



A Systematic Expository Study of the Word of God

Special Study:

LAYING UP OUR TREASURES IN HEAVEN **Matthew 6:19-21**

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth,...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven.” Christ’s exhortation concerning our treasures is two-fold - negative and positive. The word, “treasures”, is very broad and all-inclusive, meaning wealth, costly things such as property, lands, gold and precious stones; possession including money. Here, our Lord warns us against confining our ambition, interests and pre-occupation to this life. Everyone needs this exhortation because we all have treasures in some shape or form. The poor and the rich, the young and the old all have treasures they can lay up either on earth or in heaven. The first part of Christ’s command teaches us not to lay or store our treasures on earth, and gives us the reason for the teaching. The second part instructs us where to lay or keep our treasures and He gives us the reasons for the instruction. Those who lay up treasures for themselves upon earth are thinking of their future on earth. Those who lay up treasures for themselves in heaven are thinking and planning for their future in heaven. Both are thinking of the future, but one is earth-bound while the other is heaven-bound. One is foolish because his labour and treasures will perish with the earth; the other is wise because his labour is eternally rewardable and his treasures are imperishable in heaven.

TEMPORAL THINGS TERMED TREASURES ON EARTH

Matthew 6:19-21; Genesis 43:19-23; Proverbs 15:16; 21:6; Ecclesiastes 2:8-10; Isaiah 30:6,7; Jeremiah 41:8; 48:7; 49:4; Acts 8:27; James 5:1-3; Hebrews 11:24-26.

From the earliest of times, from the time of Jacob in Genesis, the term, treasure, had been identified with money. Other passages or references of Scripture identify treasure as riches, wealth, possession, produce of the farmer’s field for sale, profit or gain through labour, monetary reward of labour, silver and gold, gifts and inheritance.

In ancient times treasures also included clothes or changes of raiment as well as gold, silver, gems, lands and oil. It meant anything possessed which could be used to provide present and future comfort or convenience in life. Men often lay up these treasures - money, earthly possessions - like Achan hid the “goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight” or like the treasure of “goodly pearls of great price” “hid in a field”.

Here, our Lord cautions us and warns us against hoarding our money or other valuable possessions when there are needs to be met all around us. Laying up treasures for ourselves on earth is an evidence that our hope, faith and trust are in our wealth and riches. We must provide for the present and future needs of our family (2 Corinthians 12:14; 1 Timothy 5:8) but we must not put our hope or trust in riches (Job 31:24-28; Mark 10:24,25).

TRAGEDY OF LAYING TREASURES ON EARTH

Matthew 6:19; Ecclesiastes 5:10-15; 2:18-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; Luke 12:15-21; Jeremiah 51:13-18; Psalm 39:4-7; John 6:27; James 5:1-3; Job 31:24-28; Mark 10:17-27; 1 John 2:15-17.

“Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.” The selfish practice of laying up treasures or riches for ourselves only, without any regard to using our wealth for the good of our generation, the support of the Gospel, or the glory of God, is forbidden and condemned by Christ. Everyone of us is only a steward, to spend or dispense God’s treasure entrusted to us for the glory of God, the gospel of Christ and the good of our fellow-men.

The Lord has given us a three-fold reason for the divine precept not to lay treasures for ourselves on earth. Treasures laid up on earth are liable to destruction - can be eaten up by moths. There is also the inherent decay which pertains to all earthly things - treasures laid up on earth losing value because of rust, destruction or inflation. These earthly treasures

laid up for many years can be stolen away or the owners can be taken away from the earth, leaving the treasures behind. "Then whose shall those things be, which" are "laid up for many years"? Heaven is the only safe place in which to deposit or keep our treasures, riches and wealth.

TREASURY FOR OUR TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Matthew 6:20,21; Luke 12:31-37; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Luke 16:9-12; Isaiah 33:6; Philippians 3:7-11,20,21; Hebrews 10:32-34; 2 Corinthians 4:18; 2 Timothy 4:6-8,18; Colossians 3:1-4.

"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal". Heaven is real and we must prepare not only to reach there but to be rewarded there. To reach there and be received into heaven, we must be "poor in spirit", "hunger and thirst after righteousness" until we are "filled", be "pure in heart" and endure persecution for "righteousness' sake" "unto the end" (Matthew 5:3-10; 24:13). To get to heaven, we must be born again and receive God's grace to live in holiness of life before God all the days of our life (John 3:3-7; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 12:14). To have treasures in heaven and know in ourselves that we "have in heaven a better and an enduring substance", we must lay our treasures in heaven while we are still living on earth. How can we lay up treasures in heaven? "Give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven". "Preach the gospel to the poor". Use your treasure, time and talent to bring life to those who are spiritually dead and light to those who are living in darkness. Use your substance to bring hope to the hopeless and salvation to the lost. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

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