



Reflections

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21 NKJ)

Jesus taught a multitude of people one day on the Mount of Beatitudes, as it is presently named, and the things He taught, described a life that would become a reflection of His glory in the lives of those who believe in Him. He taught them that sin was not mere wrong behavior, but was a condition of the heart of man. He traced the law's mandates from the old covenant to the intents of the heart and mind in such a way as to challenge even the most self-righteous among them. Many quit following Him while others remained as His followers.

We can be among those who react negatively to His teaching or we can be those who have not only accepted the truth of His Word, but who have believed on Him for salvation. Let's assume the latter to be true and reflect for a few moments on why then it is so important to understand His teaching regarding what we treasure in our life. Jesus wants us to realize that life is more than this temporal existence on the Earth. He frequently teaches, in His Word, that life is eternal and must be reckoned with on that reality. He has taught us that the Father knows us intimately and that we are accountable to Him for what we do in this life and whether or not we have received, in His Son, the forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life in Jesus.

The Psalmist explains how intimately we are known by God when he writes - *For You formed my inward parts; You covered me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴ I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well. ¹⁵ My frame was not hidden from You, When I was made in secret, And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. ¹⁶ Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, The days fashioned for me, When as yet there were none of them. (Psalm 139:13-16 NKJ)* Here we are confronted with the One who knows us intimately. We are all separated from Him by sin, but He has by His grace, offered, in His Son, reconciliation to Himself. Only

God, who is our Creator, can claim such a relationship with us. He knows our innermost thoughts, He knows whether our walk with Christ is one that brings glory to Jesus or one that defames that name before whom all must one day bow. He knows if we are genuine in our testimony, if we are feasting on His Word, and if we are obedient to His Son. He knows where our treasure is, do we?

Where then is our treasure? Do we count our material blessings as our treasure? Is it our accumulated wealth? Is it our fame or talent? Is it our physical appearance? Is it in power and prestige? Where our treasure is perceived to be is an indicator of where our heart and life is focused. Since Jesus wants us to give our heart, mind, soul and life to Him, are we so tied to our treasure that we miss His call? A ruler came to Jesus asking Him what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus tested him regarding the commandments and he responded that these he had kept from his youth. Jesus, looking into the man's heart, then told him what was missing in the man's life in order for him to be a disciple. *So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²³ But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. (Luke 18:22-23 NKJ)* His heart was enslaved to his wealth and he could not part with it even for eternal life.

We can look at this man and shake our heads at his inability to give up the temporal things for the eternal, yet, are we not often guilty of the same short-sightedness? How often have we neglected the Word of God for a time of pleasure or profit? How often have we been questionable in our dealings with others, both in the body and in the world? The times in which we live will increasingly demand that we determine where our treasure is in order to face challenges to our faith which will likely become ever more frequent. Jesus gave His life for us on the Cross, the most humiliating death possible since crucifixion was the penalty for those who were criminals, yet He willingly suffered for our salvation. What treasure could we possibly have that would be of more value than eternal life in Christ? These are not new questions. We have shared them between us many times. The answer we give to these questions, however, is very personal, very serious, and very informative as to where our heart is regarding eternity. Let's choose to lay up our treasure in heaven. **Pastor Doug**