

Where Our Treasure Is

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November 2020

Introduction

Matthew chapter 6 is the middle chapter and heart of Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and the most definitive teaching in the entire Bible of how to enter His Kingdom and have eternal life. There's an explicit characteristic distinguishing those on the two different paths in this life, "broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction ... narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life" (Mat 7:13, 14). Christ taught us that it's where our treasure is. What we treasure, value, or hold dear dictates the motives for our actions and ultimately our eternal destiny.

In this crucial passage, He revealed three polar opposite attributes dividing those onto the two paths: (1) whether the motives for our actions are to be seen by people or by God, "before men, to be seen of them ... thy Father which seeth in secret" (vs. 1, 4); (2) whether our treasure is upon this earth or in heaven, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth ... But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven" (vs. 19, 20); (3) whether we're faithfully serving Him as Master or another master, "No man can serve two masters" (v. 24).

Praise from men or from God?

In the first half of Matthew chapter 6, Christ used the examples of giving, praying, and fasting to teach arguably the most fundamental distinction between those on the two paths: "Take heed that ye **do not your alms before men, to be seen of them**: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven ... That thine alms may be in secret: and **thy Father which seeth in secret** himself shall reward thee openly" (vs. 1, 4); "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, **that they may be seen of men** ... pray to thy Father which is in secret; and **thy Father which seeth in secret** shall reward thee openly" (vs. 5, 6); "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may **appear unto men to fast** ... That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and **thy Father, which seeth in secret**, shall reward thee openly" (vs. 16, 18).

What's our motive for the things we do? We can do much good but with impure motives or intentions in our hearts, "Blessed *are* the **pure in heart**: for they shall see God" (Mat 5:8). God created us with natural and normal desires to receive praise, recognition, approval, honor, acclamation, and applause for the good things we do. It's not wrong necessarily to receive praise from people for doing these types of things, only if it's the reason we're doing them. The motives in our hearts for our actions is a gauge of salvation.

Jesus questioned the corrupt Jewish leaders, "How can ye believe [*trust*], which receive honour one of another, and **seek not the honour that *cometh* from God only?**" (Jhn 5:44). They wouldn't put their trust in Him as their Messiah because they would be rejected by their fellow Jewish brethren for doing so. Because they didn't want to lose the honor and acceptance they were receiving one another, they rejected Jesus instead and lost any honor and acceptance they would have received from God.

Hypocrites are those that pretend or feign serving God; whose actions contradict their public confession. According to what He had said earlier in His sermon “That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and Pharisees” (Mat 5:20), Jesus was talking specifically about the scribes and Pharisees in His statements “as the **hypocrites** do ... that they may have **glory of men**” (6:2), “as the **hypocrites are** ... that they may be **seen of men**” (6:5), “as the **hypocrites** ... that they may **appear unto men**” (6:16). In Matthew chapter 23 He exclaimed seven times “But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!” (vs. 13, 14, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29). And He described their hypocrisy in detail, “But all their works they do for **to be seen of men**: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.” (Mat 23:5-7). Hypocrisy consists not only of doing good deeds to be seen by people but also presenting oneself in such a manner as to be viewed by people, treated by people, greeted by people, and called by people in an elevated fashion. These ways of being regarded and treated by others can be summarized in the one word “praise.”

Paul began his letter to the Romans presenting its message as the gospel of Christ: “the gospel of God” (Rom 1:1), “the gospel of his Son” (v. 9), “preach the gospel” (v. 15), “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ” (v. 16). And a little later he made the statement, “But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and **circumcision is that of the heart**, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; **whose praise is not of men, but of God**” (Rom 2:29). Circumcision is a sign or token of being in covenant with God and being counted righteous before Him. But the circumcision God recognizes and counts is that of the heart. It’s doing all things with a pure heart—with the motive of receiving praise, not from men but from God.

