

Finding Security In An Insecure World

Rich Nathan
April 8-9, 2006
Life As It Was Meant To Be
Matthew 6:19-24

For those of you who are readers, have you noticed how many books and articles have been written predicting some major disaster that is looming just on the horizon, threatening to disrupt all of life on our planet?

In the natural world, this month's *National Geographic* did its lead article on the coming San Francisco earthquake. As you know, a major earthquake is long overdue along the San Andreas Fault. And with the incredible increase in population over the last century in the San Francisco Bay area, along with the amount of high-rises, gas lines, bridges, power plants, and freeways, *National Geographic* predicts that the coming earthquake will be many times worse than the disaster that struck in 1906.

Then there is Global Warming. Scientists from the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), considered the most authoritative body on the issue of global climate change, concluded that if the current trends of rising temperature continue, there is going to be: "a dangerous rise in sea levels, flooding coastal areas and low-lying islands; an abrupt shift northward of arid land in the Northern Hemisphere; massive extinctions of both flora and fauna unable to adapt to such quickly changing conditions; millions and millions of environmental refugees, and increased conflict over shifting resources. The total effect could create profound disruptions in every aspect of human culture, and result in a great deal of suffering throughout God's creation" (as reported by www.creationcare.org).

Have any of you noticed the number of books out on global pandemics? There are a number of books written recently about the 1918 influenza pandemic that killed tens of millions of people across the globe. There are several new books out on the Black Plague. And now it is Bird Flu. You've probably heard the joke that's been making the rounds on the web:

A bear, a lion, and a chicken were having a conversation. The bear said, "When I growl, all the animals near my cave climb into their holes." The lion said, "That's nothing. When I roar, even the leaves on the trees in the jungle tremble with fear." The chicken said, "Is that all? When I cough, the entire planet races for cover."

How many diets have you read about in the newspaper that will either raise or lower your cholesterol? They are not sure. Or either raise or lower your risk of cancer, or pose no danger to you, or certainly kill you depending upon the most recent study.

Of course, threats don't just come from the natural world. There has been a steady drumbeat of articles about the threat posed to us by Iran with its militantly anti-American Islamic government that is trying to acquire nuclear capability. Iran, apparently, is purchasing advanced weapons systems from Russia.

And then there is international terrorism and threats posed by dirty nuclear bombs and chemical warfare and bio-terrorism.

What about the economy? Everyone knows that we can't sustain these insane trade imbalances and huge deficits. But our country apparently lacks the political will to do anything about them. Nor do we have the political will to shore-up social security. Gold prices are near an all-time high as investors are scrambling to find some kind of stable currency. We see book after book on the shelves regarding how to survive the coming economic crash.

Are you feeling insecure yet?

By the way, make sure you don't try to survive the coming economic crash by investing via your computer. Computer viruses that are downloaded by folks with 9th grade educations can steal all of the data on your computer. Five years ago the vast majority of computer viruses that infected your computer simply destroyed your data. You had to go through the hassle of recreating your data. But now 80% of the viruses are designed to steal your data, to steal your financial and personal data. The new viruses can not only ruin your computer, they can ruin you through personal identity theft.

It has been a constant law of human nature for thousands of years that men and women try somehow to gain security against an uncertain future. The uncertainty may have come from the possibility of famine, so people hoarded up grain in the past. Or the uncertainty came from theft and from marauding tribes overrunning an area. So people sought security by burying their wealth in the ground, or by arming themselves. The uncertainty may have come from the threat of disease, and so people wore amulets and charms and offered sacrifices to various gods beseeching the gods to protect them against forces too great for them.

Today we try to find the right kinds of combinations for investments for our 401K and we get flood insurance. We pour insecticides all over our yards. It is the law of human nature that we are all trying to find security in an insecure world. Something threatens us – some force, some power too great for us. We try to protect against that.

I've called today's message, "Finding Security In An Insecure World." Let's pray.

Matthew 6:19-24

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! 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.

