*Introduction*

We have over a number of weeks been looking at the Sermon on the Mount, and in this chapter of Matthew we have been dealing so far with our relationship with God as our Heavenly Father.

This has to be the most important thing for the Christian - that they are children of the Almighty God, and our relationship with him is one like a father to a child.

We have been looking at our personal lives in Christ with the father, so that when we interact with ourselves, those around us and God himself, we do so in a way that is private in that we do not 'show off' in front of others, that we go about our normal daily business doing those 'works' that He has ordained for us to do, yet doing them naturally, and coming to pray in the right way, again, not with lots of words repeated day after day, but quietly, shut in from the rest of the world, placing Him at the centre before bringing those things that He already knows we need.

This morning we begin looking at another aspect of our relationship with the father, it is the cares, stresses. lures and involvement with the world.

The Christian has to deal with three areas in his life, they are the world, the flesh and the devil. The Lord knows our problems in each area and helps us with the individual conflicts that arise on a daily basis.

The devil is particularly watchful when a man or woman who claim Christ as their Saviour are devout in their beliefs and deeds and will find every opportunity to throw us off course.

On top of that we have 'the world' and all that it brings.

When Jesus talks about the world, he is not talking about the physical universe or a collection of people, he is talking about our outlook, our mentality, the way we look at things.

The Christians problem with the world is a subtle one, and it is not easy.

Jesus often emphasised that being a follower of Him was not and would not be easy.

He himself, was tempted by the devil in the wilderness for forty days and nights, and the devil used the lure of world to try and make him sin. But he did not.

It is because the world is a difficult place, with many pitfalls, that Jesus dealt with our personal relationship with the Father first. Get that right, and our outlook will be right.

Jesus teaches us that the world or worldliness will attack us in two ways:

Firstly, there may be a positive love of the world. Secondly, there may be anxiety, or a spirit of anxious care in respect to the world.

The one is as dangerous as the other, so our Lord deals first with the love of the world and then the cares of the world.

We have to remember that Jesus is still speaking within the context of our relationship with the father, so we must be careful not to reduce His teaching on these things down to just a list of do's and don'ts, or rules and regulations, for if we do we become Pharisees and hypocrites.

Some get so concerned about being sucked in by the world or get so anxious by the world that there is only one thing they can do, that is, shut themselves off from it, go and live in a monastery or commune, or live as a hermit.

But this is not what God intends for us.

For before Jesus went back into heaven he gave the great commission - to go into ALL the world and preach the Gospel.

Jesus starts this section with a negative

***19‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth***

What does Jesus mean by this statement?

Firstly we must avoid thinking that He is only concerned with money, if we do, we can think that it does not apply to me because I haven't got any!!

It is a message for ALL of us, not just the few. What does 'treasures' cover?

It's a very all - inclusive word which includes money but means so much more.

Jesus is not so much concerned with what we have, but our attitude towards what we have.

There is nothing wrong in having wealth in itself, what can be very wrong is the relationship we have with our wealth, and this is true about everything money can buy.

We can take it even further, it is a question about ones whole attitude towards life in this world. What Jesus is concerned with is that we do not confine our ambition, our interests, our hopes to this life.

It is the in thing these days to have what is called a 'bucket list', a list of all the things you want to do before you die. The trouble with that is it can become all consuming and you spend your time ticking off the individual things on the list and actual miss living...

We begin to love the world and everything in it..

***1 John 2:15Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20John+2:14-16&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-30566a)***] is not in them. 16For everything in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life – comes not from the Father but from the world.***

***James 4:3When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.***

***4You adulterous people,[***[***a***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+4%3A3-5&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-30342a)***] don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity against God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. 5Or do you think Scripture says without reason that he jealously longs for the spirit he has caused to dwell in us[***[***b***](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=James+4%3A3-5&version=NIVUK#fen-NIVUK-30343b)***]?***

Its not only the love of money, its the love of honour, the love of position, the love of status....These things can all become treasures of the here and now.

