

Treasure In Heaven Matthew 6:19-24

Matthew 5:13-16 (NIV)

Salt and Light

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.

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Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, 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. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money.

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I woke up really early one morning a couple of weeks ago and the verse from Matthew 6 about storing up treasure in heaven was in my mind. I sat there for a while thinking about those verses and why did God wake me up this early to think about them. When I was asked to preach this morning, those verses were the first to come to mind. So I read and reread this section thinking about what it meant and then I backed up and looked through Matthew up to this point to get the context.

Once I feel like I know what a section of scripture is saying I like to look up sermons from other preachers to see what the scriptures were saying to them. It seems that this section was telling their congregations to tithe more. One pastor even preached on it to encourage his congregation to build a new building. While all of these things are good and build the kingdom it seemed to me like they were still building treasures on Earth. I want us to make sure we keep the section about Salt and light and the section about storing up treasure in Heaven in our minds as I preach this morning.

Before I start I'm going to ask that we keep these verses we have just read in mind. They are kind of like bookends to this section. We are about to study the sermon on the mount and it will help us grasp the meaning by keeping these verse in mind. I want to clarify the meaning of a word before we go on. **You cannot serve both God and Money.** Some translations use wealth instead of money. The KJV translates that you cannot serve both God and Mammon. What happened is when the scholars that translated the KJV came to the word *Mammonas*, they could not find a good English equivalent. So they put the word mammon in there. Strong's Greek dictionary translates it as confidence. I found newer dictionaries translate it as worldly wealth. *Mammonas* is more like being popular or thought well of in human eyes. I state this just to further show you that we are not talking about monetary treasure only.

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We are going to cover a whole lot of context this morning and I want to make sure that we get it right. So back up to Matthew 5. I'm going to try and get us up to speed with what is going on here. Matthew was written for believers somewhere between the late 50's and early 60's. It was written by Matthew also known as Levi the tax collector who left his job to become a follower of Jesus (Mark 2:14, Luke 5:27). The Gospel of Matthew starts off telling us the genealogy of Jesus, His birth, fleeing to Egypt, Baptism, temptation and calling of the first disciples. Chapter 4 ends with Jesus traveling around teaching, preaching, and healing. Large crowds are following Him and at the start of chapter 5, Jesus goes up on a mountain side and delivers a sermon to the crowds.

Let's put ourselves there. Its two thousand years ago. You are a devoted Jew. You love God, keep the Sabbath, obey the man made rules of the Pharisees, and offer sacrifices. You hear of this prophet that can heal and cast out demons. Plus you have heard He speaks against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Today we, just as the first readers of this gospel, have knowledge of the death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. So let's quickly look at the Sermon on the Mount and listen in light of the sections about *Salt and Light* and *Storing up Treasure in Heaven*.

We start with the be attitudes. If you read through these you will see that Jesus is telling everyone that God blesses those who seek God and righteousness. At this time Judaism has become a system of rules and laws. Many of these rules are mandated by Pharisees and not God. I'm going to take a minute here to say some unpopular things. I believe it will help us to see what these Jewish people were hearing and thinking and hopefully help us to see exactly what they saw when this sermon was delivered.

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I told my wife once that every Christian needs to read the gospels and every time they see the word Pharisee stop and ask their self, is that me? I promise that will put you on your knees begging Jesus for forgiveness. We must remember that being a Christian is about following Jesus and trying to be more Christ like. It is not about building a religion and being more like the Pharisees. A society must have laws or it will fail. The framers of our constitution realized this and they also realized that while we can base our laws on the moral laws of God we cannot legislate religion. Do you see the difference there? Religion is manmade rules to please God. We can't please God. There is no way a fallen and sinful creature can please a Holy God. God blesses us with His grace and forgives us on our acceptance of Jesus' sacrifice. So as I quickly go through the Sermon on the Mount listen and ask, "Am I a Pharisee."

So the beatitudes are telling us that God blesses us when we seek God and righteousness. We are in chapter 5, look at verses 11-12 because it is a key to what I'm going to say. *"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.* You see that Jesus is saying there is a great reward in Heaven for us if we seek God and righteousness.

