

**TRUST GOD FOR EVERYTHING****MATTHEW 6:19-34**

Do you trust Jesus for everything? That may sound easy enough – just trust God for everything – but it’s remarkably difficult in real life. It can be very tough to trust Jesus for everything in and about your life. But that’s what Jesus talks about in the section of His Sermon on the Mount that we consider today. If you’re not already a disciple of Jesus, it’s impossible to trust God at the level and depth that Jesus talks about here. As I thought about this portion of Jesus’ message at least four principles came clearly into focus for me. First, when you really trust God...

**YOU ARE THE WISEST INVESTOR.**

Many of you know a great deal about investments. Some of you have or have had professions in a sector of the financial industry. Others of us may have investments of one kind or another – mutual funds, stocks and bonds, retirement accounts, 401Ks, insurance, real estate – just to name a few. Why are investments a big deal? People want their overall wealth to grow. The Bible very much supports the wise management of your money and the responsible protection of your financial assets.

But the Bible also presents several very important values about investments and they show up here in Jesus’ words. There are different kinds of investments and they’re not of equal value. For example, I mentioned financial investments. But, there are also career investments like going to college to get trained for a specific profession. There are, also, relational investments such as the time and energy you put into building relationships with certain people. Spiritual investments are the most important. Why? Because they’re eternal. They have eternal value. They never stop giving you a return and they provide the greatest return possible. There’s nothing wrong with financial investments, but if that’s what you care about the most, the Bible says you’re a fool. Financial investments offer no lasting, eternal security. One day you’ll leave all your possessions behind. What happens to you then? There’s everything right about pursuing a great career and being successful at it, but if that’s the biggest driving force in your life, the Bible says you’re a fool. One day you’ll stop working. After a few years, no one will remember who you were or what you accomplished. What happens then?

Jesus calls spiritual investments “treasures in heaven” in v. 20. Jesus certainly meant your personal relationship with God. Do you have a relationship with Him? Are your sins forgiven? Have you been adopted into God’s forever family? Are you sure? On what basis? Do you think you’ve earned it through good behavior or have you received it as a gift when you put your trust in what Jesus has done for you? Your relationship with God is eternal; therefore, it’s the single most important thing in your life. Nothing else is a close second. It’s your greatest “treasure in heaven.” I also believe Jesus meant a transformed character. Is there evidence of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control showing up more and more in your life? You will take a transformed character into eternity. It will be treasure in heaven. I’m sure Jesus also had in mind whatever you accomplished for the Kingdom of God in this life. That includes so much: raising your kids to know and love Jesus for

themselves, sharing your faith in Jesus with a friend or a member of your family, supporting a missionary with money and prayer, using your spiritual gifts to serve Jesus and others in this church or out in the community, being an intentional disciples of Jesus more every day, forgiving those who have mistreated you – just so much. Whatever you do because you love and follow Jesus has eternal impact. It's treasure in heaven.

Jacques Lowe was a professional photographer. Joseph Kennedy was so impressed by his work that he asked Lowe to photograph his son, John F. Kennedy, and his wife, Jackie. Three years later, Lowe became the official photographer of Kennedy's presidential campaign and then the personal photographer of the president after Kennedy was elected. Lowe took some 40,000 negatives of the Kennedy family, but only 300-400 were ever made public. Lowe himself would make prints of his negatives when a publication or museum made a request for one of his pictures. All 40,000 negatives were kept in a safety-deposit vault at a J.P. Morgan Chase bank branch in New York City. Sounds pretty secure and safe, yes? But the bank and the vault were located at number 5 World Trade Center – a nine story building that was heavily damaged on September 11. Workers found major fire damage in the vault area of the bank and ashes had filled the safety deposit boxes. Lowe's valuable negatives were lost. The only thing that survived was made of metal or stone. Every now and then we get a poignant reminder that any and every earthly treasure is – as Jesus said – subject to moth, rust, thieves and fire. The only lasting treasure you have and I have is stored for us up in Heaven. So what have you put up there? Is anything up there?