Jesus understands that the future for all of us is uncertain. And as we've seen throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is not some Pollyanna looking at the world through rose-colored glasses, pretending that everything is just fine and dandy, that there is nothing to fear. Jesus is a realist. He understands the way the world works, and he acknowledges that there are real threats facing you and your family, both natural and manmade. Verse 19:

Matthew 6:19

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Moth and rust represent the threats that we face from the natural world – things like floods, earthquakes, cancer.

Thieves, of course, represent the threats that we face from each other. Threats like war, crime, violence, and corruption.

Jesus is a realist. He acknowledges that there are threats facing you and me. The only thing is that Jesus warns us against the common strategies for securing our futures in an insecure world. The first strategy that we commonly employ is the strategy of investing. Verses 19-21:

Matthew 6:19-21

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now, it is important first of all that we understand what Jesus was not condemning before we consider what he is condemning. Jesus is not condemning planning or savings. There is nothing wrong with saving money, or planning for the future. Jesus is not trying to make those of us who have savings accounts or education accounts for our kids, or pension plans in preparation for retirement feel terrible about ourselves. In fact, many teachings in the book of Proverbs affirm the goodness of planning for the future. Proverbs 6:6-8:

Proverbs 6:6-8

Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.

Proverbs 10:5:

Proverbs 10:5

He who gathers crops in summer is a prudent son, but he who sleeps during harvest is a disgraceful son.

Proverbs 13:22a:

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Good people leave an inheritance for their children's children

Proverbs 21:5:

Proverbs 21:5

The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.

Proverbs 28:19:

Proverbs 28:19

Those who work their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies will have their fill of poverty.

It is good to plan, to budget, to save, and to think about your kid's education and your own retirement. Jesus is not condemning investment. In fact, he says in essence that every human being is an investor. We are all treasurers.

The Greek original of Matthew 6:19-20 goes this way:

Matthew 6:19-20

Do not treasure treasures for yourselves on earth...but treasure treasures for yourselves in heaven.

The Greek word for “treasure,” by the way, is the word “thesaurus,” which is a treasury of words.

But Jesus says to us, “You can’t help being an investor, being a treasurer.” He is not against planning. He is not against investing.

Nor is Jesus drawing a contrast between investing for ourselves and investing for God. A lot of commentaries say that the point Jesus is making concerns selfishness. They say he is condemning treasuring treasures for ourselves; investing for ourselves, rather than caring about others, or being rich towards God. But Jesus is not condemning selfishness in our investments. In fact, he uses the same phrase, “for yourselves,” in verses 19-20:

Matthew 6:19-20

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

Now, I want to pause and underline this point for us today. Jesus is appealing to a selfish motive for obedience. So often Christian teaching, whether about money or some other area, appeals to people’s altruistic motives. You hear Christian teaching that says that you’ve been thinking about yourselves too much. You think too much about your comfort, your future, your happiness. You need to lay all of that aside and start thinking about others. You need to sacrifice more. You need to give money for the sake of God. But it is interesting that Jesus does not say these things to us. In fact, I want you in your Bible, if you have a Bible, to underline the words “for yourselves” in verse 19 and verse 20.

There was a philosopher who lived two centuries ago named Immanuel Kant, who said that if a person benefits from their activity, then that activity is somehow tainted. Kant taught that the highest quality for a human being was selflessness. But selflessness is not part of New Testament Christianity. Jesus does not ask us to be selfless. New Testament Christianity says to follow Jesus, to walk in his steps, and it will turn out better for you in the long-term, if you do. New Testament Christianity says that it is in your long-term interest to obey Christ in the area of money, or marriage, or sex, or truth-telling. In the short-term we may pay a high price for obeying Christ. But Jesus constantly tells us that in the long-term you will be better off. Jesus tells us that in the long-term if you obey him, you will be more full of hope, more full of peace, more full of joy. You will live a freer life, a better life; you will be happier with yourself than if you choose to not follow him.

We constantly read in the New Testament that we ought to obey Christ because it is in our interest to obey Christ. Do you believe that it is in your best interest to obey Jesus in everything? Jesus does not say to us as many churches teach today, “look at how much I’ve done for you. I’ve sacrificed for you. I went to the cross for you. I bled and died to pay for your sins. Now, can’t you do something for me?” As if Christ is standing outside the doors of a church with a little cup saying, “Can’t you help a poor man today?”