He also wrote to the Corinthians, “Therefore judge nothing before the time, **until the Lord come**, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest **the counsels [boule] of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God**” (1Co 4:5). The Greek *boule* appears 11 other times in the New Testament: “But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected **the counsel [boule] of God** against themselves” (Luk 7:30); “The same had not consented to **the counsel [boule] and deed of them**” (Luk 23:51); “Him, being delivered by **the determinate counsel [boule] and foreknowledge of God**” (Act 2:23); “For to do whatsoever thy hand and **thy counsel [boule] determined before to be done**” (Act 4:28); “And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if **this counsel [boule] or this work be of men**, it will come to nought” (Act 5:38); “For David, after he had served his own generation by **the will [boule] of God**” (Act 13:36); “For I have not shunned to declare unto you **all the counsel [boule] of God**” (Act 20:27); “And because the haven was not commodious to winter in, **the more part advised [boule]** to depart thence also” (Act 27:12); “**And the soldiers’ counsel [boule]** was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape” (Act 27:42); “In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after **the counsel [boule] of his own will**” (Eph 1:11); “Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise **the immutability of his counsel [boule]**, confirmed *it* by an oath” (Heb 6:17).

This word speaks of something decided or determined beforehand that is to be done. It’s the purpose or reason something is done. When Paul said that God “will make manifest the counsels of the hearts,” it is that He will make known openly the purpose or reason we determined in our hearts to do the things we did. But it won’t be “until the Lord come” that He does this. It will be then “shall every man have praise of God” (1Co 4:5). This is also what Peter said, “That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto **praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ**” (1Pe 1:7).

Circling back to what Jesus taught in His Sermon, “That thine alms may be **in secret:** and **thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly**” (v. 4), “pray to thy Father which is **in secret;** and **thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly**” (v. 6), “That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is **in secret:** and **thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly**” (v. 18). If our motive for the good things we’re doing is to please God and not people, then we won’t be trying to draw attention to ourselves but doing those things in secret without anyone but God knowing what we did. If this characterizes our walk with God the Father, then when His Son Jesus Christ returns and gathers us to Himself we will receive praise, recognition, approval, honor, acclamation, and applause from God. All the good things we did in secret that nobody knew about will finally be disclosed openly for everyone to hear and witness praise being given to us by God Himself.

What is our treasure?

When we hear the word “treasure” we tend to think about a treasure chest full of gold or financial wealth and riches. But its meaning in Christ’s Sermon is that of anything we value or hold dear to ourselves. When He said “lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,” He wasn’t talking about a wooden chest or a heavenly bank account but referring back to what He had said earlier, “your Father which is in heaven” (v. 1). It’s because our Father is in heaven that our treasure is said to be in heaven.

God told Abram, “Fear not, Abram: **I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward**” (Gen 15:1). He didn’t say that He would just give him a reward but that He *is* his reward. Both David and Jeremiah would later declare, “**The LORD is the portion** of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot” (Psa 16:5), “I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, **Thou art my refuge and my portion** in the land of the living” (Psa 142:5), “**The LORD is my portion**, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him” (Lam 3:24).

What’s more valuable than God Himself? What should we cherish more than God Himself who gave us life and gives us eternal life? If He is our treasure, then pleasing Him and being right with Him will be the utmost important endeavor in our lives and the determining factor of which path we’re traveling. This is what Hebrews chapter 11 is all about. All of the “By faith [*faithfulness*]” statements are examples of men and women from the Scriptures that pleased God by their faithfulness to Him, “But without faith [*faithfulness*] *it is impossible to please him:* for he that cometh to God must believe [*trust*] that he is, and *that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” (Heb 11:6). He rewards those that diligently seek to please Him. And what’s their reward? It’s Him! Just prior to this chapter the writer reminded his audience that their treasure is in heaven, “For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that **ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance**” (Heb 10:34).

Where is our treasure?

“Take heed that ye do not your alms **before men**, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of **your Father which is in heaven**” (Mat 6:1), “**Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth**, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: **But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven**, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal” (Mat 6:19-20).

Treasure upon earth is because people are on earth while treasure in heaven is because God our Father is in heaven. If we're seeking praise from people, then our treasure is upon earth but if we're seeking praise from God, then our treasure is in heaven.

From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day. **Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him**, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee. But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for **thou savourest [*phroneo*] not the things that be of God, but those that be of men**. (Matthew 16:21-23)

The Greek verb *phroneo* means "to seek" and "to desire," or "to focus on" and "to attend to." Peter was yielding to Satan's temptation of desiring praise from men. He wanted to look big in the eyes of his fellow disciples by correcting Jesus in front of them. But, of course, it was he that got corrected in front of them and got put in his place.

