

Laying Up Treasures

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The sixth chapter of Matthew, verses 19 to 21. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

Now we hear a voice here speaking to us who are His professed followers. There are many sounds, many sounds abroad, not only the sound of the motors of cars but of planes overhead and the squeal of the jet plane leaving its vapor trail through the skies, barking of dogs and the laughter of children, and the noise of traffic and the bellowing of the radio. These are all sounds.

But the alert mind, the alert man and woman whose mind is keen, will be conscious that they are trying to get through to us, that there are many voices trying to get through to us. They want to communicate with us. They want to reach us and control our thinking and change our habits and bend our wills and capture our loyalties and shape our tastes and fix our values.

But there is a fraud behind all this, and your love and charity must not make you blind to the fact that there is a fraud back of it. That after these whose clamorous voices are being heard everywhere in print and on the air, after they have attracted us and used us and exploited us for all the market will bear and gotten rich off of us or gotten elected by us or gotten the offering from us or advanced by means of us, then they have no further use for us.

This week I have been hearing another kind of voice altogether, and I want to talk to you about it a little. I have part of it here in the text. For you see, this clamorous effort to make us listen, these people don't care what happens to you at last. When you no longer can advance them, you are in a position where you can't do them any good. When you can't buy from them, nor support them, nor vote from them, nor sponsor them, then they will leave you and nature and death and the worms. They have no interest in you beyond what they can get out of you.

But here, my brethren, in the text this morning, is the voice of our great unselfish Friend. He doesn't want to get rich off of us because it's written that He was rich and for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich. He doesn't want to advance by means of us, for who can advance Him who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, and humbled Himself, and was made in the form of a servant and the likeness of man, and being found in fashion as man, He humbled Himself still further and became obedient unto death, even the ignominious death of the cross.

How can you advance anybody that has taken a low place from the world and the heavens' highest place? And He doesn't want to sell us anything. The Lord Jesus Christ has nothing for sale, He only wants our love, and He doesn't need our support. The politician kisses our baby and probably disinfects himself afterwards because he doesn't love the baby, he loves the vote of the father and the mother.

But our Lord Jesus doesn't need our support. All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth, and He is the head over all things to the church. And in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was with God, and all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that is made. And He upholdeth all things with the word of His power, and in Him all things consist.

Now you ask how He needs our support. He doesn't, so let's imagine for a moment it's an unhealthy frame of mind to conceive of Jesus standing by the high roadside with His arms stretched up like a begging friar of the Middle Ages, wanting something from you and me. My brethren, you don't have anything He wants. Only as He might want to separate you from that which is hurting you, He doesn't want anything you have except your heart. My son, give me thine heart is the only cry that God has ever made to mankind that of anything that He wants.

He wants our love, but that's all He wants. And so, what He says is all for our good. His was the loss, and ours is the gain. His was the pain, and ours is the peace, and His was the dying, and ours is the life eternal. So, I want you to listen to that voice today, not to mine, because I can be mistaken, I can be prejudiced, and no doubt I am. I can be partial, and no doubt I am, though I strive very earnestly not to be as you do. But we can be mistaken, we can be partial, we can be prejudiced, but here is One who speaks only for our good, and the man who will die for me can talk to me.

The man who wants to exploit me, I'll resist. The man who wants me to buy his goods, I'll dismiss. And the man who wants to use me, I'll dismiss. But the Man who will die for me has my confidence, and that is the Voice I am hearing today, that long Eternal Voice which began before the world was and continues vibrating through all the universe.

And the wise are hearing it, and those whose ears are opened, and those who have been touched by the Holy Spirit, they hear. And that Man has my confidence, and He has my loyalty without asking for it. If He will die for me, He can have my loyalty.

I never was much for demanding loyalty. I never was much for getting up and saying, now you owe it to your denomination to do so-and-so. It's a pretty low-grade love that has to be demanded, and it's a pretty low-grade worship that we have to demand.