Jesus appeals to a self-interested motive in calling for obedience. He says, “Store up for yourselves treasure in heaven.” So we need to understand that Christianity was intended to be good news. Our Father in heaven desires to do us good. He wants to bless us. He wants to give us peace. Christ did not come as a thief, to steal and take away from our lives what is ultimately to our good and to our benefit. Christ came to put things into our lives that are not presently there – things like peace, things like patience, things like kindness, and gentleness, love and self-control.

I will tell you, friends, you need to apply this principle that it is in your interest, your long-term interest, to obey Christ in every area of your life. For example, why not have premarital sex? I mean, if you are practicing safe sex right now, what is the big deal?

A friend of mine wrote to me recently and said, “Rich, I’m having premarital sex. I know God says it is wrong. But is there any other reason why I shouldn’t do this?” Then he wrote in parentheses, “Maybe that’s reason enough?”

Well, it is reason enough. After all, God is God. He deserves to be obeyed simply because he is God. But God condescends to us and he appeals to our own long-term interest.

I wrote my friend back and said:

Pete [that’s not his name], let me give you a few other reasons why you and Lisa ought not to continue your sexual relationship. 1) This has been an area of brokenness for you throughout your adult life. You are either going to deal with this issue now, or you will have to deal with it at some time in the future. Sexual brokenness does not get healed through marriage. If it did, I wouldn’t constantly have to deal with married men and women who are addicted to pornography and who have affairs, etc.

2) When we sin, we change spiritually. While you may be able to maintain a kind of intellectual faith in God, you will not be able to retain a warm experience of God’s pleasure or presence in your life so long as you continue to grieve the Holy Spirit. So the question is: “Do you want to feel close to God?”

3) I believe that the best relationship of trust with Lisa is going to be built on a foundation of sexual healing and sexual abstinence for your both right now. Don't you both want to have the confidence that "I am marrying someone who is sexually whole and well?" That can only happen if you're willing to say "no" to sexual sin through the practice of sexual abstinence.

4) If you love Lisa and she loves you, you would not want to damage each other's relationship with God. Put aside for a moment your own relationship with God and whether that is important to you or not. Why would you want to help construct a wall between Lisa and God through sinning with her? Don't you want what's best for Lisa? Surely, her relationship with God is more important than you having sex. Likewise, doesn't Lisa want what's best for you? Surely, your relationship with God is more important than Lisa having sex.

5) Don't you want to be a model, an example, for Lisa's children? Surely, you don't want her kids to be promiscuous. How can you credibly challenge them about sexual abstinence if you aren't going to be abstinent? What kind of legacy do you want to give to her children?

I concluded my letter this way:

Pete, I find it so much easier to come to God in worship and fellowship when I'm not carrying around the weight of a guilty conscience. I love living in the light because I've discovered that I'm much happier and more at peace and more full of life when I'm living in the light than when I'm living in the shadows. It is in your interest to obey God.

My favorite Christian writer, C.S. Lewis, wrote these words in his wonderful essay titled "The Weight of Glory." Lewis wrote:

Indeed, if we consider the unblushing promises of reward and the staggering nature of the rewards promised in the Gospels, it would seem that Our Lord finds our desires not too strong, but too weak. We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink, and sex, and ambition when infinite joy is offered us. Like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea, we are far too easily pleased.

That's the problem. We are far too easily pleased with what is not ultimately satisfying.

Well, if Jesus is not warning us against selfishness in our investments, what is he warning us against? He is warning us against foolishness. Jesus is saying to us, "If you want to gain security in an insecure world, do not invest yourself in what is inherently insecure."

There is nothing wrong with seeking security. There is nothing wrong with hedging against the future. There is nothing wrong with you looking out for yourself, but Jesus says that we should really look out for ourselves. Don't invest in what is insecure. Do you understand what Jesus is saying? It is almost like a prospectus that presents us with two investment opportunities.

Investment Opportunity #1 looks like the guy on the Monopoly board. You have this fat man with a big cigar and white whiskers saying: Give me your money and your life. Invest in my company, and then in fine print, he says: My company is teetering on the edge of bankruptcy and no matter what amount you put into my company, you will definitely lose it. You will lose it slowly as you get older and you will surely lose it all at death. It is signed "The Treasures on Earth Corporation."

