

Day 1: Matthew 6:19

‘Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal;

The term we translate as *treasure* could mean “what we treasure” or ones’ total self - all that makes us real. The term *rust* means to “eat away.” It would be like a worm that would eat away at an object. Most of us believe (because of the various experiences that remind us) that life does not consist in what we have. What we have to guard against is the fear of not having enough. This fear is what causes us to believe that we must gather all we can, even if it is at the expense of our family and friends.

Question: What is the safest place to keep what you own?

Challenge: Make a list of the things you have that you treasure.

Scripture: Luke 11:34-36, 12:21-34, 16:13

Day 2: Matthew 6:20

but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal.

The phrase “treasure in heaven” was a common Jewish image for the future reward. Matthew however does not spell out how the disciples are to understand the phrase. From other things that Jesus talked about we can gather that they where to store up heavenly treasure by serving as Christ’s ambassadors in the world. We need to proclaim the reason for our hope. We need to shine the light of God into the dark places in people’s lives.

Question: Where do you think heaven is located?

Challenge: From your Day 1 list, what items will not be consumed by moth or rust?

Scripture: Matthew 11:24-12:4

Day 3: Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The “heart” in Jesus’ time is not the seat of feeling or emotion but was where the mind and being were located. This verse is not about a feeling of affection for our treasure by an orienting of our life to secure that treasure. Jesus is saying that our way of living with the rest of creation (people and nature) shows what we believe is important and where we will spend our time and money.

Question: Does money determine how we spend our time?

Challenge: Of your time, talent and money, how much do you give (in percentage) to God’s work?

Scripture: Ecclesiastics 2:13-23

Day 4: I Timothy 6:17

As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty, or to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but rather on God who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.

The problem with wealth is not the money but the attitudes that often come from having so much. Folks with a lot of money can become “haughty”- believing they are better than others. They can put their hopes in their wealth instead of God. A person will not automatically have these attitudes because they are wealthy, but the temptation is very great. Paul is telling Timothy and the church not to spend their valuable time on gaining wealth, nor should they assume that if someone is wealthy they are better or know more. It is a bold statement that God will provide all we need. It is bold because our life experiences will try to tell us otherwise.

Question: Would you elect a poor person for President?

Challenge: Without Social Security or retirement funds, how did people live if they were too old to work?

Scripture: Psalm 101

Day 5: I Timothy 6:18

They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share,

Say I found myself walking across a desert with a gallon of water and knew I needed only a pint to have enough for me to cross that desert. If there were others on the trip with me I am more likely to give them water because I am free from the fear of having enough for the journey. Having enough money gives us a sense of security so that we have the energy to do good deeds. The fear of not having enough is what keeps us from helping others. Citizens of a country are usually afraid of too many new immigrants because they fear they might lose some of what they have worked for all their life. It is that fear of not having enough that keeps us from sharing.

Question: How would you understand “doing good” in this passage?

Challenge: How much is enough for you to be unafraid of the future?

Scripture: Exodus 34:35-35:10

Day 6: I Timothy 6:19

thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.

I cannot say for sure but I wonder if the future spoken of is that time when we know our life on earth will come to a conclusion. At that point we want to say to ourselves “well done thou good and faithful servant enter into my joy.” We want to know we have lived our life so that God is pleased with us, because we did not waste what God gave to us, in the days we were on earth. When I have talked to folks whose life is coming to a close the ones who go with acceptance are the ones who have the assurance that they have been faithful. No one recalls the times they were out of work or the arguments with family or friends or the disappointments with others but they recall a whole life lived (to the best of their ability) faithfully. In order to come to that point in our life and know we have done well we have to begin now to commit ourselves to be generous with our time, talent and money. We owe everything to God. We need to acknowledge that reality in our actions.

Question: What does it mean “life that is really life”?

Challenge: What will you commit to God’s work? Will you give 10% of your time, talent and money to God?

Scripture: Matthew 6:19-21, I Timothy 6:17-19