Next we move to Salt and Light. What Jesus is trying to make obvious to his followers is that they should be something that stands out. You put salt on your food to give it that little something that stands out and makes your taste buds happy. The same way with light it goes out and lets you know where it's coming from. Think about this you are driving down the road at night and you are heading toward Jackson on a road without street lights. You get lost and you don't know exactly which direction to head. You look up into the sky and you can see the lights of Jackson reflecting off the clouds and now you know which way to go. That's us. We should

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be clouds. God's light reflecting off of us should show lost people which way to go. The psalmist says that Christians should stand out (Psalm 119:74). There should be a hope about us that makes people ask us what it is (1 Peter 3:15). We should be a people that cause other people to praise God. If we are not doing that then Jesus asks us, "What good are we?"

Jesus goes on to tell us that He is not here to abolish the law but to fulfill it. I always get a kick out of how when you are talking to someone about a sin they do not want to give up or a decision that will lead to sin, they come to a point where they realize they can't justify their sin so they quickly tell you that they are a New Testament Christian and that the law does not apply to them. They live under grace. Paul referred to people like that as trampling on Jesus and said that there is no sacrifice for them. Jesus did not come to do away with the Old Testament laws. We no longer obey them out of commandment, but out of love. We don't have to try and live up to the law, but it should be written on our hearts. The people listening to this sermon were tired of trying to live up to the righteousness of the Pharisees. They wanted Jesus to come in destroy the Romans and start the new kingdom where they obeyed God and not the Pharisees.

Jesus tells them that that is not what He is here for. He is about to lift the law up to an even higher standard than the Pharisees. Now notice verse 19 *Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called **great in the kingdom of heaven.*** So we saw in verse 12 that our reward is great when we are persecuted for being a Christian and now we see that obeying the commandments will make us be called great.

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So let's see what Jesus says about the commandments real quick. The sixth commandment tells us not to murder, Jesus tells us in verse 22 that anger is the same as murder. To hate in our heart is the same as murder. The seventh commandment is against adultery, Jesus tells us in verse 28 that lusting in our heart is the same as committing adultery. Deuteronomy 24 explains how and why you can get a divorce. Quick summary says that if the woman is not pure the man may divorce her. The Pharisees took the word figuratively as also meaning disgrace or shame¹ and said if she burns your supper that is a disgrace and a man should be able to divorce her.

I was having a discussion with a friend once and he was explaining how his divorce was biblical because his wife cheated on him. I told him that God hates divorce for any reason. He referred to Matthew 5:32 as justification. I want to look at what that verse really says. *But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress*, Jesus was not saying you can divorce for unfaithfulness. He was saying there is no reason for divorce and that if you divorce your wife you are making her an adulteress. You are causing someone else to sin! That is what He is saying. As far as this stigmata about divorce being the only sin that God will not forgive, that is more of the church being Pharisees and adding rules that are not in the bible. Look at how that verse ends. *and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery*. It is a single act. You divorce or you married a divorced woman or man you have sinned. Singular one time. God doesn't look at you every day that you wake up and go you are still divorced, sinner. No, when you confess and give your sin to Jesus you are forgiven. If you do not believe that, then you are the Pharisee holding the stone and not looking at your own sin.

¹ *er-vaw*' literally means pure but figurately it means shame or disgrace.

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Oaths! We are Christians! The Salt and Light! Our word stands as a testimony before God. When we agree to something and we break our word we have given a testimony to God that we do not obey His commandments.

An Eye for an Eye. Exodus 21, Leviticus, 24, Deuteronomy 19 all repeat that someone is to be punished the same as they did to others. Jesus tells us here that we are not to repay evil. We are to be Salt and Light. All of this section is intended to be read that way. We are to demonstrate God's forgiveness of our sin by our forgiveness of others sins against us. When someone does us badly and we decide to forgive them, it is a representation of God forgiving us and I know God has to be a lot more forgiving of me for some of the things I have done, than I would ever have to be of someone else. This section also ties in with loving your enemies. How many of you have enemies? It's hard to love them isn't it? If someone hates you, they are committing murder and breaking the 6th commandment. If you love them. If you are the Salt and light and demonstrating God's forgiveness, maybe they can be reached and God's wrath turned from them.