Investment Opportunity #2 has a picture of Jesus Christ. Jesus says, "Invest in my company, Treasures in Heaven, Inc., I guarantee that you will reap a hundred fold in this life, and in the life to come you will reap so much more than you can imagine. We think that more money and more possessions will make us feel more secure. The fact is, friend, the more we have, and the more we feel constrained to protect what we have. In our hearts we know, although we don't admit it, that all that we've invested in to make us secure is inherently insecure. We accumulate all this stuff and then we buy expensive security systems to protect our stuff.

Safe and Secure: A thief cannot burglarize a room he can't find. Hidden doors and rooms provide safety in case of emergency and peace of mind when storing valuables. Every measure is taken to ensure that our motorized features are secure from unauthorized entry and safe to operate.

All of our motorized passageways are designed with triple-redundant safety features including optical sensor arrays, overtorque protection, thermal sensors, infrared sensors, and mechanical obstruction detectors. – Starting at \$10,000. You can do it yourself, if you want.

Here is my favorite. It is called "Smoke Cloak." It is a revolutionary machine that stops burglary by filling any room with thick smoke during a criminal attack. In less than 20 seconds visibility is reduced to the point that a would-be thief has to leave. No one can steal what they can't see.

Imagine that you accidentally set smoke cloak off at say your parent's 50th wedding anniversary party, or your child's 1st birthday, or when you are entertaining your in-laws. This is particularly helpful when you are trying to impress the boss!

Jesus says invest selfishly, but don't invest foolishly. Now, we need to remember that treasures on earth are not just financial. For example, there are researchers at OSU that are not primarily driven by money. They might be able to make much more money in private industry. But their treasure on earth is professional recognition and status in the eyes of their peers. If you want to see people fight like cats and dogs, get with a group of researchers and find out how they relate to one another when there is a dispute about who gets credit regarding a discovery, or who gets credit for a large grant, or on a professional paper that is written. Their treasure on earth is status and recognition.

Some people's treasure on earth is being well-liked. They are harmonizers. They want to make sure that in every situation they come out looking good. They live for compliments. Every act is done to make sure that they don't ruffle anyone's feathers. Their treasure on earth is being well-liked and approved of by others.

Some people's treasure on earth is their appearance. They are consumed with their hair and their face and their body and their clothes and their shoes.

What is wrong with treasures on earth? Why do they serve as such a terrible investment? Verse 19:

Matthew 6:19

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal.

Treasures on earth are always subject to two problems. They are always subject to decay and they are always subject to being stolen or ripped off. Whatever treasure you have on earth right now is decaying. If it is your body, trust me, your body is decaying.

You know those of us who are baby-boomers try so hard to keep our bodies from decaying. Do you know that the average age for a woman getting a face lift in America has declined over the last 15 years from between age 55-60, to age 42? The average age for getting a face lift is 42. And then it has to be redone and redone and redone. No matter how hard we fight it, with all the personal trainers and diets, and liposuction, our bodies are decaying. If you don't believe that, go out and watch a bunch of old guys playing a pick-up basketball game. Watch how many guys walk off the court with pulled ligaments and ankle sprains, and sore backs.

While you sit here, your car is outside rusting. Your furnace is breaking down. The motor in your refrigerator is going out. Mold is growing on the tile in your bathroom. Your driveway is cracking from the changes in weather. That is just the nature of things on earth. Jesus is being kind to us when he warns us against treasuring this kind of treasure. He is telling us the truth in love.

But there is another problem with trying to secure your future by treasuring treasures on earth. It is not only that these investments are inherently insecure, but treasures on earth will capture our hearts. Verses 21-23:

Matthew 6:21-23

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Jesus is not saying that your treasures will follow your heart. Rather, he is saying that your heart will follow your treasures. Verse 21:

Matthew 6:21

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The heart in the Bible, of course, is the control center of your being. It is where you make your decisions, how you think about life, what you day dream about, what you meditate on. Jesus says your heart will follow your treasures. Your decisions about life, about how you spend your time, about what you do with your family, what you worry about – all of these decisions are determined by your prior choice regarding your treasures. Jesus underlines this notion that what you treasure determines the control center of your being in verses 22-23:

Matthew 6:22-23

The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

He is saying here what captures your heart, by the way, the eye is a metaphor for the heart, in other words what you fix your vision on, what you think about, what you fixate on, what you fantasize about, what you look at and handle will ultimately impact your whole being.