My brethren, the only loyalty I want is the loyalty I may have without asking for it, and the only loyalty He wants is the loyalty He may have without asking for it. Can you be loyal to a politician? I can't. I have every reason to believe that he has sold out a part of his manhood to get his present job. Can you be loyal to any one political party? I couldn't.

I have a predilection and a bent toward one of the major parties, but I couldn't be loyal to it if it went wrong. I couldn't even subscribe to that famous or infamous statement,

that my country may she always be right, but right her wrong, my country. It is not a proof of great patriotism to say, right her wrong, my country, for to support your country when she's wrong is to aid and abet her evil. It is the business of a patriot to love his country and try to make her right, so my loyalty is with right, and not with this or that political party, and not even to a flag when the flag goes wrong.

It was the necessity for Martin Niemöller and many others to rise and say, God is my Fuehrer, in the day when they were demanding loyalty. And if our leaders only knew it, they would make patriots out of us by making our country such a country that we could be proud of it and loyal to it without being demanded that we should.

So, I can't be loyal to people, loyal to a denomination, loyal to the Alliance. There are those who say, if they want to dismiss a man, really want to get rid of him, they say, why, he's not Alliance, as much as to say he's never seen the face of God. Well, there are a lot of good people that are not Alliance, and there are a lot of Alliance people that are not good. I'm working with a society, get along all right with it, but it's a long, long way in my heart from saying, why, whatever the Alliance teaches, that is it.

My brethren, if we teach the Bible, that is it. But if we vary from the Bible, I have no loyalty to error, regardless of where it emanates from. The man who will die for me doesn't have to ask me for my loyalty, he can have it without asking. The man who will die for me has a right to counsel me. Now, there are counselors abroad. In fact, we're developing a whole army of counselors. People are going to school now to learn how to be counselors, and they sit and counsel you.

Well, all right, but brethren, the only one who has a right to counsel you now, if you want to buy a camera, well, then you go to a man who knows cameras, and you say, I'd like to have a little word with you. I want to buy a camera, and I'd like to know what's a good buy today. If you want to paint your house, you have a right to go to a painter and say, would you give me a bid on my house, I'd like to have it painted. If you are sick and you want to go to a doctor, you want to go to a good one and he'll counsel you on diet and all the rest. That kind of counsel is one thing.

But I'm thinking about moral counsel and spiritual counsel. Counsel that has to do with my moral life, my spiritual life, and my life with my family, and my life with my country, and my life with my people. Nobody has a right to counsel me unless he is ready to give his all for me. And this Man was, this Jesus.

And so here's what He said. Now, I want you to hear that, Voice. Remember that there's no reason for you to resist nor brace yourself and say, I won't hear that because it isn't coming from me. And it isn't coming from somebody that wants to sell you anything. The smooth, soft, velvet voice of the man who wants to sell you toothpaste.

No, don't resist yourself now. Don't resist this nor brace yourself because this is Jesus, our unselfish friend who was rich and became poor, who was in the form of God and became in the form of a corpse for our sakes and ours only. His was the pain and our is the joy. So, He says, lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth.

Now, what is a treasure? Well, a treasure is this. It's whatever has your attention when you're free to give attention to whatever you will. Now, you say my job gets my attention, but it's not my treasure. Well, you see, it gets your attention because you have to give it to it. But your treasure is that to which you give attention when you're not forced to.

The mother and her baby, for instance, she's away on vacation, say, and she doesn't have to. Her baby's been left in the hand of a babysitter in good, good hands, and he or she's safe. But before she sleeps at night and early in the morning and all during the day, her mind goes back to her treasure, her little treasure. It's that that gets your attention when you're free to give your attention to what you will. And it is that which gives you pleasure and satisfaction. That's your treasure. And it is that by which you live. And it is what you think about when you're alone.

