



## ***“Our Real Treasure”***

**Matthew 6:16-24**

**Sermon Date: December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

### **Prayer:**

Living Lord, please continue to reveal your heart to me as you teach me through your Word. Search my heart for you alone can see that which remains unseen to others. I want to guard my heart closely for I know it is the well spring of life as your Word says in Proverbs 4:23. Work in my heart so that what comes out of it would reveal a true relationship with you and not just religious practices. May you alone be the treasure that I seek.

### **Review:**

Last week we took an in-depth look at Matthew 6:10-13 and what is commonly referred to as the Lord’s Prayer. In that passage Jesus provides for His disciples an example of how to come before the Lord in prayer. This instruction came in direct contrast to the way they had been praying, which was in such a way that others might see them. Jesus in that passage, and in the entire Sermon on the Mount, makes it clear that He is concerned about the heart and not just outward obedience. Our passage this week will continue to draw our attention to that truth as we look at fasting and that which is treasured in one’s heart.

### **Scripture:**

**Matthew 6:16-24 (ESV) -**

16 “And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces that their fasting may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. 17 But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, 18 that your fasting may not be seen by others but by your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

19 “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.

22 “The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, 23 but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

24 “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

## **Handling the Word:**

1. Jesus all throughout the Sermon on the Mount criticizes the religious leaders, most notably the Pharisees, for doing right things for the wrong reasons. Read through the portion of the Sermon on the Mount that we have studied thus far at least two times through (Matthew 5:1-6:18). As you read through it pick at least 6 of Jesus' specific teachings and explain how each of them show His concern for the heart and not just outward obedience.

2. In verses 16-18 of chapter 6 Jesus delivers correction and instruction in regard to the religious practice of fasting. Using your New Unger's Bible Dictionary, or any other resources you have available to you, explain what it means to fast or to be fasting.

3. The practice of fasting was utilized frequently in both the Old and New Testaments and for a number of different reasons. Look up each of the passages below and write down the reason for the fasting in each of them.

1 Kings 21:25-29 –

Ezra 8:21-23 –

Ezra 10:6 –

Esther 4:12-17 –

Psalms 35:13-14 –

Matthew 4:1-3 –

Matthew 9:14-15 –

Acts 13:2-3 –

4. Summarize the two sections of Matthew 6 that are covered in this lesson.

Matthew 6:16-18 –

Matthew 6:19-24 –

## **Understanding and Applying:**

1. In verse 16 Jesus condemns the hypocrites for the way in which they practiced fasting. What were they doing physically and what was the heart issue that was being revealed by Jesus? Use Zechariah 7:4-6 and Isaiah 58:1-9 to support your answer.
2. How does Jesus tell the disciples they ought to fast in verses 17-18? Although not specifically commanded in Scripture, what is the significance of fasting in the life of a follower of Christ?
3. Fasting and prayer are coupled together all throughout Scripture (Acts 13:2-3, 14:23). Why is prayer a necessary part of fasting? When was the last time you dedicated yourself to prayer and fasting for a period of time? In what ways did you see the Lord work in that situation?
4. Jesus gets to the heart and motivation of three different religious practices in verses 6:1-18; giving to the needy, prayer, and fasting. Jesus clearly is not saying that these are the only three areas in which your motivation is just as important as your actual action. In what other areas in your Christian life do you find yourself sometimes doing the right thing but with the wrong motivation? Ask the Lord to reveal to you those areas which you currently may be blind to.
5. Even though Jesus makes a transition (v. 19) to another aspect of what life looks like in God's Kingdom, He continues to challenge and expose the heart of His followers. What is the heart issue Jesus teaches about in verses 19-21? What did Jesus mean by the phrase "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (v. 21)?

6. Why would Jesus specifically warn us against laying up treasures for ourselves on earth (Exodus 20:3-4, 20:17)? In what ways can material possessions become a hindrance to one's spiritual growth (Matthew 19:16-22, Luke 12:13-21)?

7. In verses 22-23 Jesus expounds upon what He said in verses 19-21 by using the eye as an illustration of the heart. If the eye is the lamp of the body then the heart is the eye of the soul. If the eye is bad then the whole body will be full of darkness. So too, if the heart is bad then the soul will be full of darkness. How does that which we treasure reflect that which is in the heart, good or bad?

8. John MacArthur writes in His commentary on verses 22-23 that "The principle is simple and sobering: the way we look at and use our money is a sure barometer of our spiritual condition." If the way you spend your money is a barometer of what your spiritual condition is, what is your barometer reading? According to the way you spend your money, would you say that you treasure that which is earthly or that which is in heaven? Why?

9. According to verse 24, why does Jesus say that it is important for us to check our hearts in regard to the issue of what we treasure (see also 1 Timothy 6:6-10)? Since we cannot serve both God and money, therefore giving our allegiance to only one, which one are you serving? If you have been treasuring the earthly above the heavenly, ask that the Holy Spirit would work in your heart and help you to change your allegiance to Him.

*"Where riches hold the dominion of the heart, God has lost His authority."  
John Calvin*