Your Treasure → Your Heart → Your Whole Life

Whatever you treasure up, you affect the control center of your being, and the control center of your being, your heart, will ultimately affect your whole life, everything about you.

Let me share with you some stories from our financial counseling ministry, Crown Financial. By the way, we have a table out in the lobby with information about the ministry. You may want to go out to the lobby and pick up some of that information, if you think this would be of value to you. You can also find out about how to be a counselor in this ministry. But I want to share with you some very real life stories that underline the truth of Jesus' words.

Story #1 – Several years ago I was talking with a Christian couple. The man was depressed and extremely tired. The doctor told him that his excessive hours of working in his cleaning business were beginning to take a toll on his health. I could hear in his voice that stress was also taking a toll on his marriage. As I talked with this couple, I learned that the man was working 70 hours a week and that he had been doing this for several years. The reason was because his wife continued to take the kids shopping and out to eat on a continual basis allegedly because her husband was never around to be with the family.

The family was literally falling apart because of uncontrolled spending. The family was in a dead-end spiral. The more he worked, the more she spent; the more she spent, the more he had to pay the mounting bills. I asked the wife if she would be willing to spend less so that her husband would not have to work the many hours required to pay the credit card bills. Unfortunately, her love of spending outweighed her love for her husband. Her answer was, "No. Absolutely not." As they left, I thought, "If only she would change her spending habits now and save her family, rather than being forced to change after her family is broken, or her husband is dead."

What you treasure determines your choices and your choices determine your whole life.

How about this story: I talked with a Christian family, who was \$50,000 in credit card debt. They had an annual income of about \$50,000. The couple had dozens of credit cards. Overspending for stuff was a consistent habit. Each new credit card was used to make payments on the previous ones. When the ever-tightening noose of credit card payments finally caught up with them, they had two options: 1) they could sell their house, which had sufficient equity to pay off their credit card bills; or 2) they could declare bankruptcy. The husband believed that owning a house was a status symbol and he was unwilling to sell it and pay off his debt. Instead, this Christian couple chose bankruptcy. They stiffed all their creditors, and lost their Christian witness, but they would not loosen their grip on their house.

The sad part is, in addition to not honoring their promises to their creditors, the real problem of their loving stuff more than God was never resolved.

Now, let me share with you a very positive story. This comes from a woman in our congregation. These are her own words:

My husband and I came into our marriage with crates and crates of garbage that colored the way we looked at marriage as well as each other. I searched for a very long time in my teenage years for love and acceptance. I grew up in a household where my dad didn't make very much money. I remember looking at the rich kids in school and wanting what they had. They had everything I wanted, looks, great clothes, cool cars, beautiful big houses.

I thought that marriage would get me all the material things I desired. My husband and I had many issues to get through when we were first married. To ease my pain, I went on shopping spree after shopping spree and before I knew it, we were \$40,000 in credit card debt. I loved all the things I bought. I truly loved them. It made me who I was (or so I thought). I loved to decorate the house, dress the kids in the best clothes, and go to fancy places. My husband responded to my spending with anger, bitterness, and abuse. But the Lord had a plan for my husband and me. Our children were attending a church called "The Vineyard" with our babysitter. They were telling us stories about Jesus.

We decided to attend the church and we accepted Christ at the Vineyard. My husband was on fire for the Lord and he started on a journey with the Lord that I was so jealous of. I loved the Lord, but I was still searching for love and acceptance. I started shopping again and caused our family to go back into debt, this time to the tune of \$60,000. We were attending a home group at the time and between my home group leader, my husband, and my women's group leader, I was confronted about my continued spending. I was confronted with the love of Christ as well as the love of my brothers and sisters in Christ and my husband. I realized that even though I had asked Christ into my life, I kept him from all of me.