God brought this home to me hard. I had an enemy that was slandering my name on a daily basis. They were starting rumors and lies and just knowing I was hated so badly for something I didn't do tore at me. When I prayed, I felt God saying in my heart that I was angry at them. I answered, "Yeah, I'm angry! They are ruining my life." Do you know how hard it is to go up to someone who has told lies about you and spent a year tearing you down. To feel that God wants you to walk up and apologize to them personally. It isn't easy and when I said, "I'm sorry for the anger I have felt against you" They said I accept your apology and that was the end of the conversation. No apology from them for what they did to me. I told God, "See that didn't do any good." But it did, I demonstrated my obedience to God. *Verse 46 If you love those who love you, what reward will you get?* There is that word again reward.

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So far we have seen how the Sermon on the Mount showed us

- That God blesses those who seek Him and righteousness.
- That in our obedience to God and the law we are to be an example of God's forgiveness.
- That God rewards those who obey the commandments, are persecuted, and those who love their enemies.

Now we are going to see where we should be in relationship to God.

Chapter 6 *“Be careful not to do your ‘acts of righteousness’ before men, to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.* Jesus is now going to talk about ways we worship God and do good deeds. I want to point out here that being under grace does not mean we should not do works. James tells us *“You have faith; I have deeds.” Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.* The thing is we have to understand the correct usage of works. Works do not grant you favor with God. We are forgiven through the blood of Jesus. There is no way we can do enough good to cover our sins. Religions that believe that if you do enough good your sins will be forgiven, are not putting their faith in Jesus and therefore are doomed to Hell. This falls back into the Salt and light category. Our good deeds should stand out and make people notice Christ in us. That though, is not the reason we should do good deeds. We should do good deeds in worship of the Father. Our heart in giving should be, Lord you have given me so much that I do not deserve, I will give some away.

If we treat Jesus as Lord and try to glorify God in everything we do and everything we do we do for the purpose of glorifying God, then we are the salt and light.

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This section about giving to the needy tells us not to be hypocrites. These are the people who give to be noticed. They give extravagantly and make a lot of notice of it. Because they want people to notice it. They want the praise of men. It's hard to resist that urge, its part of our sin nature. We want to be liked and thought well of. We don't mean to brag about our charity but we do. The thing is God notices it if we do it in worship. The first chapter of Isaiah tells us God hates when we worship in action but not in heart. God calls this sin, in verse 16 of Isaiah 1 he calls their worship evil deeds. Giving should be done out of worship and not obligation or for notice.

Before I move on to prayer notice verse 4 *so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.* There is that word again. The Pharisees would do elaborate public prayers. They would get in a reverent stance and then they would pray loudly so everyone would know how righteous they were. They were not praying in worship they were praying for attention. They were basically doing a good deed for everyone to see. Let's read verse 6 *But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.* Are you seeing a pattern? God rewards or blesses those who seek God and righteousness and do everything in worship?

Jesus ties the Lord's prayer in to the previous section about revenge and loving our enemies. He models prayer for us and then when he finishes he goes deeper with the forgiveness part of it. Have you ever paid really close attention to what you say in the Lord's Prayer. *Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.* You are telling God forgive me in the same way I forgive others. Think about that God forgives you the same way you forgive your worst enemy. Does that make you want to be a little easier on your enemies? Verse 15 *But if you*

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do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. Jesus is telling us to do some hard things. They require first us seeking God and getting our hearts right.

The last thing Jesus mentions on the section about doing righteous acts is fasting. As Baptist we do not put a strong emphasis on fasting. We lean more toward the New Testament big meals and fellowship.

Thank you Lord for potlucks.

I'm not going to go deep into fasting other than to say the New Testament mentions it several times after Jesus's resurrection. Jesus Himself says that after his death the apostles will fast. It is an act of worship and seeking God. What Jesus wants us to see here is how obvious it is when religious folk fast. They would go around looking pathetic so everyone would know that they are fasting. Kinda, look at me I'm such a good Pharisee. I'm starving over here but God is being glorified. No he is not, you are and that makes God mad.