Paul used this word when writing similarly to the Colossians, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. **Set your affection [*phroneo*] on things above, not on things on the earth**." (Col 3:1-2). Our desire, attention, and focus is to be on "things which are above." It's not that we're to simply be "heavenly minded" in general but specifically focusing on "where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." Everything we do needs to be with conscience toward God—faithful obedience to our Lord who is advocating, interceding, and mediating for us at God's right hand. We're shown favor by our Father in heaven when we obey His Son seated at His right hand.

Paul used both the verb *phroneo* and its corresponding noun *phronema* when writing this same message to the Romans, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who **walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit [*Breath*]**. For they that are after the flesh do **mind [*phroneo*] the things of the flesh**; but they that are after the Spirit [*Breath*] the things of the Spirit [*Breath*]. For to be **carnally minded [*phronema tes sarkos*]** is death; but to be **spiritually minded [*phronema tou pneumatos*]** is life and peace." (Rom 8:4-6). In both "carnally minded" and "spiritually minded," the noun *phronema* is possessive—it's literally "mind of the flesh" and "mind of the Breath." He used the exact same statement a little later in the chapter, "**And he that searcheth the hearts** knoweth what is the **mind of the Spirit [*phronema tou pneumatos*]**, because he **maketh intercession** for the saints according to *the will of God*" (Rom 8:27), "Who is he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even **at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us**." (Rom 8:34). Jesus Christ is "he that searcheth the hearts" because He said so Himself, "and all the churches shall know that **I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts**" (Rev 2:23).

Unpacking all of this; the two converse lifestyles of either walking after the flesh or after the Breath, minding the things of the flesh or the things of the Breath, correspond to our treasure either being upon earth or in heaven. It goes back to what Paul had said earlier in his letter, "whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rom 2:29). Since Jesus Christ searches our hearts, He knows the motives of our hearts for the things we do—whether we're doing things to be seen by people and receive praise from them or to be seen by God in secret and receive praise from Him. He "knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit [*phronema tou pneumatos*]," or who it is that's seeking, desiring, and focusing upon the things of the Breath. And it's those walking after the Breath, minding the things of the Breath that He intercedes on their behalf at the right hand of God.

In His personal messages to the seven churches in Asia, Jesus said “These things saith the Son of God” (Rev 2:18), but also said seven times “the Spirit [*Breath*] saith” (Rev 2:7, 11, 17, 29, 3:6, 13, 22). He called Himself “the Breath,” not just once or twice, but seven times! When we confess Him before men, then seated at the Father’s right hand, He confesses us and His Father obliges to breathe His Breath into our hearts. This reciprocity equates to the Son Himself being called the Breath. Since no human has God’s Holy Breath without the Son’s intercession for them at the right hand of God, the Son metaphorically *is* the Breath. It’s not some third Person but the Person of the Son of God by advocacy, intercession, and mediation.

Our treasure must be in heaven for Christ to intercede on our behalf at the right hand of God, “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where **Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection [*phroneo*] on things above**, not on things on the earth.” (Col 3:1-2). Since He knows our motives for the things we do and that our treasure is in heaven, He intercedes for us before God. Salvation is all about whether or not we’re one of those that the Son is presently and actively interceding for. It’s not about *us* believing but about *Him* interceding! The devil’s ministers don’t want us to know that. They want us deceived into thinking we’re saved simply because we believe some facts are true.

Our hearts are where our treasure is

One of the most profound statements in all of Scripture is “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mat 6:21; Luk 12:34). The motives in our hearts correspond to the location of our treasure. Let’s repeat that again. The motives in our hearts correspond to the location of our treasure. If our treasure is on earth, we’ll have impure motives in our hearts for the things we do, but if our treasure is in heaven we’ll have pure motives in our hearts for the things we do. Therefore, for our hearts to be changed, our treasure must first be changed. Living the Christian life is all about keeping our focus on our treasure so that the motives in our hearts for the things we do will be pure.

