

To Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, forever and ever. Amen.

¹ *Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰ but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²² The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴ No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.*

Text: Matthew 6:19-24 A 10-15-17 1 Tim. 6:6-16 Deut. 6:1-9 Ps. 119:25-40 Resp. Ps.: 86
Hymns 657, 789, 608, 175 (1st tune)

KEEP LAYING UP TREASURES IN HEAVEN

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

I once heard of a woman who had died, and according to her instructions, was buried in her expensive Mercedes Benz automobile. That is at the same time ridiculous, and terribly sad. It shows what she treasured during her life. Her nice car is rusting in the ground. Her earthly treasures aren't going to do her any good at all when she stands before God's throne on Judgment Day.

Jesus tells us, "*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth,*" that is, things of this life. Jesus isn't implying that saving money and enjoying wealth are sinful. A job, savings and investments, and things we need and things we enjoy are all blessings God gives us because He loves us. We appreciate them, and we're grateful to God for them.

In the original text Jesus is telling us, literally, "*Do not be treasuring for yourselves treasures on earth.*" "*Treasures on earth*" are whatever things of this life that are most valuable to us, what we live for, what our goals and priorities are in life. Our Lord is forbidding us from making any earthly things our treasure – in effect our gods. Again, Jesus isn't saying that money and other "*treasures on earth*" are sinful in themselves. He's warning us against having a sinful attitude toward them. The Bible doesn't say, "Money is a root of all kinds of evil." The Bible says, "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil." (1 Tim. 6:10a, my emphasis).

Jesus says about *“treasures on earth,”* *“...moth and rust destroy and ... thieves break in and steal.”* *“Rust”* in the original is literally, *“eating.”* Rust can *‘eat up’* our cars and many of our other things. Food and our other necessities, car and health expenses, and many other things *‘eat up’* our money. Jesus says they *“destroy,”* which in the original is literally, they *“make invisible.”* Jesus warns us not to place our trust in earthly treasures which can so quickly and easily disappear. *“Thieves [can] break in and steal”* them. In spite of hard work and careful planning, what we have can be taken from us. Any earthly treasure can be lost. Someone who lays up only *“treasures on earth”* has no eternal home in heaven.

“But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven,” Jesus tells us. Life here on earth is important. But what is truly important is eternal life in heaven.

How do we *“lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven”*? Jesus isn’t saying, *“Make sure you do enough good deeds during your life so that you can go to heaven.”* The Bible says that we *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* (Ro. 3:23). No one can be good enough to deserve to go to heaven. We’re all sinners who fall far short. The Bible goes on to say that we’re *“justified freely by [God’s] grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”* (v. 24). Jesus took all of our sins away with His death on the cross. Jesus assures us, *“Truly I say to you, whoever believes in Me has everlasting life”* (Jn. 6:47). God forgives our sins and gives us eternal life in heaven as a free gift by faith in Jesus.

We *“lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven”* by faith in Jesus, and treasuring Jesus and His death on the cross for our salvation, and our heavenly home with Him. We *“lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven”* by coming to church regularly to hear God’s Word, and be with our family of believers, and worship God and pray to Him, so that our faith stays alive and grows. We *“lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven”* as we have regular family devotion time around God’s Word, and when we each make time every day to study and meditate on God’s Word and pray to Him. We *“lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven”* as we look to God and His Word for the strength to fight off the attacks of the devil, the world, and our flesh, and live our lives in Christ and for Christ. We *“lay up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven”* as we ask God to turn our heart’s devotion away from the world and this life, and give us hearts devoted to Him and His Word and our home in heaven.

Jesus says, *“Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal.”* Unlike *“treasures on earth,”* our *“treasures in heaven”* cannot be taken from us. We keep *“[laying] up for [ourselves] treasures in heaven,”* confidently knowing that God will take us there! Jesus assures us, *“My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone pluck them out of My hand”* (Jn. 10:27-28).

Jesus says, *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”* What means the most to us, that’s where our heart’s devotion is – our love, our hopes, our energy and our efforts. The Lord sometimes allows us to go through financial struggles and other struggles in order to straighten out our priorities in life. We pray with the psalmist, Lord *“give me an undivided heart”* devoted to You and our heavenly treasures. (Ps. 86:11b, NIV).

Jesus says, *“The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.”* Keep your focus on Jesus and our heavenly treasures. Jesus says, *“I am the light of the world. He who follows me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life”* (Jn. 8:12).

“But if your eye is bad,” Jesus warns us, *“your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”* If our focus is on earthly treasures instead of Jesus and our heavenly treasures, we’re putting our souls in serious danger. Scripture admonishes us, *“Those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows”* (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

Our Lord tells us in His Word, *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might”* (Deut. 6:5). Jesus tells us, *“No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon”* (earthly possessions) (my emphasis). We cannot be devoted to God and heavenly treasures, and to money and things of this life. If we keep trying to hold onto our devotion to earthly treasures, our heart may well be pulled away from God, and we lose our *“treasures in heaven.”* The Christians in Laodicea had become lukewarm toward Jesus. He gave them this chilling warning, *“Because you are lukewarm, ... I will spit you out of My mouth. ... Therefore be zealous and repent”* (Rev. 3:16, 19b). Joshua challenged the children of Israel, *“If it is evil in your eyes to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve. ... But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. ... And the people said to Joshua, ‘...we will serve the LORD’”* (Josh. 24:15, 21, ESV). To that we add our “Amen!”

Christian friends, don’t be *“treasuring for yourselves treasures on earth.”* Earthly treasures can all be lost. We can’t take any of them with us when we die, and they won’t do us any good on Judgment Day. Keep *“treasuring for yourselves treasures in heaven.”* No one can take away our heavenly treasures. We take them with us when we die, and Jesus will take us to live with Him forever in heaven! Amen.