

The two master's trap

Matthew 6:19-24

How to make wise investments.

Review

1. True sanctification (5:17-48)

2. False sanctification (6:1-18)

3. True and false security (6:19-34)

- Jesus had more to say about material possessions than about heaven and hell combined. He was less concerned with what money could do for those in need of material help than what it did to those who found their soul's security in it.
- His emphasis was clearly nonmaterial. This challenges a Marxist view, which reduces all ethics to redistribution of material wealth, and a Capitalist view which measures success with material wealth.

a. "you can't serve two masters" (6:19-24)

¹⁹ Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon 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 or steal; ²¹ for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. ²² The lamp of the body is the eye; if therefore your eye is clear, 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 the darkness! ²⁴ No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Introduction

1. Anxiety is a challenge for most people for a number of rational reasons.
 - Life is full of uncertainties.
 - Really bad things can happen to good people.
 - There is no direct correlation between a right relationship with God and a trouble free life.
 - We cannot control our world.
2. Jesus spoke of a peace that passes understanding. Paul used "peace" as a part of the salutation of his letters – "Grace and peace be unto you."
3. How are we to find and maintain a posture of peace? Matthew 6:19-34 addresses this issue.

Five Spiritual investment mistakes

1. Mistake #1 Failure to get wise advice. Choose your investment advisors carefully.

- a. Our natural instincts do not always serve us well.
- b. As humans who bear the image of God we have unique longings, frustrations, and hopes.
- c. Our deep **longings** and desires of the heart that drive us to find life, to seek & store – security, significance, serenity. Anxiety come when these longings are not met.
- c. Our behavior is **goal** oriented as we set out to realize our hope of satisfying or longings. We might call these goals our “treasures.” We believe that if we can reach these goals we will have our longings met.
- d. Five common treasures:
 1. **PLEASURE** - If I can have more fun, excitement, with less hassle I will find peace.
 2. **POWER** - If I can become a person of respect, power, and influence, I can make life go my way.
 3. **POSSESSIONS** - If I can acquire more stuff I will be better off.
 4. **POSITION** - If I can make it to the social “in crowd”.
 5. **PERFECTIONISM** - If I can just be more disciplined - get to the place where I don’t need grace or forgiveness.
- e. We develop **strategies** in life to meet our goals. This is the “**laying up**” process.
 1. We learn our strategies for idol making from many sources.
 - a. Early childhood - *Trusting people is dangerous.*
 - b. Parental models - *Pleasing people is important.*
 - c. Crises in life - *Respect comes from position.*
 - d. Peer pressure - *Conforming brings security.*
 2. **Jer.2:13** “*For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*”
- f. Test questions:
 1. Do you have a spiritual investment strategy?
 2. What did you learn from your parents (and other sources) about finding security, significance, and serenity?
 3. Can you see a link between your behaviors, your goals, and your longings?

4. Mistake #2 Choosing high-risk investments. God does not intend to use this world’s stuff to give us peace.

- a. As with the Prodigal Son, it is not how we invest so much as where we invest. The Prodigal's attachment to "a distant land" was his problem. Our desire to find security in this world is our problem.
- b. We experience anxiety because our investments in the world are insecure.
- c. Too often we seek God's help in our attempts to find our peace apart from Him. We expect Him to use the things of the world to give us security.
- d. We pray for success in the world, thinking that this is where we will find peace.
- e. Test questions:
 - 1. How leveraged (indebted) are you in the things of this world?
 - 2. Do you expect God to use the things of this world to give you security?
 - 3. What do your anxieties tell you about your investment strategies?

5. Mistake #3 Trusting gut instincts. Our heart will follow our investments (commitments).

- a. Jesus indicates that our hearts will follow our investments.
- b. We can train our hearts by making wise investments with our lives.
- c. Test questions:
 - 1. Have you invested so as to discipline your heart or do you let your heart determine your investments?
 - 2. Do you believe that your heart can be changed through your investments (commitments)?
 - 3. How has following your heart worked for you?

6. Mistake #4 A lack of clear focus. Our behaviors will follow our perspectives.

- a. The way we look at OURSELVES & CIRCUMSTANCES will shape our lives.
- b. **ILLUSTRATIONS:**
 - 1. **JOB** - We are allowed to see behind the stage, Job never knew what was really going on.
 - 2. **ECCL.** - When we look at the empirical evidence we see no hope.
 - 3. **ROM.6, 8.** - We are challenged to walk by the Spirit and not the flesh - to have our mind set on the unseen and unfelt reality of our new self in Christ.
- c. Test questions:
 - 1. Can you easily see the bigger picture when you face difficult circumstances?

2. Do you have a clear sense of the power of spiritual treasure to grant you a sense of well-being?
3. Can you look at specific situations in your life where a shallow perspective has produced needless pain and fear?

7. Mistake #5 Poor allocation - Too much diversification. If we diversify our spiritual investments we will be double minded and anxious.

- a. We cannot avoid some investment in the things of this world. We even have some responsibility to do so as we provide for family and future. The challenge is to allocate our investments so that the world is not the source of our soul's sense of security and peace.
- b. Like a man with one foot on ice (which may crack or thaw) and another on a solid rock, we must always be prepared to stand even though the world's security is removed.
- c. Test questions:
 1. What are the things, that produces anger and anxiety in your life?
 2. How easy is it to suffer the loss of material things?
 3. How much time and energy do you give to acquiring and keeping material security?

Biblical texts of interest

- “An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up” (Proverbs 12:25, NIV).
- “I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears” (Psalm 34:4).
- “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).
- “Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you” (1 Peter 5:6-7) (Also see Psalm 55:22-23)
- “Then Jesus said to his disciples: ‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes. Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?’” (Luke 12:22-26, NIV). (Also see Matthew 6:25-34)
- “Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God” (Psalm 42:5).
- “Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones” (Proverbs 3:5-8).

- “...the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God’s will. And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (Romans 8:26-28).
- “And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19).
- “I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:13).
- The apostle Paul found his strength in God, He reminds us that, “I ...have ...been in prison ...frequently, been flogged ...severely, and been exposed to death again and again. Five times I received from the Jews the forty lashes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, I spent a night and a day in the open sea, I have been constantly on the move. I have been in danger from rivers, in danger from bandits, in danger from my own countrymen, in danger from Gentiles; in danger in the city, in danger in the country, in danger at sea; and in danger from false brothers. ...I have known hunger and thirst and have often gone without food; I have been cold and naked. ...Who is weak, and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin, and I do not inwardly burn? If I must boast, I will boast of the things that show my weakness. ...I will not boast about myself, except about my weaknesses. ...[God] said to me, ‘My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.’ Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ’s sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Corinthians 11:23-12:10).
- “So we say with confidence, ‘The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’” (Hebrews 13:6).
- “...put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore.” (Psalm 131:1)