“O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh**. A good man out of **the good treasure of the heart** bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of **the evil treasure** bringeth forth evil things.” (Mat 12:34-35). According to Jesus, nobody has a mixture of part good and part evil in their hearts but everyone has an abundance of one or the other. And the determinant of whether our hearts are good or evil is whether our treasure is good or evil, “the good treasure of the heart” and “the evil treasure”—treasure in heaven or on the earth. There’s no gray area, middle ground, or neutral territory. Either our treasure is in heaven, our hearts are good, and we’ll have eternal life, or our treasure is on earth, our hearts are evil, and we’ll perish.

We can become very skilled at saying all the right things to convince others that our hearts are pure. But giving this false impression goes right back to the underlying problem of seeking praise from people. It’s because we want to look good to people that we train ourselves to speak humbly, graciously, and kindly when we need to. This is what James taught, “For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, **is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is** an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (Jas 3:7-8). We train all kinds of animals to do things that aren’t natural to them. The snake charmer trains a cobra to sway and entertain people without biting yet its mouth is still “full of deadly poison.” And it’s similar with the tongue. We can “tame” or subdue our tongues to a certain point but eventually we’ll be in a situation where pressure or urgency will bring out of our mouths what’s truly in our hearts, “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.”

What people say and don't say identifies the location of their treasure—whether they're seeking praise from people or from God. When we hear someone say "I don't care what people think about me," it means they *do* care what people think about them which is why they said that. If they really don't care what people think about them, they wouldn't have said anything. And why would someone say "God knows my heart" when we already know that? It's because they're concerned we think their heart isn't right that they're trying to convince us that it is. Our mouths betray our hearts. The main way to discern what's in someone's heart, and ultimately what it is they treasure, is by listening to how they talk. Do they say things to justify and defend themselves? Do they say things to make themselves look good or others look bad? Do they complain and talk negatively or are they thankful? Our mouths indicate what's in our hearts and where our treasure is—seeking praise from people on earth or from God in heaven.

This same convention is what Jesus taught for identifying false ministers or wolves in sheep's clothing, **"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits.** Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" (Mat 7:15-16), "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: **for the tree is known by his fruit.** O generation of vipers, **how can ye, being evil, speak good things?** for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." (Mat 12:33-34). Trinitarian ministers refusing to agree with the Son of God's teaching about His Father was the crucible in which I finally concluded that they're false ministers or wolves in sheep's clothing. It's one thing for someone to be ignorant about what Christ taught but these men are highly educated with decades of ministry experience. What comes out of their mouths about God conflicts with what came out of the Son of God's mouth about God. They're known by their fruits—their mouths betray their hearts.

Our actions reveal what we treasure

Our actions in certain circumstances divulge what we treasure and therefore what's in our hearts. James said that God tests our faithfulness to Him, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that **the trying of your faith [faithfulness]** worketh patience" (Jas 1:2-3). He puts us in situations where there's a distinct conflict of interest and we're forced to decide one way or the other. What we do when pressured to obey God and suffer consequences or disobey God out of self-preservation, shows where our treasure is and therefore the motives of our hearts. James cited the time when "God did tempt [test] Abraham" (Gen 22:1):

Was not Abraham our father **justified by works [ergon]**, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith [faithfulness] wrought with his works [ergon], and **by works [ergon] was faith [faithfulness] made perfect?** And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, **Abraham believed [trusted] God**, and it was **imputed unto him for righteousness**: and he was called the Friend of God. (James 2:21-23).

The Greek *ergon* translated here and in the majority of its 176 occurrences in the New Testament as "works" simply means "actions." It rarely conveys meritorious actions of trying to earn righteousness before God under the Law of Moses. Only a few contexts impose that meaning while most of the time it's simply about our everyday actions or the things we do. James was saying that Abraham's faithfulness to God was tested when he was told to offer his son Isaac. And nobody else was on that mountain to witness what he was about to do,

therefore he certainly wasn't trying to be seen by people but only by God in secret. Of course, he was stopped short of carrying it out because it was only a test but he didn't know that—he was going to following through with it. His actions, therefore, justified what had been said many years earlier, "Abraham believed [*trusted*] God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness." He truly trusted God and it showed by his obedient actions, therefore justifying his righteous standing before Him.

