

# *The Sermon on the Mount* – Matthew 5–7

## ***A Christian's Ambition – 6:19-34***

After Jesus taught about the Christian's *character*<sup>Matthew 5:1-12</sup>, *influence*<sup>Matthew 5:13-16</sup>, *moral righteousness*<sup>Matthew 5:17-48</sup> and *religious righteousness*<sup>Matthew 6:1-18</sup>, He continued by teaching about a Christian's *ambition*<sup>Matthew 6:19-34</sup>. Furthermore, in the first half of this chapter<sup>6:1-18</sup> Jesus emphasized the Christian's private life (giving, praying, fasting), and in this second half<sup>6:19-34</sup> He was concerned with the Christian's public life (questions of money, possessions, food, drink, clothing and ambition). In all cases, Jesus called His followers to be different from the popular culture: different from the religious hypocrites (Pharisees)<sup>6:1-18</sup> and different from the irreligious materialists (*Gentiles*)<sup>6:19-34</sup>.

In each of the issues in this study, Jesus is specific in naming the choices available:

two treasures (on earth and in heaven)<sup>19-21</sup>, two bodily conditions (light and darkness)<sup>22-23</sup>, two masters (God and money)<sup>24</sup>, two preoccupations (the body or God's kingdom)<sup>25-34</sup>.

### **A QUESTION OF TREASURE (6:19-21)**

6:19 Jesus did not condemn possessions<sup>1 Timothy 4:3-5</sup> or prudent saving<sup>Proverbs 6:6-8</sup>, but He did speak against a selfish accumulation of goods, which He called “**treasures on earth**” (i.e., a coveting/love of things in the world<sup>1 John 2:15</sup>; money<sup>Proverbs 23:4, Hebrews 13:5</sup>, fame, power, pleasure, a person, cars, house, whatever). Earthly treasures are temporary, because they will waste away by natural processes (“**moth and rust**”<sup>James 5:2-3</sup>), if someone doesn't take them from you first. However, when God blesses a Christian with things, they are to use and enjoy them, but not to trust in them<sup>Psalms 62:10b, Luke 12:15-21</sup>.

6:20 However, heavenly treasures (an investment in Godly eternity: relationship with God, the Word of God, other people) do not degrade with earthly processes<sup>Luke 12:33</sup>, cannot be stolen and will last forever. Christians are to invest in things important to God, because they produce true hope<sup>1 Timothy 4:9-10, 6:17-19</sup>.

6:21 Actions reveal faith<sup>James 2:26</sup>; both earthly and heavenly treasures are gained through actions, and the type of action taken reflects what is in a person's heart (*kardia*: heart, reflecting thoughts & emotions).

### A QUESTION OF VISION (6:22-23)

6:22-23 Jesus contrasted a sighted person (“eyes are good”) and a blind person (“eyes are bad”) in both a physical and spiritual sense. The body receives guiding light through the eyes, just as the soul receives guiding light through the heart <sup>Psalm 119:10,18-19</sup>, and the light (physical and spiritual) provides the ability to see what a person is doing and where they are going. Jesus brought the light of God into the world in order to offer spiritual sight to man <sup>Luke 4:16-19</sup>, and He used the healing of the physically blind <sup>John 9</sup> to address the more important issue of curing spiritual blindness <sup>Psalm 146:8</sup>. Christians are called to allow ‘good’ (*hapious*: clear, simple) things (“light”) into the body <sup>Philippians 4:8</sup>, through what they see, hear, think, etc., because this will produce a Godly life perspective. True darkness (*skotos*: physical or spiritual darkness) is a total lack of light (*phōs*: sun or moon).

### A QUESTION OF WORTH (6:24)

6:24 Any time a person says they are serving (devoted to ⇒ *antechomai*: to hold firmly, to cleave) two “masters” (*kurios*: Lord) (i.e., both God and an earthly treasure), then God is not the Lord of their life. Christians are called to love God supremely and completely <sup>Deuteronomy 6:5, Mark 12:30</sup>. It is irrational to believe that any created thing could be considered equal in value to the Creator Himself <sup>Isaiah 42:8</sup>.

### A QUESTION OF AMBITION (6:25-34)

This section starts with “therefore”, because it is a conclusion consisting of behaviors that result from the just completed teaching by Jesus about gaining a proper perspective on treasure, vision and worth. Only after the Christian has understood the comparable durability of the two treasures (corruptible & incorruptible), the comparable usefulness of the two eye conditions (light & darkness; sight & blind) and the comparable worth of the two masters (God & money) can they decide how to apply them to life.

Also in this section of Scripture are three “...do not worry...” prohibitions by Jesus <sup>v.25,31,34</sup>.

6:25 Jesus exhorts His followers to not worry <sup>John 14:1</sup> about the things of this earth (clothes, food and drink).

6:26 When a Christian sees (“Look”: *emblepsate eis*: command to ‘fix eyes on, so as to take a good look’) how much God loves and takes care of His created animals <sup>Job 38:41, Psalm 145:15</sup>, then they will realize how much more he loves and values His precious children <sup>Matthew 10:29-31</sup>.

Please forward questions/concerns about these notes to ron price (pricegang@integrity.com, 505-294-4743).

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The proof of the elevated value of man: he is the only creature made in the image of God <sup>Genesis 1:27</sup>.

6:27 How much does man control anyway? For all his efforts, man cannot add any span or stature to life.

A believer's life is meaningful, due to their relationship with God, but life is only a breath <sup>Job 7:7, Psalm 39:5</sup>.

6:28 Jesus re-emphasized His earlier points <sup>v.25-26</sup> about man's pointless worry for what is needed in life (in this case, clothing) and His taking such loving care of His creation (in this case, the lilies).

6:29 In all his "splendor" (in wealth & wisdom <sup>1 Kings 10:4-7</sup>), Solomon was not adorned as well as a simple lily.

6:30 God took special care and time to design grass. Therefore, Jesus' followers should have complete confidence ("faith") in the vastness of God's love for them, His prize creation <sup>Genesis 1:26-28, Psalm 8:6-8</sup>.

Matthew mentioned several circumstances when Jesus confronted the "little faith" of His disciples who had many reasons for a much deeper, greater faith in Him <sup>Matthew 6:30, 8:26, 14:31, 16:8, 17:20</sup>.

6:31 Jesus restated His earlier command <sup>v.25</sup> concerning not worrying about essential earthly needs.

6:32 The non-believers ("pagans" ⇒ *ethnos*: Gentiles) "run after" earthly things (food, drink, clothes), because they believe they have no one else to depend on, but Christians have their "heavenly Father".

God knows everything <sup>Psalm 44:21</sup> and yet loves/takes care of believers - how comforting that should be.

6:33 Jesus offered a conditional promise (covenant) by saying if a Christian will make striving for the heavenly treasures ("His kingdom" representing the reign of Jesus over His disciples who have shown humility, repentance, belief and submission [vertical] and "His righteousness" representing the responsibility of believers to be salt and light [horizontal]) of primary ("first" – *prōton*: first in a superlative sense) importance in their life, then He will provide all of their earthly needs and more <sup>Psalm 37:3-4</sup>.

6:34 Christians must concern themselves with the issues they are facing today, because by spending too much energy on what may or may not happen tomorrow (and the future in general), they may miss the blessings of today. Besides, each day's "trouble" (*kakia*: evil) are all that man can handle at one time.

Quite simply, worrying is a sin. Worrying is incompatible with genuine faith, because it indicates a lack of trust in God Almighty. When worry begins, Christians should quickly turn to their sovereign LORD.

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