

Priorities: The Fathers Rewards

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 31 October 2021

Preacher: Martin Ayers

[0 : 0 0] we're reading from Matthew chapter 6 verses 19 to 34 it's 971 in the church bibles I'm going to read it first in English from verses 19 to 34 and then I'm going to read it in Spanish from verses 25 to 34 do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moths and vermin destroy and where the thieves break in and steal but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is there your heart will be also the eye is a lamp of the body if your eyes are healthy your whole body will be full of light but if your eyes are unhealthy your whole body will be full of darkness if then the light within you is darkness how great is that darkness no one can serve two masters either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to one and despise the other you cannot serve both God and money therefore I tell you do not worry about your life what you will eat or drink or about your body what you will wear it's not life more than food and the body more than clothes look at the birds of the air they do not sow or reap or store away in barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them are you no much more valuable than they can any one of you be worrying by worrying add a single hour to your life and why do you worry about clothes see how the flowers of the field grow they do not labor or spin yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these if that is how God clothes the grass of the field which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire will he no much more clothe you you of little faith so do not worry saying what shall we wear sorry what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear for the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly father knows that you need them but seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well therefore do not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will worry about itself each day has enough trouble of its own for that I tell you do not worry about your life that they will eat or drink nor for their body how they will dress they will not have the life more value than food and the body more than clothes look at the birds of the sky they do not sow or sow nor feed them in grains however the Father celestial the Father the Father the Father the Father the Father the Father the Father the Father the Father no more than them who of you for much that you can add one hour to your life and why are you worried about the clothes observe how the lilies of the field grow they do not work nor hile however

I tell you that even Salomón with all his splendor he dressed like one of them if so God saw the land that today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown at the oven would not be much more for you people of little faith so don't worry saying what we will eat or what we will eat or what we will wear what we will wear the pagans go after all these things but the Father celestial knows that you need them more than busquen primeramente el reino de Dios y su justicia y todas estas cosas le serán añadidas por lo tanto no se angustien por el mañana el cual tendrá sus propios afanes cada día tiene ya sus problemas this is the word of the Lord great good morning

St Silas my name is Martin Ayres I'm the senior pastor here and it's great to have you with us whether you've been coming many years or you're a guest today especially if you're an international guest let me add my word of welcome to Robbie's and we're privileged to have Ray with us here today who is an Australian pastor working on the ministry team of a church an Anglican church in Australia but also an expert on the impact of environmental damage on indigenous people and so is here to speak at COP26 and represent that information so do welcome Ray after the service as well and say hello to him now we're looking at this section that Alessandra just read for us from Matthew chapter 6 so it would be a great help to me if you could keep your Bible open or open one if it's fallen shut at page 971 as we look together at that we're looking at a block of teaching famously known as the Sermon on the Mount which Jesus gave to his followers he called people to trust him and follow him and then he sets out for them and for us how he wants his followers to live

distinctively in the world while they wait for his appearing and salvation so that's what we're looking at we're in a series looking at that together as a church family and I'm going to pray and ask for God's help as we turn to his word so let's bow our heads and I'll pray

Father God we give you great thanks that you are a God who has not left us in the dark about you to guess as to who you are but you have made yourself known in the person of Jesus to all nations and we ask that this morning you will open your word to our hearts and you will open our hearts to your word for we ask in Jesus name Amen the Netflix series at the moment taking the world by storm is Squid Game it's a violent Korean drama series about a group of people who enter a competition and they get taken to an island by some rich people really for the rich people's entertainment where they have to play a variety of children's games and the prize money for winning these games is astronomically high but if you lose a game you get killed the second episode of Squid Game is called Hell and you might think going into the episode that it's saying that the game is hell for these people but what happens in the episode is that these people are given the opportunity having seen round one of the games to go home and they can vote as to whether they want to if the majority want to go they can all go home and they vote and they vote to go home but when they get home and they look at their own lives and their poverty and their debt and all the problems that have come with not having enough money they decide they'd rather be in the games and by the end of the episode almost all of them are back see the message of the series is that when you're in debt when you're in poverty when you don't have money life is a living hell and we might look at that and think well we don't think like that but that message is all around us in our society that if you only had more money it would free you it would free you from anxiety money can be your saviour that's what the contestants believe in Squid Game money will be my saviour and that's what

