

Sunday Morning Message

September 22, 2019

Principles About Prospering from the Sermon on the Mount

Text for Today's Message – Matthew 6:19 - 34

Congregational Reading – Matthew 6:31 - 34

Introduction

We have been examining the Sermon on the Mount for the past several weeks here on Sunday mornings. Last week, we examined the subject of prayer from the first half of chapter six. This week we will look at what Jesus has to say about prospering taught in the last part of the chapter.

I must warn you, however, that when I say prosper I am using the word as the Bible often defines it. Prosperity from God's perspective is not possessing millions of dollars and all of the things that money can buy. Jesus idea of prosperity is having all of your needs met, and not lacking anything that is truly needed to live a joyful and abundant life for Him while you are on this earth.

The Apostle Paul told the saints at Philippi, a church who had sacrificed for the cause of Christ:

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

(Philippians 4:19)

Christian, if you are willing to do what the Lord teaches in Matthew 6, you will never again have to worry about making sure that you have what you need, because Jesus promises that He will take care of those things for you.

I. Saving for the Future (vs. 19 – 21)

The phrase, "lay up," has to do with setting aside or saving something for future use. I have been taught from a young boy that when we get paid, we should develop the habit of setting aside some of the money for a rainy day; saving it for a future need.

Insurance is also a big part of our culture today. We pay large sums for insurance policies that insure that we will be able to pay in the future medical expenses, and even the costs for our funerals. We even purchases warranties that insure that in the future if our car or appliance breaks it will be fixed.

These are all examples of "laying up," and they are all good practices of wise stewardship.

However, what investment are you making for your eternal future.

Illustrate – Brother Roloff said he kept his money in a different bank.

"And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew 19:29)

"And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." (Luke 12:15-21)

It is not wrong for you to save. It is not wrong for you to have insurance if you can afford it. It is extremely expensive nowadays.

Jesus is not telling us to neglect saving for future earthly needs, but He is telling us to not forget to lay up treasures in Heaven. Treasures, Time, and Talent invested by us today will follow us into Heaven with great interest.

*"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; **and their works do follow them.**" (Revelation 14:13)*

Notice verse 21 – The Scripture states that your heart follows your treasure. If you invest in God's kingdom, your heart for God's kingdom will increase.

II. **Sight that is Focused (vs. 22 – 24)**

Jesus now gives two illustrations to drive home the overall theme of this passage: one involving sight and one involving service.

Verse 22 – 23 – teaches us that we must keep our eyes focused on the Lord and eternity rather than on the evil pleasures of this world. If we divide our focus, it will negatively affect our ultimate outcome. Our focus must be singular. God expects us to keep our eyes focused on Him.

Verse 24 teaches the same principle with an illustration regarding service. We can only have one master. We can't be tossed to and fro, back and forth. We accomplish nothing that way. He sums the point up by spelling it out for us. We can't serve both God and money (mammon).

Our focus has to be on God, not on money. It is not wrong to use money as a means to an end, but when money becomes the end in itself, we have lost focus.

Money in itself is not evil, but the love of money leads to evil.

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (1 Timothy 6:6-10)

III. Seeking God First (vs. 25 – 34)

Five times in this passage, the Lord tells us not to :“take thought,” meaning don’t worry. He tells us not to worry about food because He will supply it.

"I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." (Psalm 37:25)

He tells us not to worry about clothing either. He will take care of clothing us as well as meeting all of our other needs as well.

What we need to do is:

"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6:33)

If we will worry about just pleasing the Lord and fulfilling His will for our lives, He will worry about taking care of everything else.

Conclusion – our focus in life should be the Lord. Our talents, treasures, and time have been given to us by Him for us to use for His glory and for His kingdom. Nothing we have belongs to us. It all belongs to Him. We are merely stewards of what already belongs to Him.

Illustration - Someone said that tithes and offerings are not simply God’s plan for financing His work. Primarily it is a means by which the Lord develops His people. Giving is an acknowledgment that all we have and are belongs to God. What we possess has been entrusted to us to use for His glory. As His stewards we *own* nothing but are *responsible* for everything.¹

Learn to give back to the Lord. Develop the habit of being a giver.

¹ Herschel H. Hobbs, *My Favorite Illustrations* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1990), 108.

"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7)

Giving doesn't come naturally for most of us because we tend to be selfish and covetous by nature. Giving is a spiritual grace that must be developed. It is an exercise of faith that will grow over time.

Practical Advice on Giving

1. Pray about what you will give to the Lord.

The Biblical practice has always been tithes and offerings. A tithe is ten percent.

The practice of tithing is found in the Bible before the Law was given. (Abraham; Jacob)

It was also commanded in the Law.

Jesus also commended the practice in the New Testament.

The Jews of old were commanded to bring their tithes to the storehouse, which was the Temple:

"Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the LORD of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts. And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts." (Malachi 3:8-12)

Today, for the Christian, the storehouse would be the local church.

Note – We are not under any Law to give today. If you are saved, you need to pray earnestly and ask God what you should do given your financial condition. You may not have enough faith today to give ten percent. Start where you are today, and give what you can. Many of us can give more than ten percent. Ultimately, it is between you and God. Pray, and ask the Lord to help you with the amount.

2. Our giving to the Lord should be sacrificial. There are things that you can give up in order to give more to the Lord. (e.g. - Coffee) It is amazing that this generation of Christians has far more than any generation before them, but proportionally, they give far less back to the Lord.

Someone once said:

“Give according to your income, lest God make your income according to your giving.”²

Illustration - Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher, was once invited by a wealthy man to come to preach in a certain country church, to help the membership raise funds to pay off a debt. The man told Spurgeon he was free to use his country house, his town house, or his seaside home. Spurgeon wrote back and said, “Sell one of the places and pay the debt yourself.”³

3. Our giving should be consistent

"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Corinthians 16:1-2)

If you get paid every week, then give every week. If you get paid every month, then give every month.

4. Our giving is an expression of our worship. When we give we are asking the Lord to accept an expression of our love and devotion to Him. We are thanking Him for giving us the money to give and for taking care of all of our needs. We are recognizing that everything we own belongs to Him.

Illustration - Hattie Wiatt, a little girl, came to a small Sunday school and asked to be taken in, but it was explained there was no room for her. In less than two years she fell ill, and slipped away on her own little last pilgrimage and no one guessed her strange, little secret until beneath her pillow was found a torn pocketbook with fifty-seven pennies in it, wrapped in a scrap of paper on which was written, “To help build the little Temple bigger, so that more children can go to Sunday school.” For two years she had saved her pennies for the cause which was nearest her heart.

The pastor told the incident to his congregation, and the people began making donations for the enlargement. The papers told it far and wide, and within five years those fifty-seven pennies had grown to be \$250,000, and today in Philadelphia, can be seen a great church, the Baptist Temple, seating 3,300, a Temple College with accommodations for more than 1,400 students, a Temple Hospital, and a Temple Sunday school so large that all who wish may come and be comfortable.⁴

Illustration – Cary Schmidt and his son with the French fries.

² Michael P. Green, ed., *Illustrations for Biblical Preaching: Over 1500 Sermon Illustrations Arranged by Topic and Indexed Exhaustively*, Revised edition of: The expositor's illustration file. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1989).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Paul Lee Tan, *Encyclopedia of 7700 Illustrations: Signs of the Times* (Garland, TX: Bible Communications, Inc., 1996), 471.