

The Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 8: Treasure, Anxiety, and Seeking the Kingdom -- Matthew 6:19–34

Most of us are quietly exhausted, and we are not always sure why. We work hard, we plan, we save, we worry, and still a low hum of anxiety follows us through the day like background noise we have stopped noticing. We lie awake doing math in the dark. We refresh the balance, scan the news, and run the what-ifs one more time. Into this restless, divided way of living, Jesus speaks some of the most liberating words ever spoken, and they begin not with our anxiety but with our treasure.

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,” He says, “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven” (6:19–20). He is not against possessions; He is after our hearts. Because, He tells us, “where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (6:21). Whatever we treasure becomes the thing that owns us, the thing that fills our vision and steers our soul. Jesus is asking the deepest question of all: what are you living for? And He warns that no one can serve two masters. “You cannot serve God and money” (6:24).

Then, gently, He turns to the worry that gnaws at us. He points to the birds of the air, who neither sow nor reap, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. He points to the lilies of the field, arrayed more gloriously than Solomon, here today and gone tomorrow. “Are you not of more value than they?” (6:26). Three times He says it, almost like a refrain meant to loosen our white-knuckled grip: do not be anxious. Worry adds nothing. It does not extend our lives by a single hour. It only steals the present and dishonors the Father who knows exactly what we need.

And at the center of it all is a single, life-reordering command: “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (6:33). Here is the cure for both misplaced treasure and corrosive anxiety. Stop living for what cannot last. Stop carrying tomorrow’s weight today. Give your whole heart to the reign of God, trust your Father one day at a time, and discover that the One who clothes the lilies will not forget you. This is an invitation out of exhaustion and into trust.

Group Discussion: Jesus says, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (6:21). Looking honestly at where your time, money, and energy actually go, what would an outside observer guess that you treasure most, and how does that line up with what you say you value?

Personal Reflection: Three times in this passage Jesus tells us, “Do not be anxious.” What is the worry that most often keeps you awake or steals your peace, and what would it look like this week to hand that specific anxiety to the Father who feeds the birds and clothes the lilies?

Read Matthew 6:19–34

Study Questions

1. Jesus commands, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth ... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (6:19–20), and explains, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (6:21). What does this teach about the relationship between what we treasure and what happens to our hearts?
2. Jesus says treasures on earth are vulnerable to moth, rust, and thieves (6:19), while treasures in heaven are secure forever (6:20). Where are you currently investing the most, and how much of it is the kind of treasure that will last?
3. Jesus says, "The eye is the lamp of the body," and warns that if our eye is bad, our whole body will be full of darkness (6:22–23). What does this teach about how the focus of our attention and desire shapes the whole direction of a life?
4. Jesus declares, "No one can serve two masters ... You cannot serve God and money" (6:24). Where do you feel the tug of divided loyalty in your own life, and what would it look like to choose one master clearly?
5. Three times Jesus commands, "Do not be anxious" (6:25, 31, 34), grounding it in the Father's care for the birds and the lilies (6:26–30). What does this teach us about the character of God and why anxiety is, at its root, a question of trust?
6. Jesus asks, "which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?" (6:27). What has worry actually accomplished in your life, and where is it stealing the present moment from you?

7. Jesus says the Gentiles, those who do not know God, “seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all” (6:32). What is meant to make the people of God live differently from those around them when it comes to possessions and worry?
8. Jesus points to the birds and the lilies and asks, “Are you not of more value than they?” (6:26, 30). Where do you struggle to believe that your heavenly Father truly values and will provide for you, and what experiences have made trust hard?
9. Jesus gives the great command at the center of this passage: “But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (6:33). What does it mean to seek first the kingdom, how does this connect to wholehearted allegiance to Christ’s reign now and daily trust in the Father, and what does the New Testament show about how a person enters and lives in that kingdom?
10. Look back over the whole passage, from treasure to anxiety to seeking the kingdom. Name one specific way Jesus, who calls us to treasure heaven and trust the Father, is reshaping where your heart is set or how you carry your worries this week.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Luke 12:13–21, the parable of the rich fool who stored up treasure for himself but was not rich toward God; 1 Timothy 6:6–10, 17–19, godliness with contentment and the danger of loving money; Philippians 4:6–7, do not be anxious but pray, and the peace of God will guard you; Colossians 3:1–4, seek the things above where Christ is seated; Daniel 2:44, the kingdom God sets up that shall never be destroyed.