

TREASURES IN HEAVEN—AND HOW TO LAY THEM UP!

Big Picture, we are in the midst of a series entitled “God, Gifts, and Giving.” In way of review, **we first** looked at the truth that God wants **you** before He wants your money! **Why?** Because God is a **living, loving personal Being** that wants to have a relationship with **you**—not your rituals or your religion!

Just **as a child** wants their parents’ attention and love and time **more than toys**—and a spouse wants the attention and love and time of their spouse—God wants the same from us! He **knows us** already—and wants us to **know Him**!

Jer 9:23-24 “Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: ²⁴ But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he **understandeth and knoweth me**, that I am the Lord which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”

Did you catch that? God **delights** in us knowing Him—so much so that He wants us to glory—to brag about—knowing Him!

Second, we looked at three declarations God makes regarding money and possessions. God owns all things, God gives us what we have, and God wants us to be givers!

And the last couple of weeks, we’ve been looking at the Jesus’ commands regarding laying up treasures as found in Mt 6:19-20. Let’s turn there once again; please follow along as I read verses 19-21.

The **first command** is relatively easy to understand—“**Lay not** up for yourselves treasures **upon earth**.” What does that mean? It means not to be focused and pre-occupied **with this life** and **the things** of this life. Luke 12:15 “And He [Jesus] said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life **consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth**.”

The **second command**—“...**lay up** for yourselves treasure **in heaven**”—is a little more difficult to understand, though. Understanding **why** we should lay up treasures in heaven **isn’t** the difficult part. One reason—and the only reason we **should really need**—is because **Jesus commands it!** But there are other reasons and we looked at 3 of them last week. Reason #1—Because our life will end, and we can’t take our earthly treasures with us! Reason # 2—Because we are pilgrims passing through this life. And because we are pilgrims, we should want treasures in our **permanent** home—not our **temporary** one! Reason #3—Because we are stewards that will give an account of ourselves to God!

What exactly will we give an account of? We will give an account of what **we have been given!**

What have we been given? According to J. Hampton Keathley, III—and others...but more importantly, the Bible—each believer has been given time, talents, treasures, a temple (your body), and the truth (God’s Word)

But **how** does our use of time...and talents...and treasures here on **this earth** “lay up treasures **in heaven**?”

We’ve never **been there**—and once we get there, we **can’t come back!** In other words, we can’t go to heaven, drop off treasure, then come back to earth for more treasure!

So how can we **send ahead of us**—to heaven—something from this life that has value in the next?

And then there’s this question—what **kind of treasures** will they be?

How we use our **time** on earth won’t “store up” **time** in heaven because time will be no more!

How we use our **talents** on earth won’t “lay up” **talents** in heaven because they won’t be needed there!

And how we use our **treasures** on earth won’t put **money** in a heavenly bank account because money won’t matter there!

So we’re going to dig into some of these questions here this morning. We’ve talked about some of this already, but as I mentioned last week, some things need to stay “in the crock pot” a little longer than others. Besides, our on-line listeners didn’t get to hear the sermon last week due to technical difficulties!

Let's consider first... **1. What are treasures in heaven?**

A. Treasures in heaven are not earthly things

We don't need to spend much time on this one because we've been looking at it off and on for the last couple of weeks. Treasures in heaven are not **things from earth** that are transferred up to heaven!

--They are not **garments or grain that last longer** in heaven because of the absence of **moths and mice!**

--And even though **money** would **be safe** in heaven because there won't be thieves there, money won't be necessary in heaven! We will be **walking** on streets of gold (Rev 21:21)—and Rev 21:19 says "and the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones."

Treasures in heaven, then, are not **possessions** from this life.

B. Treasures in heaven are rewards

1) Jesus spoke of rewards **while here on earth**.

--Turn back a few pages to Mt 5:11-12. Here we see we will be rewarded if we are made fun of... or persecuted... or lied about because of our faith.

--Jump ahead to Mt 10; notice verses 41-42. Here we see we will be rewarded for properly caring for God's people—even if it is only giving them a cup of water! It is possible that the reward will only happen here **on earth**, but based on some other verses I think there are **heavenly rewards** as well.

--Now Mt 19; vs 21. We looked at this a couple of weeks ago. Jesus is **not** telling the rich young ruler that he will get into heaven by giving to the poor. But...Jesus certainly **is saying** that there are rewards for helping meet the needs of the poor! And these rewards are what Jesus calls "treasure in heaven."

2) Jesus promises rewards **when He returns**. **Rev 22:12** "And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

So... we see from Mt 19:21—and Revelation 22:12—that ... C. Treasures in heaven are rewards for good works

I want us to turn again to I Corinthians 3. We looked at this last week, but I think it would be good to see it again. Notice how many times works (or labors) are connected to rewards.