Scotland believes we see it everywhere and it's hard to spot greed in yourself because we see it all around us so we tend to think well I don't have a problem with greed because we think of another person who is relatively greedy you can spot adultery am I committing adultery well is this person my wife or not but it's harder to spot greed much more difficult we tend to think no I need that money I need it well what does Jesus say he calls his followers to a radically different approach to how we think about money but let me encourage you as well as we look at his teaching here though it's extraordinary in its expectations upon his people this teaching it also provides deep assurance and great comfort let me encourage you to look out for that the ways that Jesus calls us to have a different world view that means that we can see money and let go of it in generosity so let's dive in and our first point this morning is let the father's reward be your priority

[9 : 55] Jesus asks us what are you setting your sights on what are you aiming for in life and he says there are two treasures and if you're someone who can't resist a good bargain or you love a good investment opportunity Jesus here appeals to our need to spend wisely and invest well so have a look at verse 19 do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moths and vermin destroy and where thieves break in and steal but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven where moths and vermin do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal there's a writer Randy Alcorn a Christian writer who calls this the treasure principle and the treasure principle is that when it comes to your money you can't take it with you but you can send it on ahead you can't take it with you because treasures on earth don't last moth and rust make things wear out but you can send it on ahead and store up treasure in heaven so when we think about treasure in this world it doesn't last does it

I think about my new bike that I got a few years ago now I remember choosing my new bike the amount of thought and excitement I put into it and I remember when it arrived and it was really shiny and when you rode it it was smooth and when you breathed in it had this this kind of new bike smell I don't know where they get that I think it's the tyres and the tyres still had these knobbly bits all round them and it was so excitingly new and within a few months I didn't even think about it it was just my bike it's just been just my bike ever since when I get it out in the morning I don't think oh look at my bike it just wears off maybe you can think about that with an item of clothing you've bought that you were so thrilled by at the beginning or a car or a smartphone that seemed to have everything you'd need until the next one was launched but we get sucked in don't we at one of our children's friends her home was on this

TV series this year Scotland's home of the year so I watched it wouldn't normally watch it and they had these three homes on the program and these judges walking around and little interview with the

family family was so happy in the interview and then we saw their home and these experts were gushing over every exquisite detail in the homes everything had been thought about so meticulously and I found myself thinking better house more happy that's what I need better house I'll be more happy more stuff more happy and it's not true is it put an unhappy person in one of those homes they'll still be unhappy put a happy person in a tiny home with nothing and they'll still be happy give it time in a good home and you just think you need something better and if you're thinking but actually

I do have something a possession that has changed my life that does make me happy we're to remember that these things don't last they break they depreciate your home it could burn down it could be on fire right now while you're here you could be losing all your stuff right now okay it won't last it doesn't matter and ultimately you can't take it with you but Jesus invites us instead to trust him with an offer he makes us an offer he says there is a treasure you can store up for yourself and it's completely secure it will never wear out treasure in heaven where there will be joy and happiness in the presence of God enjoying his peace forever and as we set our heart on heaven and invest what we have now towards the things that our good father God will reward there we can send our money on ahead we prepare a place where we can enjoy it forever we can do that with our money today it doesn't matter how much you have how little you have that when we give in a way that expresses a heart's desire to love the things