Now, if you will just check on yourself sometime when you're not being influenced by somebody, a radio on or something, and you're alone, and for a little time it's still, and then check on your thoughts. Whatever you're thinking about is likely to be your treasure, unless you're scared, and you're thinking, or fear has hold of you, or jealousy. But if your mind's running free, then whatever it gravitates to with pleasure, that's your treasure too. Pleasure and treasure rhyme, and they are together because the one gives the other.

And your treasure is what you fear most to lose. What is it you fear most to lose? That's your treasure. It's whatever masters you, and it's whatever gives you a feeling of confidence and well-being. Now, it may not do all of these things, but it does some of these things, and probably most of these things. So that is your treasure.

It may be money and property, or it may be any source of confidence and assurance. It may be anything that your heart gravitates to. It may be anything that gives you trust and delight. It may not be money only, but it may be whatever is precious to you and whatever you love the most. That is your treasure.

Now, where is your treasure? That's the next question. Well, Jesus said, where your treasure is, there your heart will be. Find out where your heart is, and you'll know where your treasure is, for your heart is always with your treasure.

Now, somebody says, but Mr. Tozer, I am a mother, and my treasure is my child. I am a young man, and my treasure is my wife, is my fiancé. I am a young woman, and my treasure is my husband. Well, you're going to say that I can't have any pleasure in my baby or in my wife or in my husband or in any nice thing I have. No, I'm not saying it, because, you see, treasures are relative, and there are treasures in degree.

For instance, I have a knife here that I've carried for a great many years. It is pure Swedish steel, and it has the Swedish coat of arms on one side. It was given to one of my boys by a Swedish politician, and he gave it to me, and I've carried it, chiefly because it's quite a nice little thing, very beautiful to look at, but also because I need it occasionally, and I carry it.

Now, that's quite a treasure, and I often show it to people and say, do you ever see one like that? That's a treasure, but then that's a long way from what I think about when I'm free to think about anything I will. That doesn't give me a source of great delight or joy. I'm glad I have it. My son Wendell gave it to me, and I appreciate it, but I could lose it, and I probably wouldn't weep, and I have no great source of pleasure here, no great confidence. I have some other treasures, too.

I have some books that I treasure. I have relatives and close people that I love and cherish, and you are perfectly free to have that kind of secondary and relative treasures, because God has said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, soul, strength, mind, and thy neighbor as thyself. There is your secondary treasure. God allows that, but he's talking here about your primary treasure.

Now, what is that which you live for? If a man's business keeps him from church, then he's put his business first and his church second. He may treasure his church, but he treasures his business most. If his relatives come to visit him and he skips a prayer meeting to stay home with them, then he may treasure his church, but his relatives are above his church. If a man skips his job and ducks out of responsibility in the house of God to do something that gives him pleasure somewhere, then the house of God is second and the other thing first. Lay not up for yourselves treasures.

If you have few diamonds as I have here in your pocket, they are treasures. But Jesus didn't mean that, because my mind doesn't run to those diamonds I have in my pocket. There are secondary treasures, relative, down the scale. They don't mean anything. But the treasure, the final supreme treasure, what is it? I say that it is whatever gets your major attention, gives you the most pleasure and satisfaction, gives you a sense of well-being and assurance, and draws your mind to it.

And finally, it masters you. That's your treasure, for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. You can know, then, where your treasure is.

Now, it's vitally important that I know where my treasure is, because where my treasure is, as I've said, the heart will be also. Did you ever stop to think that to the man whose treasure is on earth, dying will be a kind of hell, because he will be violently torn away from his treasure. To the actor who loves the footlights and the applause, when he dies, he's torn violently away from that which he lived for and gave him his highest enjoyment.

To the musician who lives for music and nothing else, the dying musician who dies out of Christ will be and suffer a kind of permanent bereavement, a kind of perpetual misery, because that which he enjoyed the most he is being torn away from. Never to hear a harmony where he's going, never to hear the sound of singing, for there's no singing in hell. There was singing when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, and God laid the foundations in the deep.

