

**January 13, 2019 – Elmont Baptist Church**  
**Message Series: EnTRUSTed: Our Money and Our Mission**  
**Week 1: Heart Healthy**  
**Text: Matthew 6:19-24**

**Introduction:**

These past 2 weeks have been quite different around our house. We have a 3yr old for the first time in 7yrs, and a 3yr old boy at that. He's a great kid, and we've grown to already love him very much, but like with any 3yr old, Ryder doesn't especially like to be told what to do, and if it's not something that he wants to do then we typically get 1 of 3 responses. "I can't." "How about later?" And "No, I won't." As the parent, I know I am trying to get Ryder to do something that he needs to do because I am thinking ahead, but he can't usually see that, so he responds as he sees best for himself in the moment. He trusts his judgement more than mine. He's like all of us at certain times. He gets selfish, hard-headed, and even hard-hearted.

The subject of money as a sermon is one that immediately generates a response. Typically people get nervous, defensive, or cynical. Even when we clearly see what the Scriptures say about giving and generosity, most often the responses are "I can't", "How about later?", and "No. I won't". But just like Ryder that response can be a heart issue, or just not really understanding that you have a Good Father who is thinking ahead for you, but you can only see in the right now.

Let me I confess to you early on. I've stayed away from this subject intentionally over the past 9+ yrs, and that's too long, and I'm sorry. It was out of not wanting to cause anyone to think, say, or feel that the church wants your money, and even though I would never come from that angle, I assumed it would be difficult to talk about and not have people immediately make that accusation. Even when I preached one of the text that I'm using today, I worked hard to soften the blow a bit. But here's the deal, if I am to faithfully preach the whole counsel of God, then we cannot avoid dealing with this subject head on any longer. Why? Because 1 out of every 10 verses in the NT deal with money in some way. That's 288 in all. 16 of Jesus' 38 parables deal with how to handle money and possessions. In the Bible there are 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 on faith, and over 2,000 on money and possessions. And the line that Jesus will draw here is firm and non-negotiable. So, I am sorry for neglecting God's Word on this with you for so long, but that changes today.

Here's my hope in this series - to lay out the Scriptures over the next 3 weeks and trust the Holy Spirit to encourage your heart in faithful obedience to Him. To help you see that each of has been Entrusted with so much and we need to constantly evaluate how we are leveraging it for the glory of God in advancing His Kingdom. Each week you will be left with a partial picture. You'll be left hanging. Things won't wrap up as neatly as we're used to with each message, so I need you to hang with me for the next 3 weeks to get the full picture of what we're going to unpack from the Sacred Text about our hearts, stewardship, and enjoyment of the things God has entrusted to us.

We're going to be in Matthew 6:19-24 today and look at Jesus' teaching that tells us that...

*Kingdom practices are driven by a focused heart that loves and is devoted to Jesus as King.*

This text as well as any other helps us see why Jesus talked about money and possessions more that he talked about heaven and hell combined. He understands how we handle our money and possessions is a direct indicator of the condition of our heart and ownership of our lives.

**Jesus Teaches Us that...**

✓ **Kingdom Practices... v. 19-20**

- Not pursuing things that are temporary
- And pursuing things that are eternal

Jesus starts with the practical and external to begin to dig down to the central and internal. Couple of things here though... the text doesn't say not to have earthly treasures, but rather not to lay them up for yourself. Don't depend on earthly treasure for meaning and significance. Instead use what you have to advance the Kingdom and help others. Eternal treasure is something we can all pursue regardless of income level. It's all the

things that Jesus talked about leading up to this passage in this sermon that He is preaching. Read through this sermon in Matthew 5-7, and you'll see we're called to be a selfless people wholly devoted to Jesus, and nowhere does selflessness shine more than in how we handle the things He has entrusted to us. Open hand or tight grip? But He's not just talking to rich people in this passage, in fact, most of his audience would have been poor. Poor or middle class can struggle with selfish greed and be just as materialistic as anyone else. This is about passions, not possessions. As pastor Sam Storms says, *"Materialism, as the Bible portrays it, does not consist in the acquisition of money and property, but in the attitude one has with respect to money and property, however much or little of it we may actually own."* He goes on to say *"The issue is not how much you have in your grasp, but how tightly your grasp is on what you have."* Although there are stern warnings in the Scriptures to the rich, it never says for them to be ashamed of their wealth, unless obtained dishonestly. Likewise, the Scriptures never tell the poor to be ashamed of their poverty, unless it's the result of laziness or irresponsibility.