Jesus challenges you and me to be a wise investor. Every person has a choice about what he or she considers to be the most important investments. Frankly, most people today value this world and what it offers the most. They place ultimate value on things that are here today and gone tomorrow. They invest in or live for things that are only important for a brief period of time. Their focus is on earthly treasure. But if you value God and you value what is eternal, you focus on heavenly treasure instead. Now, second, when you really trust God...

## **YOU LIVE FOR WHAT MATTERS MOST.**

That thought runs throughout Jesus' words. He says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Mt 6:21 NLT) Whatever is most important to you in this life is your treasure according to Jesus. That's what matters most of all to you. It's either Heaven or this Earth, God or things, the eternal or the temporal, spiritual reality or physical stuff. What you focus on, what you care about, what drives you, what you're passionate about, what you live for – all that is your heart. Jesus simply pointed out that your heart clearly reveals what you yourself believe to be most important. Then Jesus went on here to use the imagery of an eye letting light into your body. If your eyes are clear and good, you see well. If they're not, then you see poorly or you live in darkness. Jesus compared your ability to see to your ability to grasp truth. If your truth receptors are good, you're going to see what matters most. It's God and everything to do with God. But if your truth receptors are bad, you will everything but God what matters most.

Sadly, most people don't live for what matters most. Most people end up living for things that aren't worth their greatest devotion – money, possessions or accumulating stuff, career success, other people like your spouse or your kids, even drugs, alcohol or illicit sex – you name it. And, let's face it, many people who happily claim to be followers of Jesus struggle with those same kinds of issues just as much as those who have use for Jesus. It's so easy to make anything and everything more important than Jesus. All too easy. How vigilant you and I need to be – constantly aware – that our hearts are truly set on heavenly treasure, eternal treasure, and lasting treasure!

Jesus said, “But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Mt 6:33 NLT) That's a verse worth memorizing and pondering often in a deeply personal way. “Lord, am I truly seeking Your Kingdom first? Do my current priorities clearly reveal that I'm living for what really matters?” For a disciple of Jesus, what matters most in all of life is Jesus. For a citizen of the Kingdom of God, what matters most of all in life is anything and everything that has to do with the Kingdom of God. That doesn't make you weird, but it most certainly does make you different than other people. Sure, you do all the normal stuff – you go to school, you pursue a career, you get married, you raise a family, you contribute to society, you enjoy retirement – but the focus of your life, the center of your life, the passion of your life, the core of your life - is completely different than someone who doesn't follow Jesus. You serve another Kingdom that's not of this world. You serve a King who has a definite agenda and plan. You're sold out to Him and to that plan come what may. You're fully aware that your heart can drift away from Jesus; therefore, you seek out the Holy Spirit's correction and adjustment of your heart day in and day out.

It was just a small adjustment, but it could make a really big difference. Sure, it was against NASCAR rules, but almost every other race team was doing it. A few years ago, Tim Shutt, a racing team crew chief, crawled under the No. 20 car driven by Mike McLaughlin. Tim was a new disciple of Jesus thanks to a spiritual retreat for people in the racing industry. Tim explained his inner struggle. “Most teams figure that as long as you get away with it, it's not cheating. I said to Mike that morning in practice, ‘If we're no good in practice, I'll put this piece – the illegal piece – on the car. Probably 30 other teams are doing it.’ I was justifying it. I got up under the car. I got halfway through putting it on and that verse, ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God’, came flashing in red in front of me. Whoa, that was it. I said, ‘I'm leaving this up to you, God.’” Tim Shutt didn't make the illegal adjustment to the car. Mike McLaughlin went out and won the race anyway – Talladega – one of the biggest races on the NASCAR circuit. Later, Tim reflected, “When we won, the first thing that came to my mind was that verse. God wanted to show Himself to me.” Disciples of Jesus just know what matters most in life. Third, when you really trust God...