God loves when we give to support gospel work so that Jesus can be proclaimed and made known in Glasgow and all around the world when we give like that we store up treasure in heaven we send money on ahead and we can invest for heaven by sharing what we have as we open our home up and invite people round or we share our food or our stuff with other people and we do that out of love for God not for what we could get ourselves but out of love for God when we do that treasure in heaven is stored up for us Jesus says this is the only sensible thing to do with the money you're given in this world because of its durability it will last two treasures one kind you're going to enjoy forever so let me ask when you think about how you use your money this month maybe if you think about the money coming in and the money going out are you investing for heaven are we investing for heaven next he tells us that as well as two treasures there are two visions he's actually showing us that being gospel generous with our money is good for us not just in the future but now so have a look at verse 22 the eye is the lamp of the body if your eyes are healthy your whole body will be full of light but if your eyes are unhealthy your whole body will be full of darkness if then the light within you is darkness how great is that darkness so picking up this idea that if you have no light if it's pitch black you can't see and because no vision is going in you have darkness about where to go and Jesus says in a similar way what you set your eyes on what you fix your gaze on has an impact on your whole life and setting your eye on something is another way of saying kind of setting your heart on it being preoccupied with it if we spend our time preoccupied with stuff material things for ourselves then it will continue to direct our life and we end up in a dark place inside us if I'm spending all my spare time browsing holiday websites or clothes websites or watching car reviews what's going on in my heart could be just making me more selfish with my money but if my time instead is spent reflecting on the

[17 : 25] Lord and thinking more about the future with him what heaven will be like looking to his promises for me today looking to be generous with what I have an eye for generosity it brings light into my life it's the same idea as verse 21 if you have a look there he says for where your treasure is there your heart will be also so in a sense you want to know what somebody loves you look for where their money is going it kind of reveals that but there's more to what Jesus is saying there isn't there that he's saying where you put your treasure your heart will follow that so if you invest your money in selfish stuff now you'll love yourself more and if instead we give our money to support gospel work our hearts will follow that money to be more and more moved by the advance of the gospel

Jesus name being known so there are two treasures there are two visions and then Jesus says when it comes to money and God we have a choice between two masters look with me at verse 24 no one can serve two masters either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other you cannot serve both God and money so we might you might be someone who has more than one job couple of part time jobs or you study and you work and you're used to having two employers but Jesus here when it comes to following God or any God is using the language of master and slave and when you were a slave you couldn't moonlight you couldn't

be a slave of somebody else as well and Jesus uses the word here for money he uses the word mammon

Matthew here recording a word that's in a different language it's in the kind of vernacular because it makes money sound like a God like a pagan God mammon the Bible doesn't say money is evil it says that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil and it warns us that if you want to get rich you can fall into a trap because it's got many temptations with it 1 Timothy 6 so I think it's probably fair to say that for lots of us here this morning if we're being honest with ourselves the rival God to the living God of the Bible that's most likely to pull our hearts away from him is mammon it's money if we were living in a Muslim country if we were in Morocco or Tunisia or somewhere we would be aware in the way we live our lives that all around us there are people who are captivated by a God we think isn't real and that because we're immersed in that culture there's temptation you know we'd hear the calls to prayer every day and we'd be on our guard not to be pulled away but in Scotland it's mammon that is the God that's being worshipped all around us that's the air that we breathe if you get more money you will be more happy more money more happy we see it in how things are advertised don't we to make us discontent and make us want for something else we see it in what's on the news the budget how will it affect me the economy rising fuel prices rising house prices we get money stress I need more it's only natural that that would infect us in the church but Jesus says here if you love money it will turn your heart away from God he says it clear as a bell doesn't he you cannot serve both God and money and the danger is folks that you still think that you can you want your life to be an experiment in trying to prove

Jesus wrong that you can serve God and mammon and Jesus says trust me it can't be done you can't do it so I think practically we get to the end of these verses and they call us to think honestly ourselves about our money our money decisions how we handle it it's not about how much we have or how little we have it's about our hearts and asking when we look at the money that we get in and the money we get and the things we spend it on and the amounts we give how how could our decisions about those things reflect that we trust Jesus that we take him and his word that we believe there is a way to have lasting treasure that can never be taken from us by crime or time that there's a way to fix our eyes on God instead of on worldly things that will be good for our hearts and enlighten our whole lives and that maybe sometimes we have to teach our money a lesson and show