We recognize this basic principle in everyday life. We say things like "Actions speak louder than words," or "What you're doing speaks so loudly that I can't hear a word you're saying." Sometimes we'll hear a sports team "trash talk" before a game but the other team responds with "We'll do our talking on the field!" This is what James meant, "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith [*faithfulness*], and have not works [*ergon*]? can faith [*faithfulness*] save him?" (Jas 2:14). What good is it to say we're faithful yet we're unfaithful? It isn't what we say but what we do that counts, "Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith [*faithfulness*], and I have works [*ergon*]: shew me thy faith [*faithfulness*] without thy works [*ergon*], and I will shew thee my faith [*faithfulness*] by my works [*ergon*]." (Jas 2:18). If we're truly being faithful, we don't need to say anything—our actions speak for themselves.

Peter also said that our faithfulness is tested, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: **That the trial of your faith [*faithfulness*]**, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto **praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ**" (1Pe 1:6-7). And when we pass the testing of our faithfulness, we will receive praise, honor, and glory from God at Christ's return.

God tests us regularly to build a case that will be used in the final judgment—either for us or against us. We must learn to appreciate these tests as opportunities to prove our faithfulness to Him and justify our entry into His kingdom. We have no idea the multitudes of situations we've been put through in our Christian lives that were orchestrated by God to test our faithfulness to Him. We thought things just happened the way they did or that people acted the way they did for no particular reason. We didn't know that God was testing our faithfulness to Him.

The sheep and the goats

Then shall **the righteous** answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, **Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.** (Matthew 25:37-40)

When read in its plain sense, the "sheep and goats" judgment recorded in Matthew 25 sounds like some type of "social gospel"—that entering Christ's Kingdom depends entirely on feeding and clothing the poor, taking in strangers, and visiting the sick or incarcerated. However, it all comes back to what Christ taught is the determining factor between those that are His and the hypocrites, or the sheep and the goats.

"That **thine alms** may be in **secret [*kryptos*]**: and thy Father which seeth in **secret [*kryptos*]** himself shall reward thee openly" (Mat 6:4). Those that are His give alms to the poor with conscience toward God the Father—to be seen by Him in secret. This principle is consistent with what He will say to the sheep in the

judgment, “And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, **ye have done it unto me**” (Mat 25:40). When the sheep do good deeds in secret toward God, they’re doing those deeds unto Him.

This is also what Paul taught, “In the day when God shall **judge the secrets [*kryptos*] of men by Jesus Christ** according to my gospel” (Rom 2:16), “But he *is* a Jew, which is one **inwardly [*kryptos*]**; and circumcision *is that* of **the heart**, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; **whose praise is not of men, but of God**” (Rom 2:29). The “sheep and goats” judgment will be the day when Jesus Christ reveals what was done in secret, “That thine alms may be in **secret [*kryptos*]**: and thy Father which seeth in **secret [*kryptos*]** himself shall reward thee openly” (Mat 6:4). And what was done in secret with conscience toward Him will be rewarded with praise and recognition by Him in that day.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Christ was teaching God’s righteousness, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and **his righteousness**; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat 6:33). This is why the sheep are called “the righteous” in the judgment, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but **the righteous** into life eternal” (Mat 25:46). They’re righteous because their treasure was in heaven—they fed, clothed, lodged, and visited people with pure motives toward God to receive praise from Him.

Now, it’s not that the goats never did any of these same things that the sheep did but that their righteous deeds aren’t going to be recognized at the judgment, “But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *and* doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked *man* doeth, shall he live? **All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned**: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die.” (Eze 18:24). They’re not going to be rewarded for their good deeds because they were rewarded already, “Verily I say unto you, **They have their reward**” (Mat 6:2, 5, 16). The praise they received from people is the only reward they’ll ever receive.

It’s because the sheep and the goats weren’t aware they were being tested is the reason they’re going to ask Christ “When did we see you...?” God routinely puts us in situations that reveal what’s in our hearts by testing where our treasure is located. He imposes upon us conflicts of interest in which we must either make a sacrifice to remain faithful to Him or be unfaithful to reap a personal benefit.