Jesus is teaching to redirect our desire, not eliminate it. Don't pursue treasure on earth, instead pursue treasure in heaven. It's not "Don't pursue anything" but rather "pursue the better thing". Some of us aren't pursuing anything really. There's two parts to this command that Jesus gives, and we cannot halfway obey it. It's not enough to just not chase earthly treasure. You also need to walk in obedience to the rest of the command and pursue treasure in heaven by growing in love and obedience to Jesus. The difficulty for so many of us is that our hearts are so easily distracted to chase things we think will bring happiness, and it's most often money or the things that money can get us. So Jesus makes this inseparable link between the work of our hands and the condition of our hearts. That the things we pursue, possess, or hope in for happiness on daily basis are a direct reflection of the state of our heart and that can be very good or very bad because it's only Kingdom practices that...

#### ✓ **...Are Driven by a Focused Heart... v. 21-23**

- Singular focus and purpose
- Not divided and distracted

Where are the things we treasure most? What do we spend our time getting, keeping, protecting, increasing, and enjoying? "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." This illustration is about seeing with the right perspective. The word "healthy" is translated "good" in other versions, and it's a word that is really about having a single focus. Soren Kierkegaard said "Purity of heart is to will one thing." And that gets at the heart of this illustration that Jesus gives. What are your eyes focused on? Are you convinced that Jesus alone can satisfy you? That nothing this world can offer is more valuable than He is? That everything you've been entrusted with is for you to use for the glory of God to advance the Kingdom, to make disciples? Our hearts think they can multi-task, but they can't. They weren't made for that. So Jesus started with the external – treasure – to lead to the internal – the heart. We try to use external things to pacify the longings of our heart, but Jesus helps us see that that's not how it works. We have to change the way we think. Outside things don't satisfy our hearts for long. The heart has to change to be satisfied in Jesus, then the Christ exulting practices flow from there. The reason we keep chasing things is that our heart is divided. So we need a healthy heart that wants one thing, serves one King, so that we can overflow with Kingdom practices that are driven from a focused heart...

#### ✓ **...That Loves and is Devoted to Jesus as King. v. 24**

- We will serve someone
- But only one

Author, Sinclair Ferguson, said it well when he said, "We should notice the obvious implication of Jesus' teaching here. We were made to have a master." The American way has taught us that we are free people, but we've misunderstood that as it conflicts with Biblical truth. Romans 6 helps us see that we are either slaves to sin or slaves to righteousness. Here Jesus says that either God or money is your master and you cannot serve both. It's not that you shouldn't serve two masters, but rather that you cannot. Now, He does not say that we cannot have money and serve God, but that we cannot serve money and God. This is our problem, too often we think we are in control, but our sinful flesh cannot be in control, it gives itself away to whatever it's convinced makes the greatest promise of happiness. The language here is strong. You will hate one and love the other, or be devoted to one and despise the other. God and money won't be your two top favorite things because they can't be. You can't be the first person in the history of creation to pull this off.

The hope in this passage is that we will see the connection to what we spend our time and resources on is a direct indication on the condition and ownership of our heart and life. That kingdom practices are driven by a focused heart that loves and is devoted to Jesus as King.

What do we do with all this? We ask the Holy Spirit to show us what misplaced desires we have. What does our heart really look like? What material thing would cause us emotional pain if God demanded we give it away? Father, how can I better pursue treasure in heaven?