The freedom that I felt that day I was confronted was unbelievable. I didn't have to hide anymore. I didn't have to live in torment anymore. I didn't have to live searching for love and acceptance anymore. I was loved and accepted by my loving Father, my husband, and my friends, who I later became accountable to. It would have been so much easier to declare bankruptcy and walk away from my sin. But after much prayer, my husband and I felt we needed to pay every penny back. It was very hard for six years to not buy anything except the things we needed. No vacations, no new stuff, no splurging. We are now debt free. The dark shadow of debt no longer follows us around. And over the last six years not only have we become debt free, but our marriage is filled with joy, peace and love. We chose Christ first in our marriage above all else.

Looking back I can see how much God loves me, and how he desires good for my life.

Notice that this woman is saying that Jesus' words proved true in her life. It was in her ultimate self-interest to stop treasuring up treasures on earth. You see, the Lord intends us to live this kind of life, but we don't listen. We are always trying to secure our future by attaching ourselves to something in this world. But Jesus concludes saying in verse 24:

Matthew 6:24

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.

About 30 years ago Bob Dylan wrote a song titled "You Gotta Serve Somebody." I want to read to you the first few verses of the song. I'll try to keep from singing it.

You may be an ambassador to England or France,
You may like to gamble, you may like to dance,
You may be the heavyweight champion of the world,
You may be a socialite with a long string of pearls.
But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed,
You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil, or it may be the Lord,
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

You may be a construction worker working on a home,
You may be living in a mansion, or you might live in a dome,
You might own guns and you might even own tanks,
You might be somebody's landlord, and you might even own banks.

But you're gonna have to serve somebody, yes indeed,
You're gonna have to serve somebody,
Well, it may be the devil, or it may be the Lord,
But you're gonna have to serve somebody.

That's what Jesus is saying. Unfortunately, the NIV obscures what Jesus is saying here. In verse 24 in the NIV:

Matthew 6:24 (NIV)

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.

But Jesus' literal words were:

You cannot serve both God and Mammon.

The word “mammon” should not be translated “money.” Money is a form of mammon. The word “mammon” comes from the Hebrew word “amon,” which is related to the word “amen.” Amon means something that you are trusting in. Mammon is anything or anyone that you are looking to for your security against the insecurities of this world. Your family could be your mammon. Your career, your bank account, your pension.

See, the problem that we have that Jesus is addressing is that we take good things – our jobs, our homes, our bodies and investments, and even the great things – our families, our kids – and we make them into ultimate things. We look to those things for significance and joy. The problem is that everything we have in this world is on lease to us. Your health is being leased to you by God. So is your body and your career. So are your kids. So are your parents. Your spouse is being leased to you. So are your possessions. So is your pension. God doesn’t tell us the term of the lease at the front end. We don’t know if the lease term on any of the good things or the good people in our lives, the good experiences in our lives – we don’t know if the lease term is another day, month, year, or decade.

Let me pull this all together for you. You are not wrong to enjoy the good things of creation – your family, your friends, your home, your job. But when good things become ultimate things, when you must have these things to be happy, then those things become mammon for you. They become idols.

When we lose good things, we are sad and we grieve. We grieve the loss of relationships. We grieve the loss of careers. We grieve the loss of our health. When we lose ultimate things, mammon, we are shattered. Our lives totally fall apart.

In this text, Jesus is lovingly warning us to not seek security in what is ultimately insecure. Seek your security in the Lord. Hang your hopes on Christ. Find your meaning in life through an ever-deepening relationship with Christ. Invest your heart, your money, and your energy in the kingdom of God. This will result in your long-term happiness and your long-term gain. It is in your interest to not treasure up treasures on earth, but to treasure up treasures in God. Let’s pray.

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I. Treasuring Up Treasures (Matthew 6:19-20)

A. What Is Not Condemned

1. Investing And Planning
2. Selfishness And Investing "For Ourselves"

B. What Is Condemned

II. Treasures Control Our Lives (Matthew 6:21-23)

III. Treasures, Trust And Serenity (Matthew 6:24)