

TUESDAY 17 May 2022 "Treasure Stored" (Matt. 6:19-24)

Hello my "Walking with Jesus" friends,

In these days of fast rising inflation, rising prices, dropping values in the stock market and other investments, many people are very concerned about the future and their financial security. Whenever I see a sign in a store window "Going Out of Business" my heart grieves as I imagine some person or maybe a family who invested all they had and now the business has failed leaving them empty handed and with nothing but crushed dreams. So, in this very uncertain global economy, I have a simple but profound question for all of us... *"Is your treasure safe and secure wherever you are storing it?" I don't mean only your treasure of money, but let's expand it to include the treasure of the memories and artifacts and relationships and events of your life, which you treasure.* Are they safe, not just for today or tomorrow but forever?

I left you yesterday with Mr. Matthew, one of Jesus' disciples, pondering a profound statement Jesus made note once, not twice, but three times in a matter of a few moments, one day as He was speaking to a large crowd of people. That statement was this: **"Your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you."** (Matt. 6:4,6,18) Jesus was speaking to these people about Almighty God and referring to God as **"your Father"** as He often did, drawing the people to a relationship with God. But Jesus was also saying Almighty God is Omniscient. *He SEEs and KNOWs and UNDERSTANDs everything, even the secrets we all have!* Finally, Jesus was calling the people to consider which rewards are better and which do they desire, those gained from people or those gained from God?

Jesus paused, as He often did in this remarkable message that day, because He was moving on to the next topic, although it is closely related. I wonder if we can see that. Jesus continued speaking with: **"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth where moths and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal..."** (Matt. 6:19)

Jesus' words call us to ask ourselves some important questions, no matter our age or where we live in the world or our financial condition or the political system in the country where we live nor even the security of the banking system in our country. I wonder what answers these questions arouse in you my friends...

First question: *What are the things you treasure most in your life?* Finances? Your home? Or how about the Artifacts which remind you of very special events in your life? Or what about your memories of people and places and events which tell the story of your life? Or what about the Relationships with the special people in your life?

Second question: *Where do you store these treasures?* Why? How confident are you that they are safe?

Third question: *How do you protect your life treasures?* How do you know if they are decaying or being stolen or damaged?

Again, I think Jesus paused and looked around the hillside that day at the people. They were struggling with His words. Safe and secure options for people in first century Palestine to keep their most treasured possessions were very few. The Roman Empire was powerful and sometimes took what wasn't theirs from defenseless people. Corruption was widespread in all aspects of society, sometimes even among religious leaders! Work was hard, in fact daily life was hard. Those are all reasons why Jesus was attracting such large crowds when He spoke or when word spread of another miracle.

Jesus lifted His voice and continued: "***But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and rust do NOT destroy and where thieves do NOT break in and steal...***" Suddenly a very practical conversation turned to theory and for some simply myth. If there was such a place as heaven, and if it was true there were no moths or rust or thieves there, *how in the world would someone send their treasures to heaven for safekeeping?* Again, Jesus paused and watched. A few people actually got up and walked away from the crowd. They had work to do, the sun was getting hot, and they had no time for nonsense talk. Some murmurs spread through the crowd...what was Jesus talking about? What did He mean by what He was saying?

Look, Jesus is talking again: "***For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.***" Jesus paused, people rubbed their foreheads and their chins, and they reflected on His carefully selected words. Normally when we think of 'treasures' we think of tangible, valuable things which we go to great lengths to protect. *But when we think of the treasures of our hearts, oh my, that takes us to a very different place of reflection, doesn't it?* Suddenly we all need to ask ourselves a different set of questions...

1. What are the absolute MOST valuable things in our lives?

Are they tangible like money or jewelry or things money can buy? Or are they things money can't buy, and we could never replace if lost, stolen or destroyed... things like photographs of people we loved many years ago? Or recordings of events which took place in our lives long ago?

2. WHY are these things so valuable to us? Are they equally valuable to others as well? What causes us to cherish some things and not others?

The more we think about it, **TREASURE** is a very personal matter, isn't it? We each value, we treasure what we treasure for reasons that are unique to each of us. *The truth is... what is treasure to one person may be nothing but junk to another, right?* And isn't it also true that **TIME** has a profound effect on **TREASURE**? What I treasured many years ago may now have very little value to me, for I'm at a different stage of life, I'm a different person than I was as a child or a teenager or a young adult.

The journey of my life has ebbed and flowed and what I valued, what I treasured has changed, more often than I'd like to admit, how about you? When was the last time you went to an Estate Sale or a Garage Sale or a Flea Market, my friends? What did you see there? What emotions did you feel?

Look at Jesus there on the hillside, as He looks at us: **"...where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."** That's a very profound statement, the more we let it permeate deep into our souls, isn't it? *Treasure is a matter of the heart, isn't it? Oh my! And what is it deep in my heart that determines what I treasure, what I love, what I cherish, what I'll do anything to acquire or attain or hold onto?* Yes, what is that driving, often insatiable appetite deep within me that determines who or what I love?

Look, Jesus is standing up now and He's speaking again... **"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."** (Matt. 6:24) Wow, that's powerful! May I ask... have you found that to be true my "Walking with Jesus" friends all around the world? How have you seen this struggle in your heart? *What does it look like for you when your love for those things you treasure is being strained by your desire to honor God with your life, your resources, especially your heart?*

Friends, this is so powerful, I suggest we pause right here, with Matthew, and all those, both on that hillside that day, and all down through time, who have read and wrestled with what Matthew wrote, what Jesus said that day. Find a quiet place to sit with Jesus, your Bible and your journal... and read these verses, listen to them in the audio dramatic Bible link below, and ask Jesus to help you see what HE sees as He looks into your heart right now... and let's meet back right here tomorrow!

Today's Scripture is Matthew 6:19-24.