

The Treasure of Something More

Thomas Robinson, *New Year*, January 5, 2020

Matthew 6:19-34

¹⁹ “Don’t **treasure up** your **treasures on the earth**, where moth and rust ruin things and where thieves break through and steal. ²⁰ But **treasure up your treasures in God’s realm**, where neither moth nor rust ruins things and where thieves don’t break through and steal. ²¹ For **where your treasure is, there also will be your heart!**

²² The **lamp of the body is the eye**. So, if your eye is **simple** (generous), your whole **body** (person) will be **bright**, ²³ but if your **eye is evil** (envious), your whole **body** will go **dark**. Then if the **light** that’s in you is **darkness**, how great is the darkness!

²⁴ **No one can be a servant to two lords**, for they’ll either **hate** the one and **love** the other, or be **devoted** to the one and **despise** the other. **You cannot serve both God and Mammon.**

²⁵ **Because of this fact**, I’m telling you, **refuse to be anxious** any more about your life (*psyché*), what you’ll **eat** or what you’ll **drink**, or about **your body** (*soma*), what you’ll **wear**.

Isn’t your life **something more** than food, and your body than clothing?

²⁶ **Look at the birds of the heaven**: they’re not **sowing** or **reaping** or **gathering** into barns, and your heavenly Father is feeding them. **Aren’t you more important than they are?**

²⁷ And who of you by **being anxious** can add a single arm’s-length to how long you live?

²⁸ And about **clothing** – why are you **anxious**? **Look carefully at those lilies** in the field, how they’re growing. They’re neither laboring hard nor spinning. ²⁹ But I’m telling you, not even **Solomon in all his glory** was dressed like any one of them. ³⁰ But if **God is clothing the grass of the field** so gloriously, though it’s here today and tomorrow is thrown into an oven, isn’t he **much more clothing you? You of little faith!**

³¹ Therefore, **refuse to be anxious**, so that you’re saying, ‘What should we **eat**?’ or ‘What should we **drink**?’ or ‘What should we **wear**?’ ³² The **nations**, of course, are avidly **seeking** all these things. Why refuse? Because **your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.**

³³ But **seek first God’s kingdom** and his righteous faithfulness, and **all these things will be his additions to you.**

³⁴ Therefore **refuse to be anxious as you anticipate tomorrow**, since tomorrow will add anxieties on its own. Sufficient for each day is its own trouble.”

Matthew 7:7-8

⁷ “**Ask**, and it will be **given** to you. **Seek**, and you’ll **find**. **Knock**, and it will be **opened** to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened.”

1 Corinthians 13:13

¹³ Now **faith**, **hope**, **love** really last. These three! But the greatest of these is love.

Mark 4:18

¹⁸ “Others are those sown among the thorns. When these hear the message, the **anxieties** of the age, and the **deceptiveness** of wealth, and the **desires** for more and different things start pushing in. They choke off the message and it doesn’t bear any fruit.”

Seeing the Reality of Life – A Life of Treasures

We start the new year/decade in Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Seek God's kingdom. Jesus is talking to villagers, farmers, fishermen, women who spin & weave. Life is survival. Too vulnerable to care about abstractions, meaning. (Pyramid of motivation) Jesus goes straight for deep-high meaning. These hardscrabble people have treasures. The question: where they/we put treasures. What gives meaning/value? Where my heart is. Earth – things that pass away. God's realm – things that can't be destroyed. But both are here and now. It's a challenge of vision. How do I see the world/life. My ability to see the world and people as God's realm can become distorted, dark or give light. Jesus focuses on a difficult "choice." Who do I serve? God or Mammon? A personification of Money, power, control, and all their embodiments in structures, relationship, stuff. Mammon's the most powerful god we can create. Mammon is our human replica of God, the kind of god we think God should be. Pragmatic, real. Visible (not hidden). Powerful. Equipped with full theology. Daily rites to shape my choices. Able to save and destroy. Now I am a creature of God. That relationship is real. God is less visible. Gives me freedom.

From "Nothing But..." to "Something More"

To modern ears, Jesus may seem quaint. We're trained by long tradition of reduction from Adam Smith to John Locke to Darwin to Marx to Nietzsche to reductionist science to postmodernism. We're reducible to mindless particles, to irrational drives, evolutionary processes, invisible hand of the market. We strive to rid our world of purpose, meaning. But Jesus challenges the heart of so much debate. The secularization of society, the disenchantment of the world: Max Weber. Charles Taylor (*A Secular Age*) develops a Christian view. Now Eugene McCarragher (*The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity*) says the modern world was never disenchanted. We shifted the enchantment from God (now private opinion) to Mammon, our public god. The "enchantment" is another word for "serve." Jesus talks to people who've never heard of capitalism, free markets, socialism, mercantilism, modernism. But the enchantment of Mammon is already real on every level, even for a fisherman or spinning woman.

Refuse Anxiety – God's Generosity

Jesus says the anxieties come from not looking clearly enough at life/reality. We don't see life as a gift that's both vulnerable and secure in God's generous love. We see it as a product made by mighty Mammon. We keep producing our god. We always "need" more. No amount of Mammon is enough. No satisfaction. But we ultimately realize that we can't add one cubit where it really matters. We get reduced to nothing but the size of our god. We lose the "something more" that is the glory, beauty, mystery, creativity of life. Jesus says God's reality is there in front of you – in all the beauty and delight of the world. God's not removed to a distant heaven. Jesus sees/knows God everywhere. So pervasive, we can ignore him. Heaven is God's all-pervading realm touching everything. You are that something more made for the touch of God, God's life. God know/loves you. Seek His kingdom, justice. Seek! In a world of Mammon, it's hidden. There, you find All.