But there's no singing in hell. There's singing yonder when the Saints come marching home and when the beasts and elders and all the ransomed gather and join their voices in saying, Worthy is the Lamb. But the only picture of hell we have shows it without a song.

There cannot but be melody in heaven because God has made this a musical universe. He has built it upon mathematics and music is built upon mathematics, and out of it flows and comes the music of the spheres.

And so, the harmonious musical God, the composer of the universe, heaven is bound to be a place of music because it's a place of harmony. And there can be no music in hell because it's eternal dissonance, it's eternal disharmony, it's eternal discord, and there can be no music there. So the musician who has loved and lived for his music, it'll be bereavement without end when he dies and leaves it.

The man who's lived for his money will not take it with him, and so at the last moment he'll die surrounded by evidences of his wealth, but he'll be ripped away from it, torn from it like a ligament's torn loose, and he'll leave it. And so I say perpetual misery and permanent bereavement, if a man's heart is one place and he's forced to go another. But to the man whose treasure is in heaven, dying will be a joyous fulfillment, for it will be going where his treasure is. It will be perpetual delight because where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

I have often quoted the old preacher, or the preacher now old, whom I heard testify some years ago, and he said briefly this. He said, there was a day when I had so much on earth that I loved it, but he said, now I have so much over there and so little down here that my biggest stake is over there, and so it's easy for me to keep my face set that way.

And the man who has his treasures piled up above is going to go where his treasures are. Now please don't let's ruin this wondrous golden truth by thinking about stacks of money or a high pile of gold yonder. Who wants gold in heaven when he's walking around on streets of gold? Who wants strings of pearl when the gates are made of pearls? Who wants jasper when the walls are jasper? Who wants silver pendants when silver and gold and all the diamonds and all the precious stones make up the four square city? Don't think of that kind of treasure, please, for the treasure we lay up above is another thing altogether.

And so you must see to it, I must see to it, that my treasure is laid up in heaven. Lay up in heaven treasures for yourself. The only place where it won't be torn away from us or we torn away from it. The man who is going to heaven but has sent his treasure ahead will rejoin his treasures there, and what will they be?

I see the Roses down in the congregation. They're working up in that hard, hard field. I think they've said there's not been a convert there, but there will be one of these times. The groundwork is being laid, and one of these days they'll learn how to say Jesus died for sinners in the language of those aborigines. And somebody, somebody will have a flash of light from God, and it'll be said in the New Book of Acts, the Lord opened her heart, and she'll believe; that'll be a treasure.

And that man who lies on the hillside out yonder, never even have been able to take his body down, broken remnant of what was a fine, happy man once. He's lying out there with his machine on the hillside, but because he lived and flew his plane, there are

people in New Guinea that believed in Christ, and there will be those who will. And my brethren, those are treasures, the people that helped.

I don't like to talk about it, for I certainly don't want to know my right hand to know what my left hand does, but I'm thinking about a little girl over in Germany. Irene Trattner is her name, and I took her when she was a wee little doll of a thing. Now she's big enough to stand up and have her picture took to send back to the man in America, that's keeping her. I never saw little Irene, I don't know her parents, but I only heard of her, and so every once in a while, I send her the amount that keeps her.

Oh brother, I'll never meet little Irene. She's probably four now, and a fine-looking, high-cheeked, bone-slavic type, but a pretty little girl. I'll never see Irene on this earth, likely. But don't you suppose that the little it takes, it doesn't take much. Ten dollars a month, you know that? You can keep a little one somewhere all over the earth, and almost anywhere for eight to ten dollars a month. They can live and have their clothing and grow up, and she even had a rag doll on her arm.

Well, brethren, those are treasures, and those are things you send ahead. Everybody that ever got down on his knees and said, thank God for Sister Smith, thank God for Brother Jones, thank God Father that you ever sent Mr. So-and-so or Miss So-and-so to me. That's your treasures, brethren. That's your treasures.