[23 : 00] I don't trust you I don't think you're my saviour God's my saviour so I'm going to give some away to prove that it's our security that feels under threat when we think about money and we find it scary and Jesus gets to the heart of that in our second point so our second point is let the father's care be your security and six times in this section Jesus says don't worry don't worry now of course there are times in our lives when we can worry because we are clinically anxious we get ourselves in a way that's a mental health issue that we're worried and also some of us just temperamentally are anxious people and I take it we're not to read this section of Jesus teaching and feel guilty about any of that rather we're to take comfort in what Jesus is saying here comfort that what he's saying is when you truly know that God the God of all of this is your good heavenly father worry becomes incompatible with faith it's not compatible with a life of faith it's not consistent our worries are not consistent with it the first reason he gives not to worry about material things is because it's not worthy of us so in verse 25 he asks is not life more than food and the body more than clothes so he's saying we were made for something more than just a race to have more and more stuff in your life we were made to know

God and to live our life looking to see his kingdom grow and his righteousness on earth so when we worry about money and not having enough it's kind of an unworthy thing to be worried about to be concerned with God saved us for more he also says don't worry because it's totally useless so have a look at verse 27 can any of you any one of you by worrying at a single hour to your life so Jesus tells us instead trust your father's care he says let the birds teach you a lesson when we see the birds they don't worry like we worry the worry that makes us rush around and panic and our heavenly father feeds them and he says in verse 26 look at the birds of the air they do not sow or reap or store away in barns and yet your heavenly father feeds them are you not much more valuable than they

I think it's a striking picture that from Jesus because when you think about how birds are fed if you just watched birds feeding your first thought might not be God's feeding them they seem to be constantly busy don't they looking for food catching food some birds store food as well so this isn't a

picture that says that it's wrong to work hard for money the Bible calls us not to be lazy but to be diligent and it's not Jesus isn't saying that it's wrong to save and to think about what we'll need later for a rainy day for a pension and so on in the book of Proverbs we're told that it's wise to consider the ant and how the ant is busy working hard and storing things up for later so it's not wrong to plan for the future but there is a point at which prudent saving just becomes selfish hoarding and we have to be willing to examine ourselves on that and think am I preoccupied with money am I preoccupied with how much I spend and don't spend and does it take up too much of my time thinking about money so that we could think maybe I look to money for my true security it's possible to be giving to church to mission agencies and actually still be a lover of mammon after the birds Jesus says let the flowers teach you a lesson maybe you could think I was thinking of the daffodils in Glasgow in springtime it's amazing when the daffodils come out they just brighten up the whole city they are splendid aren't they they are better than royalty when you look at the daffodils down the roadsides in spring and Jesus says if God so clothes the grass in effect the flowers of the field that are gone within weeks will he not more clothe you let's trust him to provide us with what we need he even says in verse 30 you of little faith he's saying when we worry that we might not have enough money for our essentials our food our clothes it's a sign that our trust in God is falling short and he's not saying that that trust won't be tested so in verse 34 he says don't worry about tomorrow that will worry about itself each day has enough trouble of its own so there will be trouble in our lives every day each day has enough trouble of its own but in the day of trouble we have a choice between do I worry about it or will

I have faith in my good heavenly father but we find it hard not to worry about things because people around us are worrying about them so that's our third point let the father's kingdom be your ambition let the father's kingdom be your ambition let's pick things up again in verse 31 where we hear that everyone is chasing something verse 31 so do not worry saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear for the pagans run after all these things and your heavenly father knows that you need them so the non-Christian chases after material things because they think if I don't get them no one's going to get them for me and Jesus says the antidote to worrying about them and chasing after them is to know the character of God that he is our heavenly father and even before we come to him to ask for things he already knows what we need he knows what we need better than we do so we come to him and we pray your kingdom come your will be done and then we ask give us today our daily bread so having been freed up not to have to chase those things and make it those our ambition we get called by Jesus to chase something else in verse 33 verse 33 he says seek first his kingdom that is your father's kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well so we seek God's kingdom and we make it our ambition to see that grow to see more and more people acknowledge

[30 : 28] Jesus as their king in other words that's what should drive us should be what takes up our energy our time our resources our prayers driven towards more people hearing that we're sinners who need a savior and Jesus loves us and any of us can turn to him and be saved and we seek his righteousness when we then go out into the world longing that God's will is done here the things that God calls righteous are done in our lives and all across the world so instead of using our wealth to be a self centered consumer knowing our heavenly father and his care and provision liberates us to become a kingdom partner a couple of years ago I saw a couple of friends set up their own coffee shop in Glasgow just near here and they found what they thought was the perfect venue you see it from time to time on this street on Park