Abraham’s sacrifice when nobody was watching proved His fear of God and trust in Him. And the same is true with us when we make sacrifices for others expecting and receiving nothing at all in return, “And if ye **lend to them of whom ye hope to receive**, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, **and lend, hoping for nothing again**; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and *to the evil*.” (Luk 6:34-35), “But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: **And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee**: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” (Luk 14:13-14). This is what distinguishes the sheep from the goats.

No man can serve two masters

It was prophesied in a mystery from the very beginning, even before mankind had been created, that there would be two categories or classifications of people: “And God saw the light, that *it was* good: and God divided the light from the darkness. **And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night**” (Gen 1:4-

5), “For ye were sometimes **darkness**, but now *are ye light in the Lord*: walk as **children of light**” (Eph 5:8), “Ye are all the **children of light**, and the **children of the day**: we are not **of the night, nor of darkness**” (1Th 5:5).

These two classes would have one ruler or another over them, “And God made two great lights; **the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night**: *he made* the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, **And to rule over the day and over the night**, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that *it was good*.” (Gen 1:16-18).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared “**No man can serve two masters**: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**” (Mat 6:24). Since every person belongs to one category or the other, ruled by one master or the other, then everyone not ruled by the Lord Jesus Christ is ruled by the devil. This is what it all comes down to. If our treasure is pleasing our Father in heaven, we’ll serve and obey His Son with pure hearts and be rewarded with eternal life. However, if our treasure is pleasing people on the earth, we won’t be serving and obeying His Son with pure hearts and we’ll perish.

Pastors of Protestant Trinitarian churches aren’t leading their flocks to eternal life but to destruction. They’re effective at this by teaching *their* definition of serving the Lord to convince their flocks that they’re serving Him. But their definition is not His. We can only serve Him, His way.

In Luke chapter 16, Jesus taught the parable of the Unjust Steward and concluded it with the same statement He had made in His Sermon on the Mount, “**No servant can serve two masters**: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **Ye cannot serve God and mammon.**” (Luk 16:13). The word “mammon” is an English transliteration of a noun from Aramaic origin. In the entire New Testament, it’s only used by Jesus and only in His Sermon on the Mount and His parable of the Unjust Steward. Lexicons and theological dictionaries define this word as “money,” “riches,” or “wealth,” but this isn’t how Jesus used it in His parable.

The parable is about a servant that was unfaithful to his master. He was given the responsibility of overseeing his master’s debts and collecting what was owed to him but was unfaithful in this duty by misappropriating the funds to make friends with his master’s debtors. He settled what they owed for pennies on the dollar for his own personal gain and benefit. This is the essential idea of mammon—it’s personal benefit at our master’s expense.

A similar endeavor is true with Protestant Trinitarian elders, pastors, scholars, and theologians today. Rather than faithfully upholding the standard of righteousness our Lord commanded, they lower His standard by settling His debts for less than what is due. Such doctrines as original sin, a sin nature, sola fide, and once-saved-always-saved, lower the bar of what’s required to enter Christ’s Kingdom. And by keeping their flocks preoccupied with serving religiously—church attendance, a daily Bible reading plan, devotionals, journaling, memorizing verses, small group discussions, prayer groups, serving in positions, missionary trips—they delude them into believing they’re serving the Lord faithfully. They’re serving alright, but not necessarily serving the Lord.

A couple of life examples

My wife and I used to live in a condominium unit near an older Christian couple wanting to sell their unit to my wife's mother. We had only known them passively for about a year but they were always warm and kind to us and attended a local church regularly. However, when it came to dealing with them over the sale of their property, they turned quite unpleasant very quickly. They pressured us to make an offer which we finally did but about a week after signing the contract and receiving their earnest money, another party made them a better offer. That was when things turned ugly. They began demanding to be released from their contract and for their money to be returned. We eventually did this. What I learned from the experience is that we get a glimpse into people's hearts when their treasure is in jeopardy. Just start messing with people's treasure and we'll see pretty quickly where their hearts are at.

