



Sermon first preached at St Matthias Church on 26 June 2016

Where your treasure is so your heart will be also...seek first the kingdom...Matt 6:19-34

Two step ladders, similar height, with bases close to each other so that can get from one to the other very easily..Maybe so close that you can initially attempt to climb both ladders at once before ones legs get too far apart to make that impossible!

Jesus offers us 4 choices and gives us good reasons to always put God's ways first...

- 2 treasures
- 2 visions
- 2 masters
- 2 preoccupations

A 2 treasures

God's Timeless Treasure vs.

Earthly Treasure

Heart at top of step ladder

Suitcase filled to brim and overflowing with material things: Monopoly set; Holiday brochure; M and S Food mag;

Ideal Home mag; Camera, Yacht, Game controller, model Car...

Let's put right any confusion to begin with...

- Jesus does not say that material things are bad, nor that money is bad in itself.
- The bible commends us for saving enough money to provide for our family, and expects us to work for our living
- The problems come when climbing the ladder of materialism is our main goal such that it becomes our ambition to get more and better and bigger things
 - Difficult because everyone else is climbing this ladder,
 - And difficult because the adverts encourage us to do that,
 - And of course it's nice to enjoy those things...

Two problems:

One is things break, wear out, get rusty, moths eat them up; thieves come in and steal things... *(enter thief, panto style behind speaker's back and steal something)*

Second problem is that when we are climbing this ladder, we cannot be climbing God's ladder of treasure at the same time...we can try, *(Actor- try to go up both together and give up as legs spread too far apart)* but it doesn't work..

We have to choose which ladder to climb

B 2 Visions

Jesus speaks about the eyes being the lamp of the body. It's an odd phrase but when Jesus says that our eyes are full of light he means someone who is living by God's light, sharing God's heart for His way to live, but that when our eyes are bad or unseeing, it is as if we are blind and stumble around trying to find the right way to live. It's a bit like climbing this (*God's*) ladder – even in the dark you have torch to see by - *....actor does that...*

Contrasted with climbing the materialism ladder as if blind – *fumble around with blindfold trying to get up other ladder.*

Jesus is saying that when our vision is set on material things more than on God's ways we can no longer see clearly what God's priorities are. Nor can we any longer see what is just common sense.

Anyone like playing Monopoly? It's a cut-throat game where the winner is the person who makes the most money by collecting as many properties as possible, putting houses on them, and charging high rents – well you can if you have properties in Mayfair!

Even get a real thrill from winning all that money. But I love the story of author John Ortberg who says he used to play as a boy with his grandma. And when he got too carried away with delight at how much money he had, she would remind him, at the end of the game it all goes back in the box.

However much wealth we accumulate, we cannot take it with us when we die.

Jesus commends a different approach... focus your vision on God's priorities, not your own, then we'll see clearly how to live, and not get distracted or blinded such that we climb the wrong ladder.

C 2 masters

Jesus talks then about how we cannot serve two masters – we cannot serve both God and 'money' really 'wealth' or 'mammon'...

It's really easy to follow wealth, earthy treasure...

It's forever calling out to us...Quote adverts strap lines...'because you're worth it'...etc,

that lure actor slowly but surely up the steps...

But the trouble is we do want to serve God too...

Hear God's voice calling – maybe, 'come follow me' says Jesus...

Actor gets down from ladder and starts climbing the God one only to get back down and go up materialism ladder as soon as hears another advert...this goes on a few times up and down, up and down...

Grace...space...pace - Jaguar

Because you're worth it – L'oreal

Be kind to your behind – Cottonelle

Instant gratification! Nissan Leaf

Come take up your cross and follow me

You can do it when you b&q it -

Come to me all who are weary and burdened

"This is not just food, this is M&S food"

I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry.

The best a man can get – Gillette

Believe in better - Sky

I have come so that you may life in all its fullness

Most of the time we think we can do it, in the same way it is possible to be employed by two people and work part time for each...but Jesus here speaks of God and Wealth being not just employers but as slave owners – we belong to one or the other..It really is impossible to obey the call of both. We have to choose.

2 preoccupations

Either we are full of worry like this...

At top of materialism ladder – with suitcase on our lap – nursing the contents carefully, but worried when given a new thing - and an existing one falls to the ground...we worry and fret that not all safe and secure....

Or we can choose to stick with God's priorities, his ambitions, his plans,

Seek first His Kingdom, not our comfort...and trust him to provide for all we really need...

make that your treasure, that your heart..And you will begin to know how to really 'live well' as God intended....

Start to climb God's ladder and ½ of the way up, an angel appears and hands you a slightly smaller suitcase – which you are surprised but very happy to receive and continue to climb up

Seek first the kingdom and his righteousness...and these things will be given to you as well...