--End of vs 8 "...and every man shall receive his **own reward** according to his **own labour**."

--Vs 13. "Every **man's work** shall be made manifest [evident]: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try **every man's work** of what sort it is."

--**Why** are our works tried by fire? To see what sort—what kind—of works they are!

--**Why does it matter what kind** of works we have? Because some are **worthy of rewards**—and some **are not!** We see that plainly stated in vss 14-15 "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive **a reward**.¹⁵ If any man's work shall be burned, **he shall suffer loss**: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." His "suffering loss" does not mean loss of salvation—but it does mean loss of rewards!

--Is it a **literal, physical** fire? Probably not! How would you "bundle up" works and put it through fire? God **could do** it that way, of course! He could take our good works—our works done in the right way with the right motive—and transform them into literal gold, silver, or precious stones and run them through a fire! They would make it through—but wood, hay, and stubble obviously wouldn't!

Or... God is using metaphors for us to better visualize what the judgment of our works will be like. The bottom line, though, is obviously this: our works will be judged by God! And some works will be deemed worthy of **rewards**—while others **will not be!**

Let's consider next... **2. What are the rewards?**

We know from the passage before us that we shall receive rewards for our labors. But what will the **rewards be?** We already know our rewards—our treasures **in heaven**—will not be what we consider treasure here **on earth**. The Bible doesn't give a lot of specifics regarding what these rewards will be. Here are a few, though:

A. Hearing, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"

We see that in **Mt 25:21, 23** "...Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord."

Is that a reward—a treasure in heaven—that we **should desire?** I sure think so!

These verses also refer to another possible reward...

B. Positions of authority in the Millennial Kingdom

"I will make thee ruler over many things..." Is it talking about ruling **in heaven!** Obviously not—but it certainly could be referring to ruling **on earth** when Jesus sits on a literal throne in Jerusalem, ruling for 1000 years!

In a different parable given by Jesus, we see similar rewards for faithful service.

Luke 19:17 "And He said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, **have thou authority over ten cities.**"

Notice Peter's question—and Jesus' answer—when Peter asked about rewards.

Mt 19:27-28 "Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? ²⁸ And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man **shall sit in the throne of His glory**, ye also **shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.**"

It seems, then, that part of the rewards of faithfully serving God during **this life** will be positions of responsibility during the Millennial Kingdom.

Although we don't have a lot of **details** about rewards, we do know that **we will be rewarded!** How do we know? Because God says we will be! I'm of the opinion that God doesn't give us a lot of the details because He wants us to **walk by faith—not by sight!**

There's another reward—another treasure in heaven—that we probably don't think about as much as we should. I want to introduce this reward to you by having you first **take your hymnal** and turn to page 451. Please follow along as I read the first stanza of "I Saw Jesus in You."

When I enter heaven's glory and I see my Savior's face,

I will offer Him ten thousand years of praise.

Then I'll find that special one in whose life I saw God's Son,

And through tears of joy with trembling lips these words I'll say:

Chorus: *I saw Jesus in you, I saw Jesus in you.*

I could hear His voice in the words you said—I saw Jesus in you.

In your eyes I saw His care, I could see His love was there.

You were faithful, and I saw Jesus in you.

Quite a thought, isn't it? Getting to heaven, finding the person that pointed **you** to Christ, and thanking them!

But let's not forget the possibility of the **flip side**: getting to heaven...and having people come up **to you, thanking you** for pointing **them** to Christ! What a humbling, joy-filled, tear-jerking moment that will be!

But these are thoughts **from a song!** Words **of a song** don't make something true! **God's Word** is what determines whether something **is true!**

Is there **Biblical** support for this idea of ... C. Rejoicing with those we've impacted for Christ?

I believe there is! Notice on your outline **I Thessalonians 2:19-20** "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? ²⁰ For ye are our glory and joy." In the way of background, Paul, Silas, and Timothy came to the city of Thessalonica and shared Christ with them. They had to leave, however, because a riot started, and some people wanted to kill Paul!

We can tell from the letters Paul wrote to them—I and II Thessalonians—that these new believers—his children in the faith—had a special place in his heart.

Back to the verses on your outline.

"For what"—**who**—"is our hope?" Who is the object on which our hopes are based on?

Who will bring us **joy** when Jesus returns?

Who will be the ones for which we will receive a **crown of rejoicing**—a victory wreath—like the ones victorious military commanders received? Paul then answers his own question: "Is it **not even you?**"

'**You** are the ones who will bring **us joy** when Jesus comes; you are the proof that we have been faithful! And because of your salvation—and perseverance—we will receive a crown!'