Why does Jesus tell us not to do these things,

***where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.***

The simple truth is, it will not last, it will either deteriorate, or be taken by someone else.

The ancient Egyptians who were wealthy, believed they could take their wealth with them when they died, the pyramids show us that they even tried to take hundreds of servants with them - but they couldn't!! The servants died, the treasures were stolen.

So, having said that, How do we 'lay up treasures in heaven?'

This is the positive part of Jesus message.

***20But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven***

What Jesus is teaching here - IS NOT achieving your own salvation. There is nothing that you can do to get you into heaven yourself. We do have to be clear on that.

If that were the case, then Jesus would not have had to die, he would not have had to come at all, we could have just carried on almost in the OT way.

Not only that, he was addressing those people to who he had already said "blessed are the poor in spirit, the one who has nothing, those who mourn over their sinfulness.

***1 Tim 6:6 But godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. 8 But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.***

and then again later in the chapter

***17 Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.***

***Mark 4:18And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,***

***19And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.***

***20And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred.***

Jesus is so concerned about our walk with Him that he does not want anything to get in the way or hinder.

Later in the book of Matthew Jesus is telling another parable and really brings home what he has been talking about

***Matt 25:34‘Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. 35For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, 36I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.”***

***37‘Then the righteous will answer him, “Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? 39When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?”***

***40‘The King will reply, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”***

In another story Jesus told of a rich man who went away, having been told to give his wealth to the poor, and Jesus said

***Matt 19:24Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God.’***

In order for each of us to lay up treasure in heaven, in practice, we have to have the

'right view of life' and especially a 'right view of glory'.

We have to live by the principle that we are pilgrims, we are walking through this world under the eye of God, in the direction of God and towards our eternal hope.

If we think and act in this way, how can we go wrong, in fact our lives will flow in such a way that we will not even know we are laying up treasures in heaven, because our focus is on Him.

The great men of faith in Hebrews 11 were just like this -

***13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. 14 People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. 15 If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 Instead, they were longing for a better country – a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them.***

By living by this principle of being pilgrims we come to understand that all that we have is not ours, we are just custodians of it, to use it for the glory of the Father

We are stewards who will have to give an account of our stewardship, just like the servants who were given the bags of gold.

Now there is obviously a link between this and what Jesus says next in verses 22-24

I want to cover this in a nutshell by saying this.

If you are looking on your life as a pilgrim, a steward of all God has given you, your eyes will see clearly and illuminate your whole being. But if you hold on to your wealth, if you become a miser, your eyes will be darkened, you will not see the blessings of God and you will be miserable.

You cannot have a halfway house either, you cant try and serve the two God and Money, because if you try that one will win, and that will be money.

In closing this chapter Jesus says 'Do not worry'

***25‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?***

The devil is very subtle, if he cant get you through wealth he will try and get you through worry.

The human way is to worry when we have money, who is going to try and get it from me!

and we worry if we don't have money - How will I pay the bills!

Jesus gives the people some practical examples - He says 'look at the birds' - their looked after, 'look at the flowers' they are clothed and even look better that King Solomon did.

This is all part of hoarding wealth here, Jesus states

***32For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. 33But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. 34Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.***

As a Christian you are not on your own, you have within you and around you the Holy Spirit, who will never leave you.

***Deut 31:6Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.’***

Worry comes from not trusting. Our God is the Almighty God, the only True God who knows all that you need - every day.

Throughout the 40 years in the wilderness the Israelites had manna and quail, their shoes and clothes did not wear out. They had everything they needed every day.

*Conclusion*

Don't trust in earthly treasure, for you cannot take it with you. But build up for yourself treasures in heaven, safe from harm and you do this by living as a pilgrim, walking towards God under His watchful eye towards our eternal hope.

And when you do, don't worry, He has got it all in Hand - and His hands are big.

Praise His name

Amen