Road new outlets opening up people check them out they buy them and they pour themselves into them these a couple of guys and you could see them in there in the evenings day and night they were working this wasn't just a job for them it was a labor of love as they stripped out the outlet got rid of everything in a skip as they started to build how they wanted it to look inside the coffee shop and they tiled it and they finished it and they started bringing in the coffee machines that they'd chosen and the crockery that they thought would be just right it was a labor of love it was their pride and joy and their energy was driven by it you know they told the story on Instagram they had people following it to see this project come alive folks Jesus calls us to have that kind of drive for his father's kingdom to see that kingdom grow to see the church grow as people turn to him so folks our time is nearly nearly gone how do you feel as you hear Jesus teaching there I hope some of us will feel immensely comforted by God's promises as a good father that others of us might feel excited by the purpose driven life that Jesus calls us to some of you will be giving your money with radical

generosity and I hope that you hear Jesus teaching and find it deeply reassuring to be reminded that that's the right way to treat money but there will be some of us who might be feeling crushed as we hear Jesus standards for generosity that we might be feeling guilty unworthy and if that's how we feel then let's let the sermon that Jesus preaches here drive us to him because he is a great savior the apostle Paul describes Jesus as the one who was rich spiritually rich enjoying the home of heaven where everyone every creature served him and that though he was rich Jesus Christ for our sakes became poor so that we through his poverty might become rich

Jesus says elsewhere that the son of man has nowhere to lay his head we have a savior who knew what it was to be vulnerable when it came to money who learned what it meant to pray every day to his heavenly father that he'd have somewhere to stay that night that he would have shelter that he would have bread and even as Jesus was teaching here the crowds he's already under the shadow of the cross in this world he had many troubles so that on the cross he could pay the redemption price for our freedom it was as though our sin was a debt around our necks impossible for us ever to have a hope of paying off and when Jesus died on the cross he took on himself that spiritual poverty so that his riches could be used to pay our debts so at the cross we see the father demonstrating to us that we can trust him to provide all the things that we need and we see Jesus taking the punishment for our selfish greed so that we can run to him however we've thought of money before and we find shelter and forgiveness and a fresh start so that with joyful thanks we can say like the hymn writer at the cross where the whole realm of nature mine that were an offering far too small love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all so let's have a moment of quiet to reflect on God's word and then I'll lead us in a prayer amen communities can Wales like the same no

Unterschied bådewide benefits really with the same benefit if Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, we recognize that we live in times where the love of money is all around us.

And we're sorry for the ways that we have been doing wrong when it comes to money. We thank you that Jesus became spiritually poor at the cross to pay all of our debts, that we might enjoy every spiritual blessing in heaven.

[36 : 34] By your Spirit, we pray that you will help us from now on to have our eyes fixed on you, that we might seek first your kingdom and your righteousness, and you would grow in us a deeper trust in you, our good Father, and your daily provision for all that we need.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, we're going to sing in response to God's Word. Father God, thank you that you have called us into your kingdom.

Help us to store up our treasures in heaven and not here on earth. Lord, we ask that you would open our eyes to the true value of the coming kingdom and of Christ's, not rather than what we could have here and now.

Lord, help us to fight the temptation to live our lives for money and aspiring to have more stuff. Instead, help us to rightfully live lives for you, giving everything we have. Lord, we can trust you with everything, so help us to rely on what you've given us.

Thank you that we can learn from the flowers and the birds what it looks like to live. And please take any worries away that we might have over what we need. Father, help us to become partners in your kingdom.

[37 : 48] Help us to pour everything we have that your kingdom might grow here in Glasgow and throughout the world. Thank you that we are part of a church that encompasses many nations and thank you that Christ is the king of the whole world and that he wants us all to be in that kingdom.

Help us to follow King Jesus every day, making the right choices for him, that his kingdom may grow. In your holy name, Lord. Amen. Amen. We'll be back.