**BCM Bible Study: April 22/23, 2020**

**Matthew 6:19-34: Materialism and the Kingdom**

Check In: Here are last week’s challenge options:

1. Give something to someone without telling anyone.
2. Set scheduled prayer times with God this week.
3. Fast from something for a set period of time.

Treasures in Heaven: **Read Matthew 6:19-21**

* What is the difference between storing up treasures in heaven and on earth?
* Why should we store up heavenly treasures rather than earthly ones?
* Practically speaking, how do we store up treasure in heaven?
  + “We must remind ourselves again that [in Matthew 20:1-15] there is a deliberate discrepancy between the effort expanded and the recompense received…Those treasures are stored up not by performing meritorious acts…but by belonging to and living by the priorities of the kingdom of heaven.” (France, 259)
* Does this principle mean that it is wrong for the Christian to possess personal property or other significant possessions? Why or why not?
  + **Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19.** How do these verses guide how we should think about managing finances and possessions?
* Verse 21 is a good litmus test for determining where your heart is. What does your investment of time, money, and resources say about where your heart is?
  + What practical steps can you take to shift the desires and priorities of your heart?

**Read Matthew 6:22-24**

* What is the meaning of verses 22-23? What does this have to do with the message of this section?
  + In this metaphor, the eye is a lamp that reveals the quality of a person’s inner life. A healthy eye (clear vision) suggests loyal devotion to God. In terms of the topic of treasures in heaven, a spiritually darkened understanding (unclear vision) is indicated by over-valuing earthly possessions. Clear spiritual vision will result in rightly valuing earthly possessions.
* Have you experienced the struggle of being torn between two priorities? What was that like?
* Is materialism in conflict with the kingdom of God? Why or why not?
  + A key principle that needs to be acknowledged is that of **priority**. Money is not inherently bad; it is a prioritizing of accumulating wealth that is being called out here. This section and the next urge you to answer the question: what is your priority?
* What worldly “master” is fighting for your loyalties in daily life?

Worry

* What are some of the things that cause you the greatest worry?
* When do you feel most free from worry?

**Read Matthew 6:25-30**

* In v.25, Jesus says that life is more than food and the body is more than clothes. In what way has worry about material things kept you from experiencing a more full, joyful life?
* How will the treasures and masters we choose (vv.19-24) impact our ability to be free from worry?
* Jesus uses two images to illustrate why we should not worry and trust God. What do we learn from each of these images?
* How does worry reveal a lack of faith? (v.30)
  + Consider this definition of faith: “‘Faith’, in Matthew, means the confidence that God can and will act on his people’s behalf; without that, however much a person may believe intellectually, they are for practical purposes ‘faithless.’” (France, 270)
  + What do you think of this definition? In what way does it challenge you?

**Read Matthew 6:31-34**

* Verse 32 says that people tend to run/seek after the material possessions. Give examples of how people do this today?
* What does it mean to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness?
  + A disciple is someone whose deepest wish and resolve is to live in God’s way. To resolve to live under and advance his kingdom is to live under God’s direction and control. God’s kingdom is the **priority**.
* Consider this quote: “Confidence in God’s provision…allows the undistracted pursuit of God’ will.” (R.T. France)
  + What keeps you from the undistracted pursuit of God’s will? What things consume most of your time and energy?
  + How should Christian goals and ambitions be different from those of non-Christians?
  + What does this mean about life insurance and savings plans? Should we abandon these things?
* Jesus closes the section by telling us not to worry about tomorrow. What has Covid-19 shown us about the fruitlessness of worrying about tomorrow?

Conclusion

We must exercise our faith to grow in it. Consider doing one of these things to help grow your faith, reduce your worry, and seek God’s will:

1. Give beyond your comfort to someone/an organization in need. Many organizations, like the [Pregnancy Resource Center of the NRV](https://www.prcsupport.com/), are in desperate need of financial support right now. Consider giving to prioritize kingdom needs over and above your comfort and desires.
2. Give up your time this summer. Many of your internship plans have been ruined by Covid-19. Consider tutoring, volunteering or working at a camp.
3. Give thanks. As a family, commit to posting on Friday, Sunday, and Tuesday 3 things for which each of you are thankful. You can do this in your family’s GroupMe. Practicing thanksgiving opens our eyes to God’s provision that we often take for granted.

**Leader Note:** A common struggle in this chapter revolves around this question: “If God promises to feed and clothe his children, why are so many impoverished and undernourished?” In light of this, we must also consider Matthew 25:41-45. Moreover, Jesus says elsewhere that his followers can accept hardship (Mt. 8:20); verse 34 also alludes to this. The disciple is promised survival, not affluence. This is simply a general statement; some will, of course, die for their faith.