Those with the strange names and funny eyes and strange complexions all over the earth that you've helped, and those who are saved because you lived and were a medium through which God could work, those are treasures. Lay up your treasure above, and it may be money, it may be time, it may be your abilities, it may be your power in prayer, it may just be your affection. I don't know what it may be with you, but whatever it is, see that God gets it. Above all things, see that God is your treasure. Jesus Christ is your treasure.

I read this text years ago in Isaiah 33.6, the fear of the Lord is his treasure. For days, and I think as I recall, weeks, that kept coming back to me as a wonderful illumination. To fear God is your treasure, to fear God. My brethren, the fear of God, the love of God, the worship of God, the desire to help humanity, that's the treasure we lay up above. And though we may die poor as a church mouse, we'll take our treasure with us above.

Could I tell you this story? It will take me two minutes, and then we'll be through for the morning. I've told this in a sermon maybe five or ten years ago, but I want to repeat it this morning to close this little word. There lived in a town, a small town somewhere in the United States years ago, maybe a generation or more ago, a very rich man, and he owned the town, as George Jost just about owned not only the town, but everything around it, in the little town where I came from, La Jose, in Pennsylvania.

Well, he owned about everything, and one night he had a dream that he was going to die at midnight. But there was another man in that town, too, and he was known as Brother John, and he lived in a tar paper shack by the railroad track. And he did odd jobs and gave out tracts and talked to people about God and sang as he went along and patted babies on the head and cheered people as they were dying and helped the widow in her

distress and then went back to his little shack, slept overnight and spent another day doing the same thing. Everybody knew Brother John and liked him.

But everybody, of course, knew and respected, if they didn't like, this great tycoon who won't have the town. But one night this irreligious man in love with his money had a dream. At midnight he said, I'm going to die, and was it so vivid. But the angel had said to him this, the richest man in town will die at midnight. And he said, that's me.

So, he went down and said to his wife, I've had a terrible dream. He couldn't eat breakfast. It's a horrible, disconcerting dream. The richest man in this town, it can be nobody but me, to die at midnight, and I'm not ready.

Well, she tried to wave it off and laugh it off, but no laughing at all. And the day went by, and as the sun set, he grew more terrified. He tried his best, nobody could help him apparently, and his wife didn't know how. And as he grew nearer to the midnight hour, his face was gray and his hands were tense, and he clutched the arms of the chair until his knuckles were white. And it was the angel's voice had been so real, and he knew, though practical man that he was, this was too real to doubt. The town's richest man would die at midnight.

And finally, bong, bong, went the old-fashioned clock, and he jumped like a man in the electric chair, but his heart still beat on, and he was still breathing. He looked around and waited a little until it struck itself out and gone on around past twelve. Then he began to breathe for the first time quietly, and said to his wife, I guess I was a fool, I guess I was a fool.

Well, he went back to bed and slept. Oh, how he slept for the first time since that awful night when the rich man was to die at midnight. The next morning the sun was shining brightly on his great big front porch, and he was standing out snapping his suspenders back in the old groove again. The world was his oyster. He owned it all.

Somebody went by and waited and said, good morning. He said, did you hear the news? He said, No. He said, Poor old brother John has left us. The old man said, when did he die? He said, just as the clock struck twelve last night brother John smiled and went away. The old rich man bowed his head and went slowly back into his house.

The angel hadn't failed him. The richest man in town had died at midnight, but he lived in a tar paper shack beside the railroad. But the man who had the biggest bank account had the heaviest heart. And if he lived on, unsaved, once he was ripped away from all that and went where his reputation didn't amount to a hill of beans. While he lived in his town, he was the big man. When he went out into eternity, he was one more speck of dust in the universe.

Brethren, hear the voice of the kind, selfless Jesus. Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Amen.