

We release to Thee the greed and overambition that has made us try to grasp too much of life too quickly.....

Help us to simplify our lives. Help us to live for those things that are truly important.

In the name of Jesus, Our Lord and Master. Amen.