

## Stage IV. The Great Galilean Ministry

### E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and Teaching on the Mount

#### 9. Teaching on the Mount, Part VIII:

##### Love For God Requires Unrivaled Loyalty to Him Alone

###### The DAILY JESUS NEWS #075

Base Text: MT 6.19-24 (Parallel Text: None)

19 *"I command you not to store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. 20 But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

22 *"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 23 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.*

24 *"It's impossible to 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."*

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NOTE: We use superscript identification of the source gospel in "blended texts" as follows: Matthew = <sup>MT</sup>, Mark = <sup>M</sup>, Luke = <sup>L</sup>, John = <sup>J</sup>, Acts = <sup>A</sup>. This "superscript ID" is inserted at the beginning of the quoted text, identifying that Bible book until a different superscript appears. In addition, *the words of Jesus are italicized in red*. Old Testament quotations are CAPITALIZED.

CONTEXT DIGEST	
Location	On a Mountain in Galilee
Timeline	May, 31 AD (Month Sixteen)
Jesus' Life Context	Stage IV: The Great Galilean Ministry
	E. The Appointment of the Twelve Apostles and "Teaching on the Mount"
Title	9. Teaching on the Mount, Part VIII: Love for God Requires Unrivaled Loyalty to Him Alone

#### COMMENT:

So far in his "Teaching on the Mount" Jesus covered the core attitudes of a disciple; the key principle of love as the fulfillment of the Law and the basis of true righteousness; six primary examples of this principle in action; and the way the principle of love impacts our practice of three basic spiritual disciplines. In today's reading Jesus applies the "love-fulfillment" principle to our relationship with God. Tomorrow Jesus will look at the way God's love causes the Father to relate to us.

Jesus had declared the centrality of love in true righteousness, and given us numerous examples of the way unconditional love goes beyond the requirements of the Law in doing what is best ("right") for others, even our enemies. However, **"love your neighbor as yourself"** was the second great command of the Law. The first was to **"love the LORD your God with all of your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."** (Duet. 6.5) What does loving God really require of us on a daily basis, beyond loving others?

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Loving God comes down to understanding his unrivaled value, and offering our obedient loyalty to him in everything we do. It is impossible to serve two different bosses (Lords) simultaneously, for their commands to us will conflict, and we will inevitably have to choose which commands to prioritize with obedience and which to leave undone. Jesus wisely told us that we will end up “loving” one with our prioritized obedience, and “hating” the other with our neglect. Our love for God must be unrivaled by any other love--the Trinity must be our unquestioned, highest priority.

Jesus reduced our loyalties to either loving God, or “money.” What did he mean by “money” here? The underlying word was the Aramaic term for “material things”-- or what money can buy. Money can buy just about anything in creation, or anything man has created. In the most simple terms, then, Jesus was defining the issue as either love of the Creator, or love of something else in his creation.

Only God is great enough to create everything else out of nothing. Only God is great enough to sustain and uphold everything he has made. Only God is great enough to exist in infinite abundance only in himself as the Trinity--with no need or reliance upon any created thing. God is so much greater than the totality of his creation that he alone deserves unrivaled love, devotion, and loyalty. To love anything in creation to the same degree that we love God is in fact not to love God at all!

This is why Jesus spoke in this reading of the importance of our “eyes.” If we see well, then we will be full of light--if our eyes do not see, then we will be filled with darkness. Jesus was speaking here of the way we perceive the world around us--our “world-view.” If we clearly understand the nature and character of God as our all-consuming, supreme love, whom nothing in all of his creation can begin to rival, then we are full of light. If we love other created “things” more than God, then our most basic perceptions about the nature of reality are horribly skewed, and we will be full of darkness.

Therefore, Jesus gave us a command to stop treating created things as our most valuable treasure. **“Laying up treasure on earth”** is the attempt to make created things satisfy us, because we consider them to be the most important, valuable things in our lives. Instead, Jesus commanded us to **“lay up treasures in heaven”** by seeing God himself as the greatest treasure we possess, and pursuing our relationship to the Trinity as our highest and unrivaled expression of love.

The core attitudes of a disciple that Jesus began this teaching with were all expressions of unrivaled love for God. We are poor in spirit, mourn, hunger and thirst, and are meekly obedient because we love God supremely, yet we are sinful and fail to love him at the same time. Love for God causes us to be merciful to others, become pure through his forgiveness, rejoice in making peace, and even to dance and shout with joy when we are privileged to suffer persecution for his sake. These attitudes all exude unrivaled loyalty and love for God. We lay up treasures in heaven when we live with this kind of love for God now, on earth.

It is unrivaled love for God that should motivate our love for people--we do it in Jesus’ name, for his sake. Passionate love for God, who has first loved us without measure in his Son, causes us to deal righteously with our anger, to be sexually pure, faithful in marriage, and people who honor our word, and can therefore be trusted with our simple “yes” or “no” when we give it. Crazy levels of love for God cause us not to retaliate when we are taken advantage of, and even to love our enemies as unconditionally as we love those who love us the most.

Love for God cause us to “secretly” give as generously as we are able, fast regularly, and pray privately as our normal lifestyle. Everything Jesus has spoken about in this teaching so far was actually about loving God.

Disciples should be absolutely clear that our life mission to love God with all that we are, in all that we think, do, and say. We consider the privilege of loving God in this manner to be literally the greatest honor in the universe. Loyalty to God is our supreme passion and obedience is our greatest joy. This is how we “see” the surpassing unrivaled value of God, versus his creation.

The truth that Jesus knew well, was that only love for God can motivate true righteousness. Furthermore, love for God is only possible as a response to his prior unconditional love for us. We love God by giving back to him what he has first lovingly given us. This is the truth that Jesus will speak about in our next reading.

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### APPLICATION:

The glory of what Jesus commanded us to do here--lay up treasure in heaven by loving God--is that it causes us to appreciate all of his creation because it is HIS creation. True God-lovers are the most content and fulfilled people on earth.

Passionate God-lovers are thrilled with, and enjoy his creation fully because we are always aware of God's love, wisdom, and providence in providing all of his creation. Likewise, Passionate God-lovers can be thankful for the pain and suffering that are also part of the fallenness of creation, because it all causes us to grow more into Jesus' likeness. Loving God supremely increases the value of everything he has created, rather than diminishing it.

*What do you love about creation more, because you love the God who made it?*

*What created thing tends to rival your love for God? How can you adjust your view of this person, or thing?*

*Is God truly your greatest, unrivaled love?*