Vs 20 “For ye **are** our glory and our joy.” Not only will you bring us joy on judgment day, you bring us joy **now!**

It seems to me, then, that if **people** getting saved brings joy now—and future rewards in heaven—that **pointing people to Christ** is a big part of laying up treasures in heaven! We can’t save them, of course—only Jesus saves! But we need to be faithful in sharing their need for Christ—and His ability and willingness to save.

With that in mind, let’s consider this... **3. How to lay up treasures in heaven?**

How do we go about—in a practical sense—laying up treasures in heaven? We touched on it some last week, but I want to expand on it more this morning.

A. Invest your **time** with an eternal perspective

Last week, I mentioned the importance of making time for God and the work of God. We should pray...and read our Bibles...and come to church to hear God’s Word...and worship God...and be a blessing to one another. But investing our time with an eternal perspective isn’t just about reading our Bibles, praying, and coming to church. Let’s think about two different categories of people here in our church.

1) Parents with children. How can parents with young children invest their time with an eternal perspective?

- Read with them, pray with them, bring them to church, bring them to VBS, send them to camp
- Be creative in recognizing throughout the day ways you can talk about God
- Be mindful that you need God’s forgiveness just like they do
- Love them—and show them what Jesus is like
- Lastly—but most importantly—seek to win them to Christ!

What a wonderful thing it will be to spend eternity **with your children!** Proverbs 31:28 reminds us, “Her children arise up and call her blessed.” Paul commended both the mother—and grandmother—of Timothy for sharing God’s Word with Timothy when he was a child. Parents—especially Moms—have many opportunities to invest in eternity!

2) Those of us without children at home. What about us without children at home? How can we use our time with an **eternal** perspective? If we are grandparents—and our grandchildren are around—we certainly can do some of the things I just mentioned. But we can also invest time in **our friends**—or other **family** members.

We should invest our time in **building relationships** with the unsaved so we can point them to Christ. It is easy to build relationships with people based on **common interests**—but we need to be ever mindful that **they are a soul that will spend eternity** somewhere and God has brought them into our lives for a reason!

B. Invest your talents with an eternal perspective

We can invest our talents with an eternal perspective in much of the same ways we invest our time. God has given us different talents and abilities—and we should use them to serve Him both **inside**—and **outside**—the church. As mentioned last week, playing musical instruments...singing...preaching...and teaching are ways to serve within the church. But so is mowing...and snowplowing...and weed-whacking...and cleaning...and bringing snacks...and helping with VBS...and volunteering to do some of the other dozen or so things on our project list!

But...those same talents and abilities can still be invested with an eternal perspective **outside** the church. You can be a blessing to others by volunteering to help them with things that you know how to do. You can “win” them as a friend—which, in time, will provide you an opportunity to tell them about Christ!

Lastly, C. Invest your treasures with an eternal perspective

Just as how we use **our time** reveals our priorities, the same can be said for how we use **our money**. Ever hear this saying—or something like it: “Show me a person’s checkbook and I can tell you what he cares about.” I wonder **how long a pastor would last in a church** if he visited everyone that attended and asked to see their budget and checkbook!

That’s not my place—and I’d never do that—but let’s not forget this: **God sees** your checkbook; **God knows** what you spend your money on! What does God see? Does He see an **investment** in eternal things? Does He see money set aside **for Him** each week? Does He see money going into the **camp fund...or missions?**

I mentioned when I started this series that I’m not preaching on money because **I want a raise**—and I’m not preaching on money because **we are behind on our bills**.

But I do have an ulterior motive—I would like to see us as a church support **more missionaries!**

Why? Because it is an investment with an eternal perspective—and laying up treasures in heaven!

Jesus commands us to lay up treasures in heaven. **What** are treasures in heaven?

--One is hearing “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” from the Lord.

--Another is hearing someone say to us, “Thank you; thank you for pointing me to Christ.”

How are treasures like that laid up?

--By using our time...and our talents...and our money with an eternal perspective.

Are you doing that?

So what would God have us do in light of His Word this morning?

1. First, are you 100% certain you are going to heaven after you die? We can know—and God wants us to know! How can we know? By having the Son—by having Jesus. I John 5:12 plainly states that: “He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”

Do you **have** Jesus? Knowing **about** Him is not enough!

2. Second, how do you use your time...and talents...and money?

--They are all gifts from God.

--Are you investing in things that have eternal value?

3. Third, ask God to burden you for souls—and make you bold in telling others. You know this, but I’m going to say it anyway: “**People** are the only thing from earth that you can **bring to heaven** with you!”