

The Divine Conspiracy

"Treasure"

Matthew 6:19-24

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Let's get clear about one thing here: Jesus does not say not to treasure things. He does not say we're not supposed to store up what we do treasure. No. He says everything depends on *where* we invest it, where we store it.

I always used to come to this passage and simply assume that Jesus teaches that we need to change WHAT we value – value the right things! Don't value what the world values! But that isn't what he says! He says store it in heaven – whatever it is. I'd gone right past this for years.

If we invest in the wrong place, it doesn't matter if we value the right things – they will disappear. Furthermore, the point Jesus seems to be making is this: the place we invest it has great power!

The treasure isn't as important as the place where you invest it.

Let me use an example here. Let's say you had a million dollars in gold to invest. Pretty good, solid, measureable, glittering, tangible treasure wouldn't you say? It's really worth something! But if you put it into a tiny little bank with a falling down sign, no assets, and a pending bankruptcy hearing, that treasure is probably going to disappear. The investment vehicle is no good.

But let's say you only had a measly \$100 in paper money, it's 1964, and you put it in Berkshire Hathaway Stock. Today, that \$100 would be worth: \$1,272,700. Or, excuse me... \$1,272,699.63.... (I rounded up 37 cents).

The place we store our treasure is the key. The point is that we're supposed to engage in *treasure management* – by putting everything we treasure in the right place.

- **Where we put our treasure is the key, not what we treasure...**

The place we're supposed to put whatever we treasure is with God. Jesus says, *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and thieves burrow into and steal, but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and thieves do not burrow into and steal."*

Does this mean, as some have thought, don't invest in this life at all? That it's all a waste? That the only thing that counts is the NEXT life? I don't think so. To place your treasure in heaven means to place it there NOW. Heaven has to do with God's eternal realm which surrounds us every second, is closer than your heartbeat, and is more real than this world. Jesus is making the startling claim that we can actually store up treasure in God's realm right now.

Neither does this mean to store up righteousness in heaven against the day of entry when we'll need to bank on it to get in. I HOPE we all understand that the Kingdom enters us – we don't enter it. WE receive it, we don't earn it.

So, whatever you treasure put it in God's hands. Invest it with God. Take what you value, and give it to him. All of it.

I want to clear one little thing up right now. Many treat this as a passage about giving to the church. You know it's the old, "Invest in heavenly things, which means **church** – give your money to the church and it will be invested in spiritual things..." That's not at all what this teaching is about. It's about investing EVERYTHING you treasure with God, and doing that now. When we do that, we're storing up our treasure in the right place.

And Jesus does mean placing with God as Treasure manager everything and anything we value, or treasure.

Time? Education? Family? Savings? Laughter? Sunshine?

- **Put in the right place... the place itself has the power to do at least three things:**
 - **It Has the Power to Transform WHAT we treasure**

What do you treasure? By the way, let's remember something very important to God, value or treasure comes, not from the thing itself, but from US! There's nothing in gold that makes it inherently valuable, other than the value people PLACE upon it!

Something can be worth only a few dollars in monetary value, and be priceless to another. Like my nephew's Curious George doll. When he was little, Curious George went everywhere with him. Curious George became bedraggled, to say the least. His fur was worn slick. There were worn spots, and his stuffing was all lumpy and thin in places. You couldn't have gotten a plugged nickel for ol' George. But to my Nephew? Nothing was more prized or valued than that lumpy, worn out little monkey-thing.

Then my Sister and her husband moved across the country and lil' George was lost in the move. Oh my goodness! An All-Points-Family-Bulletin was put out for Curious George! My mother was called from the new place – could she double check that George wasn't left around grandmother's house? Could she go over to the former house and inquire if a worn-out trashy, lumpy monkey-thing was in a closet? In a box? ANYWHERE?

All to no avail. The grief went on for months. Because he was a treasure to a little boy. Just like the Velveteen Rabbit.

Or like Oklahoma after the tornadoes of 99 – photos.

But what does God value or treasure? The blood of Jesus. *"For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."* (I Peter 1:18)

God invests his treasure – the blood of Christ – in you; he thinks that's a worthy investment.

As we covered last week, the greatest treasure is the pleasure of the Father.

Where do WE invest our treasure? Wherever it is, it has the power to change what we value.

- **It has the Power to Multiply That Treasure Exponentially**

This treasure, when placed in the wrong place – disintegrates – it just melts away. But if we put it in Heaven, it multiplies exponentially.

Take time as an example – every time I have genuinely dedicated some time to God, I find that it mysteriously multiplies! I'm working on something and really getting somewhere. It seems that time is flying by. But when I look at the clock? It's as though I have all the time I need and more.

But when I grab for time as though it's mine alone, it just seems to slip through my fingers and there is never enough. It melts away.

The same is true in my experience with relationships – given to God; the richness of love and the joy of another's friendship or love grows beyond our imagination. But if we store it up for ourselves, they seem to diminish or even go sour or stale.

How is this so true? Because where we put our treasure has the power to transform WHAT we value, but then it multiplies it exponentially.

Especially in receiving and giving back the pleasure of the Father...

- **It has the power to transform our heart.**
 - **Treasure shapes HEART - HEART does not shape TREASURE**
- **The Goal is Heart -**
 - **What is HEART?** - It's the place where everything we are – the decisions we make, the emotions that help us live, our spirits – where we are fully alive in the Holy Spirit, and our minds all come together and intersect.
 - **Alive at the center and living from there.**
- **This is what the Eye Statement is about - when we're alive and living from God's center, with a properly aligned heart - our vision is on what God envisions. Vision determines direction, but proper vision comes from the heart, which comes from placing our treasure in heaven.**

- **How's your vision? What do you dream about? Do you still dream? Do you see what God sees? All this comes from where we put what we treasure.**
- **If I take what I value and give it to God, it changes the way I see the world.**
- **Money** - Let's look at money through this lens. If we store it with God by giving it all to him, then it gets transformed. We value it not for what it can get for us, but how it can be used for God's Kingdom. We begin to see it as a tool used to glorify God and love and serve others. It is multiplied, not in amount, but in what it does for God. This is why Jesus could say that the widow who put the one cent-piece in the treasury at the Temple was said by him to give MORE than all the others put together, because it could be used to God's glory.
- **AND** - our heart grows around what money can do for God rather than for us – our heart is transformed.
 - **In this way money is a means to end, not an end in itself.**
 - **BUT - if we treat money as an end in itself?** If we don't give it all to God, if we store it up only here and for ourselves, it tends to become like a demonic power that takes over life. Then there is never enough of it – it always seems to disintegrate and slip away, we value what is shallow and our hearts become hard.
 - **Money is just money, but if we store it in the wrong place, if we invest it in this life and on our own, then it becomes Mammon - something that takes over our lives and leads us away from God. The amount doesn't matter. I've known people with very little money whose lives were taken over by it, just as I've known people with a great deal of money who stored it with God and who weren't affected by it at all.**
 - **JUST AS I've known those with a great deal of money who stored it with themselves and lost their souls and I've known**

**people with little money who were rich in God. The
AMOUNT isn't as important as where we put it!**

- **Treasure management - give whatever you treasure over to the Lord.
This is the life of faith.**