There's a dear Christian lady my wife and I have known for many years that had a prolonged period where some family members were causing her problems. The times we would get together with her just to visit, she would inevitably bring up the latest things these family members were doing to her. And I never once heard her admit anything she had ever done wrong to them but it was always about what they were doing wrong to her. What she didn't realize is that the entire situation could very well have been a test from God and she was apparently failing the test. James said, "**And the tongue is a fire**, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that **it defileth the whole body**, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and **it is set on fire of hell [geenna]**" (Jas 3:6), "But if ye have bitter **envying and strife in your hearts**, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but **is earthly, sensual, devilish.**" (Jas 3:14-15). The little tongue in our mouths can lead our entire bodies to *geenna* or the Lake of Fire. Envy and strife from the tongue is "earthly, sensual, devilish"—it indicates we're treasuring what's on the earth, yielding to the flesh, and serving the devil.

Conclusion

Within the heart of His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ taught the distinguishing characteristic of those that will enter His Kingdom and have eternal life, "Take heed that ye do not your alms **before men, to be seen of them** ... That thine alms may be in secret: and **thy Father which seeth in secret** himself shall reward thee openly" (vs. 1, 4), "Lay not up for yourselves **treasures upon earth** ... But lay up for yourselves **treasures in heaven**" (vs. 19, 20), "No man can serve two masters" (v. 24). They do good deeds to be seen by God their Father and therefore to please Him. And because they live to please the Father in heaven, their treasure is said to be in heaven.

There's nothing more valuable than God Himself. Therefore, there's no greater endeavor in life than pleasing Him and being right with Him. And the only way we can please the Father and be right with Him is to faithfully serve His Son seated at His right hand. Salvation or eternal life is all about the Son presently and actively interceding for us at the Father's right hand in heaven.

Hypocrisy is pretending or feigning; it's acting contradictory to one's confession. It consists of doing good deeds to be seen by people and presenting oneself in such a way as to be viewed by people, treated by people, greeted by people, and called by people in an elevated manner. The word that best expresses this is "praise." Hypocrites seek praise from people while genuine servants of the Lord Jesus Christ seek praise from

God, “whose praise *is* not of men, but of God” (Rom 2:29). The reason treasures are said to be upon the earth or in heaven is because people are upon the earth and God is in heaven. Therefore, the essence of laying up treasures upon the earth or in heaven is whether we’re seeking praise from people or from God.

The motives of our hearts coincide with the location of our treasure, “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (Mat 6:21; Luk 12:34). It’s whether our treasure is in heaven or upon the earth—seeking praise from God or from people—that we’ll have a corresponding abundance of good or evil motives in our hearts for the things we do and say, “out of **the abundance of the heart** the mouth speaketh. A good man out of **the good treasure of the heart** bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of **the evil treasure** bringeth forth evil things.” (Mat 12:34-35). Christ’s statement “the good treasure of the heart” is simply an abbreviated form of “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The only way the abundance of motives in our hearts can be changed is by changing what we treasure.

Our words divulge the motives of our hearts and what it is we treasure. As animals can be trained, we can coach ourselves to speak humbly and graciously to give the impression that we have good motives in our hearts. However, our idle words and small talk betray what we truly treasure.

God routinely tests our faithfulness to Him by putting us in situations with a conflict of interest to observe what we will do when pressured one way or the other. Our actions when tested justify our righteous standing before Him. Therefore, we’ll be judged by our actions, “I am he which **searcheth the reins and hearts:** and I will give unto every one of you **according to your works [ergon]**” (Rev 2:23), “the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their **works [ergon]** ... and they were judged every man according to their **works [ergon]**” (Rev 20:12, 13).

Eternal life comes by being counted righteous by God. But to be counted righteous by God we must please God. The only way to please God is to confess His Son as Lord, then obey Him by our actions with the right motives in our hearts—genuinely, not hypocritically. And the determining factor of whether we’re genuine or hypocrites, righteous or unrighteous, sheep or goats, is the location of our treasure. What we treasure, value, or hold dear dictates the motives for our actions and ultimately our eternal destiny.

Our trust in God is demonstrated when we’re willing to forego the praise, approval, recognition, and honor we could have received in this life from people in exchange for being criticized, mocked, belittled, and falsely accused instead. God is pleased when we’re willing to be shamed before people for His Son Jesus Christ’s sake—His glory, name, and honor. It’s difficult and discouraging to continue for years and even decades without getting any recognition or praise for the things we’re doing in secret. But Jesus Christ assured us that one day we’ll receive the treasure we’ve been seeking, “and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly” (Mat 6:4, 6, 18).