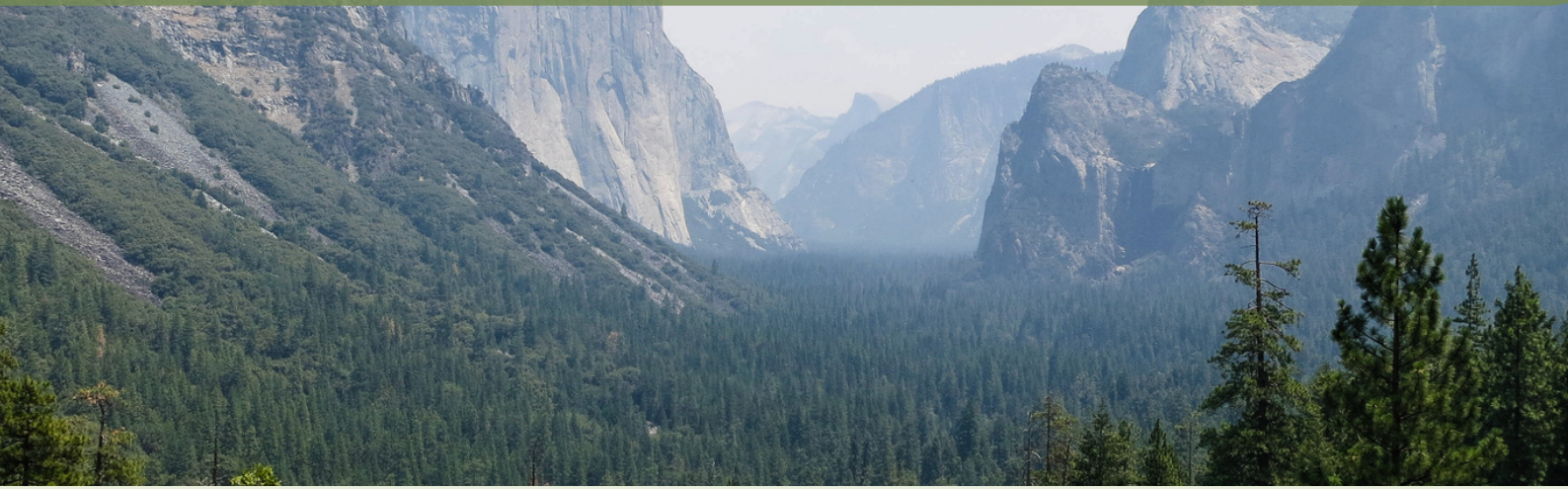




Week 5: Matthew 6:19-34

In Week 4, Jesus contrasted heavenly reward and earthly reward when illustrating the correct and incorrect intentions of giving, praying, and fasting (Matt 6:1-18). Building on the theme of true reward, Jesus moved on to talk about treasures and possessions. He again invited us to examine our hearts and our priorities.

It is important to read through the “Introduction” and previous weeks’ study guides beforehand, as they provide an essential foundation for understanding the entire Sermon on the Mount.

Warm-up questions

- (a) If a huge fire breaks out in your bedroom and you are only allowed to bring one thing with you as you evacuate (in addition to your mobile phone), what will that be?
- (b) In your everyday life, what/who makes you worried? How do you usually handle your worries?

Read Matt 6:19-24

1. What is the problem with storing treasures on earth but not in heaven? What makes most people prioritise the former over the latter? How does that reflect one’s level of trust in God?

- Hint: The Apostle Paul illustrated a similar concept in 1 Tim 6:6-10. Money in itself is not evil. The Bible contains multiple verses that encourage people to work hard and save up for contingency (Prov 6:6-8) and to enjoy life and be glad (Eccl 8:15).
- Note: The meaning of “treasures in heaven” should be considered alongside “blessedness” in Matt 5:3-10 and “reward” in Matt 6:1-18, which is centered on the Kingdom of God.

2. In Matt 6:22, the Greek word for “healthy” (ἀπλοῦς / *haplous*) implies being single-minded toward God, without reserve, and generous. So how do “unhealthy eyes” in Matt 6:23 relate to the problem in Matt 6:24? Why is it not possible to serve God and money at the same time?

Read Matt 6:25-34

3. According to Jesus, what is the reason for “do not worry” (Matt 6:25)? What are the common characteristics of birds, flowers, and grass, and what was Jesus pointing out by comparing them with human beings?

- Hint: Matt 6:25 starts with “therefore...” so this is a conclusion drawn from the preceding verses.
- Note: Jesus was certainly not calling us to be lazy and do nothing. God is not against a hardworking person – work was part of the original order of God's creation (Gen 2:15), and laziness was often criticized (Prov 6:6-11).

4. “Food” and “clothes” in Matt 6:25 and 6:28 point to our worries and concerns of our daily needs and material things. Are there things that you currently feel worried or anxious about? How does that reflect your relationship with God?

5. According to Matt 6:32-34, what should be your priorities in life? How does the Lord's Prayer (especially Matt 6:10-11) reflect that? What are some potential challenges in pursuing that?

- Note: Both Matt 6:11 and Matt 6:34 emphasise our *daily* reliance on God for our *daily* needs. There is nothing wrong with doing long-term planning, but our willingness to follow God's will daily and trust in God's daily grace is a posture of humility and reverence to God, which draws us closer to God.

6. What are some practical ways to apply Matt 6:33-34 in your daily life as an antidote to your worries and anxieties?

*If He dresses the lilies with beauty and splendor
How much more will He clothe you?
How much more will He clothe you?*

*If He watched over every sparrow
How much more does He love you?
How much more does He love you?*

*It's more than you ask, think or imagine
According to His power working in us
It's more than enough*

*Jireh, You are enough
Jireh, You are enough
I will be content in every circumstance
Jireh, You are enough*

(Lyrics from "Jireh" by Elevation Worship & Maverick City Music)