The point Jesus is trying to get across talking about giving, prayer, and fasting is that it should be an act of righteousness, an act of worship. It should be between us and God and not a way of showing how religious we are. God hates religion. I refer back to Isaiah 1 again. Jesus is here to do away with religion and bring about true worship. As he says in John 4, worship in truth and spirit. Okay focus in on verse 18 *so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.*

Okay I'm done with getting my context out of the way now I can get started on my sermon. If you looked at your watch when I said that then remember we just talked about fasting.

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¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Sermon on the Mount kind of changes as it goes into a section about how we should seek God and not worldly things. If we seek God He will take care of us. Jesus throws in something about Judging others and again reminds us that God will judge us in the same way we judge others. Jesus ends by talking about how we will be recognized by our fruit and that we should build on a solid foundation.

Everything we do on Earth will fade away. Wealth you build up will be gone. Education you seek will be gone. The house you live in will be gone. When we stand before Jesus the only things that matter will be what we did for Him. Jesus is telling us that our entire life should be devoted to seeking God. That’s what Lord means. Everything is to please the Lord you serve. Jesus doesn’t care if you got that promotion so now you can go buy that car you’ve been dreaming of. Jesus doesn’t care if you got that new house built so everyone can see you have finally made it. Jesus doesn’t care if you helped the widow out down the street if you did it to get recognized. Jesus will never honor that because you have already got your reward from mammon. That Jesus sign in your yard doesn’t mean a thing to Jesus. Do you know why? Because if people can not tell that you are a Christian, then you are not Salt and Light. You are not building treasure in Heaven, but treasure in the eyes of man. Yes we should help widows! Yes we should build new churches. But we need to be doing it for the right reasons.

Matthew 5:12 (NIV)

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¹² Rejoice and be glad, because **great is your reward** in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5:19 (NIV)

¹⁹ Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands **will be called great** in the kingdom of heaven.

Matthew 6:6 (NIV)

⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, **will reward you.**

Matthew 6:18 (NIV)

¹⁸ so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, **will reward you.**

When we are persecuted for Christ we are building treasure in Heaven. When we obey God's commandments we are building up treasure in heaven. When we privately do acts of righteousness in the spirit of worship we are storing treasures in Heaven. Prayer, fasting, and worship store treasure in Heaven. I'm talking true worship. I'm not talking about religion where we come to church because we have to. I'm not talking about when we are sitting there listening to a preacher and thinking wow, he is boring or he needs to hurry and wrap this up so I can get to lunch. I'm talking about worship where when the pastor takes the pulpit we say, "God what do you want to say to me today. Lord what do I need to work on. Lord, am I a Pharisee? "True worship where we seek God. We scream out like Moses **show me your glory**. That is how we build up treasure.

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I'm not going to try and describe what our reward will be like. I'm not going to try and make you believe that your mansion will be bigger than everyone else's. I'm not going to tell you if you do wrong you will be a janitor in heaven, because if that's your understanding of heaven, you are not being a humble servant of God. I will tell you about the reward I look forward to.

I look forward to the day, where I stand and hear "Well done my good and faithful servant." That is my reward. But you know there is another reward that we can store up. One we can see here. Just imagine standing before Jesus and hearing those words, "Well done my good and faithful servant." Then Jesus asks you, "Who is this that you brought with you?" You turn and there is the little league coach you have been witnessing to. The waitress you were kind to at the restaurant last week. The coworker you have been sharing the gospel with. That single mom whose name you didn't catch as you slipped her a hundred dollars as you passed her on the street last Christmas. Yeah, she's here and because of you, so are her children. It may even get more personal than that for you. There is your father or your mother, your brother or your sister. Yeah you managed to bring them with you.

So when Jesus asks you who are all these people, who are you going to see standing behind you. How big is that crowd? How many people are there that you didn't realize you were bringing just because you chose to seek God and be the salt and light. Let's build a foundation on the rock by putting these things into practice. Let's go out and store our treasures. Let us all become wealthy.