### **YOU OWN NOTHING.**

Jesus said, “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.” (Mt 6:24 NLT) Jesus says it's hard to put both God and money in the

place of ultimate value. No, that's not what Jesus said at all. Jesus said it's impossible. You can't value God and money equally. You can't serve both God and money equally. It's a logical and spiritual impossibility. Much of what people worry about has to do with money: Do I have enough money? Do I have enough money to buy what I want to buy and do what I want to do? Do I have enough money to support the lifestyle I want to live? Most people have concluded that money – or the things money can buy – provide the only real, lasting security available in this life.

The Bible isn't "anti-money." It's not against you having nice things per se. But the Bible is very clear that money has a spiritual power behind it that can capture your soul and make you its slave. For example, the Bible says, "But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows." (1 Tim 6:9-10 NLT)

The imagery Jesus used is very important to understand. Jesus said it's impossible to serve two different masters. Not two different employers, but two different masters. We're fortunate today to live in an economic system where your employer tells you what to do for 8-10 hours a day for five days in the week. What you do the rest of the day and the week is up to you. But Jesus's image is not about employers and employees, but masters and slaves. Back in Jesus day, a slave had no rights or free time. He or she was a living, talking tool – like something you hang in the garage. His master could treat him well or beat him senseless. He could treat her like a part of the family or kill her with no legal repercussions. A slave owned precisely nothing. He didn't have his own money, or clothes, or possessions. She didn't have free time or personal time.

The Bible uses a variety of images to describe our relationship with God. One of them is the fact God is our Father and we are His children. But another image that's just as prevalent throughout the Bible is the fact that God is the Master and we are His slaves. Jesus says here that His followers are God's slaves. That means you and I don't own anything. Your money isn't your money; all of it belongs to God. Your time isn't your time; all of it belongs to God. Your energy isn't your energy; all of it belongs to God. The wonderful fact about God is that He's the most generous, gracious, unselfish, thoughtful Master in the universe. He doesn't begrudge you using His money, or His possessions, or His time. But neither does He ever want you to forget that He is the ultimate owner of everything. And He doesn't ever want you to forget that you are accountable to Him for all of it.

There's an old story about a farmer who told his wife with great joy that their best cow had just given birth to twin calves – a red one and a white one. He said to her, "You know, I've been led by the Lord to dedicate one of the calves to Him. We'll raise them together. When it comes time to sell them, we'll keep the money from one calf and we'll give the money that comes in from the other one to the Lord's work." His wife asked him which calf he was going to dedicate to the Lord – the red one or the white one. The farmer said it wasn't necessary to decide that issue then and there. Several months

later, he came into the kitchen looking very sad and miserable. He said to his wife, "I've got bad news. The Lord's calf just died." His wife was puzzled, "But you hadn't decided yet which was to be the Lord's calf." Her husband said, "Oh, yes. I'd always determined that it was to be the white one. The white calf – the Lord's calf - has died." Whether it's money, time, or energy, it will always be the Lord's calf that dies unless you give up the lie that you own anything in this life.

Jesus said here that money, the things that money can buy, and the lifestyle that money can provide can so easily become a god for many, many people. No, it's not the only alternate god out there, but it's one of the main ones. Money is the most prevalent alternate god for people living in North America. It's a very deceptive god. You can worship money and still go to church regularly. You can worship money and believe Jesus died on the cross for your sins and rose again. You can worship money and look and act spiritual. But you can't be a disciple of Jesus and worship money. Not really. What do you trust in? What drives your life? What's most important? What really matters? What are you passionate about? How you answer those questions will reveal the truth of who or what is truly your master – your God. Fourth, when you trust God...

### **YOU LIVE LIFE FREE FROM WORRY.**

Someone did a study and concluded that 92% of the things we worry about never come to pass. I have no idea how they came up with that percentage, but you'd probably agree that worry is a waste of time and achieves nothing. Just like money, anxiety can have tremendous power over you. It can rule your life if you allow it. We worry about the past which we can't change. We worry about the present over which we have very limited control. We worry about the future which is completely unknown. Anxiety can lead to ulcers, affect your judgment, cause you to make bad decisions, and degrade your ability to deal with life effectively.

