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Series: Sermon on the Mount

HIT THE TARGET, WIN THE GOLD!

(Matthew 6:19-34)

Matthew 6:19-33-----“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. 22 “The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 24 “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. 25 “Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 “So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? 31 “Therefore do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ 32 For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

In the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Greece, sharpshooter Matt Emmons had the gold medal in sight. He was one shot away from claiming victory in the 50-meter three-position rifle event. He didn't even need a bull's-eye to win. All he had to do is to hit the target. But in what was described as QUOTE “an extremely rare mistake in elite competition,” Emmons fired at the wrong target. Standing in lane two, he fired at the target in lane three. His score for a good shot at the wrong target? Instead of a gold medal, Emmons ended up in eighth place.

The text that we just read in Matthew 6:19-34 is from Jesus’s “Sermon on the Mount.” As we saw last week, Jesus taught His followers that whatever good they do for others, they should always do it for God’s approval and not the applause of other people. Now in today’s text, Jesus speaks to His disciples about an area of life that is very important to Him and His Father. Unfortunately, it’s an area of life in which many Christians are missing the mark—and badly. They just aren’t missing the bull’s eye—they’re shooting at the wrong target! And that is what I would like to speak to you about this morning.

Title: Hit the Target, Win the Gold!

(Prayer)

Andrew Murray, a Scottish missionary to South Africa for nearly 70 years, wrote one of the shortest but most powerful statements about God and money when he said:

The world asks, "What does a man own?" Christ asks, "How does he use it?"

The Bible says that Jesus "knew what was in man," in other words, regardless of how we look to others on the outside, Jesus knows what we are really like. He knows when we are hitting the target spiritually and when we are totally missing it.

And in our text this morning in Matthew 6:19-34, Jesus speaks to you and I as His followers and tells us how to hit the target with the money He entrusts to us during our earthly lives. And what He tells us in this passage is that the way to hit the target and to win the gold medal of ETERNAL reward is by living a life in which you put God ahead of money.

And this morning, I would like to give you four ways that you can do that. The first way is found in verses 19-21:

Matthew 6:19-21 ----- "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The first way we put God ahead of money is...

1. **By aiming for eternal treasure in how we use our money (6:19-21)**

Jesus said if you hoard your money (lay it up for yourselves on earth)—it will get eaten up or taken from you. But if you become sacrificial and invest it in the church, and missions, and in helping others, it will be waiting for you in heaven to use for all eternity.

When you and I come to the end of our lives, we won't be laying on our deathbeds asking, "How much have I gotten?" we will be asking, "How much have I given?"

In Luke 12:16-21, Jesus told a parable about a man who was a hoarder. When his barns were full of grain, he didn't ask, "How can I give some of this away?" he said, **"I will build bigger barns!"** But God said to him, **"Fool!** You are going to die tonight. Then who will own all that grain?" Then Jesus said:

Luke 12:21-----"This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Allow me to paraphrase C.S. Lewis:

“If you put God ahead of money and aim at heavenly reward, you’ll get earth thrown in. If you aim only at earthly reward, you will get neither.”

The first way we put God ahead of money is...

By aiming for eternal treasure in how we use our money.

The second way we put God ahead of money is...

2. **By having God’s perspective on money rather than man’s (6:22-23)**

Matthew 6:22-23 ----- “The lamp of the body is the eye.

[Our eyes let light into our brains so we can see where we are going.]

If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

[If we have good eyesight—a biblical perspective—we can navigate well, and avoid tripping and hurting ourselves.]

But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

[If we are blind—have an unbiblical perspective—we won’t be able to see where we are going.]

If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

[If we think our view of life is correct when it is really unbiblical [darkness], then our view of life is very dangerous.]

So what Jesus is saying here is this: if you have only a human perspective on how to use your money (a bad eye—an evil eye—a greedy eye) you will not see eternal matters correctly. You will use your money incorrectly and lose eternal rewards! You will miss the target!

If you are going to hit a target “right on the money” you will need to be “**right** on the money.”

The first way we put God ahead of money is...

By aiming for eternal treasure in how we use our money (6:19-21)

The second way is...

By having God’s perspective on money rather than man’s (6:22-23)

The third way we put God ahead of money is...

3. **By making Jesus Lord over our finances rather than ourselves (6:24)**

Matthew 6:24 ----- “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

If **Jesus controls** your life, you will be loyal to Him and you will hate the idea of letting money control your life.

But if money controls your life, you will be loyal to it, and you will despise the idea of anyone (including God) telling you how to spend it.

If Jesus is not Lord over our finances—if we do not honor the Lord with what He has given us—we will miss the target and lose eternal riches (as well as suffer for our sin and selfishness down here).

The first way we put God ahead of money is...

By aiming for eternal treasure in how we use our money (6:19-21)

Secondly...

By having God’s perspective on money rather than man’s (6:22-23)

Thirdly...

By making Jesus Lord over our finances rather than ourselves (6:24)

Fourth and finally...

4. **By trusting that God will meet your earthly needs (6:25-34)**

Due to time, we won’t be able to go over this section verse by verse, but the question Jesus asks us over and over here is this: “**Why are you worrying** about food and clothing?” Birds don’t worry that they will starve. Fields don’t worry whether they will be clothed with flowers. God makes sure of this. GOD ALMIGHTY is YOUR FATHER!!!! So quit worrying!

Here is what He wants us to focus our lives on:

Matthew 6:33-----But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.

A student once asked **Albert Einstein, "Dr. Einstein,** how many feet are there in a mile?" To the utter astonishment of the student, Einstein replied, "I don't know."

The student was sure the great professor was joking. Surely Einstein would know a simple fact that every schoolchild is required to memorize. But Einstein wasn't joking. When the student pressed for an explanation for this gap in Einstein's knowledge, he declared, "I make it a rule not to clutter my mind with simple information that I can find in a book in five minutes."

And my friends, as followers of Christ, we would be wise to lay aside earthly things that try to capture our focus in this life **and focus on hitting the target for God**—Seeking first His kingdom, laying up eternal treasure, and making Him the true Master of our lives rather than money. If we will do this, we will hit the target and win the gold in His presence!