Jesus said very powerful things about worry in v. 25-34. He said that worry fails the test of common sense. He argues from a greater example to a lesser example. If God is big enough to give you life itself, then isn't He capable of providing for your everyday needs in life? If He can create your physical body, can't God provide what's needed to keep your body alive? Jesus also argues from the lesser example to the greater example. If God can make sure every bird gets enough to eat, can't He make sure you get enough to eat? If God can clothe a flower with beauty and radiance, can't He give you something suitable to wear? If you believe God made you in His image and for His glory, sent His Son to die on the cross for your sins, and who promises repeatedly in His Word to take care of you, worry doesn't make any sense. I love when the Bible says, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you." (1 Pt 5:7 NLT)

Jesus implied that being dominated by worry reveals a serious spiritual problem. Now, I realize that some forms of anxiety are related to chemical imbalances in your body and are really a physical rather than a spiritual issue. I'm not talking today about that kind of anxiety. Instead, I'm referring to a kind of worry that is really a failure to trust God to meet some kind of need in your life. You and I have to grow into a worry free life.

Again, worry so often reveals what you truly think is most important and what you live for. If you worry about money, it's because you value money above anything else. If you worry about people's opinion of you, it's because you value human approval more than anything else. If you worry about the future, it may be because you value personal happiness and comfort more than anything else. If you worry about your career, it's because you value success more than anything else. Your worries reveal what you value – and what you don't value. When God is the center and the focus of your life – when He is what you value above all – worry can never dominate your life. What's there to worry about? How I love what the Bible says! “Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down. It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.” (Ph 4:6-7 MSG)

Jesus said that worry reveals a life of little faith. That's probably what Jesus calls many us right there in v. 30: “You of little faith!” (Mt 6:30 NASB) You can have faith, but it's weak and inadequate. It's possible to have faith that God will save you from hell and judgment, but lack faith that He will take care of you day to day. That doesn't make any sense, but you and I do it all the time. We trust God selectively, don't we? I guarantee the devil will find out where you don't trust God and he'll make every effort to turn you into a nervous wreck right there. Here's what we need to remember. We have a Heavenly Father that can never be someplace where He cannot see us. There's nothing in your life that He doesn't already know about and He still loves you regardless. He knows every detail of your future – every joy, every triumph, and every blessing as well as every heartache, every defeat, and every discouragement. Your Heavenly Father will always be there and one day He will welcome you into your eternal home with Him. Oswald Chambers, the great devotional writer, put it like this: “Resting in the Lord doesn't depend on external circumstances at all, but on your relationship with God Himself.” It's easy to say, but hard to do. Trust God for everything.

Two year old Trevor loved to visit the zoo. During one visit to the zoo with his family, Trevor visited the orangutan exhibit. Did you know that orangutans possess the strength of at least five men? Now, orangutans are not the most active of all of God's creatures, but on this day they were pretty lively. Trevor was amused by the orangutans' antics. Then, without warning, one of those hairy beasts suddenly began to beat on the glass. In fact, the only thing separating Trevor and his family from those awesome, powerful creatures were panes of thick glass each 20-feet tall. Trevor leapt into the arms of his mother, crying, "I scared! I scared!" His mother tenderly took him, placed his little hand on the glass, and showed him that the glass shielded him from the animal, so there was nothing to fear. Afterwards, any time Trevor visited the zoo and seemed uncertain, his mom would simply say, "Remember the glass."

God Himself is the glass between you and whatever scares you in this life. What are you scared of today? What the doctor will say? Will that relationship ever get better? Will the financial situation ever improve? Will you have a job tomorrow morning? I'm not saying God is going to shield you or me from every difficulty in life or times of great

challenge. I am saying that God is worthy of your trust. I am saying that God Himself stands between you and whatever scares you about life today. Trust God for everything. I'm not saying it's easy to trust God for everything. I am saying that disciples of Jesus just learn how to live that way: trusting God for everything.