

The Mindset We Need

Matthew 6:19-34

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September 21, 2025

Introduction:

- Last week, we saw how the Bible speaks directly to the violence in our world today.
 - Instead of hating our enemies, Jesus calls us to love of enemies.
 - Instead of retaliating against those who hurt us, Jesus calls us to bless those who curse us.
 - He even calls us to serve, and pray, and fast for those in need.
- And I was so encouraged to hear, how many people were fasting and praying for someone this past week.
- Let's make this our regular practice.
 - Let's fast and learn to depend on Christ.
 - When Satan comes to tempts us to self-reliance, let's declare our faith in God's word.
 - ***Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*** Matthew 4:4
- Now, just as the Bible speaks to the anger in our world.
 - The Bible also speaks directly to the worry in our hearts.
- We're living in a time of uncertainty.
 - And it may be that:
 - You're worried about our nation.
 - You may be worried about more violence.

- You may be worried about your marriage, or your job, or your finances, or your family, or your health.
- Even though we know that God's in control, even though you've been a Christian for many years, sometimes, worry can still creep in our hearts.
- The good news is that, in our passage, Jesus speaks directly to our worries, and he shows us, how we can grow in peace.
 - In fact, he shows in these verses, the cure for anxiety.
 - We know this, because in chapter 6, 3 times, Jesus says, ***"Do not be anxious about your life."***
 - And through these verses, Jesus leads us to still waters, and he guides us to green pastures.
- I recently said to someone, *God will lead you to where you need to go, God has a plan for you.*
 - And then I said:
 - *Of course, I know you know this already.*
 - And this person said, *Well, Tom, it's still good to hear.*
 - Oftentimes we need reminders.
 - We need to hear God speaking to us.
 - And that's my prayer for all us today.
 - That we'd hear God's voice, and grow in faith, and that our worry would turn to worship, that our anxiety would turn to peace.
- As we begin, we see how, Jesus describes 3 reasons, why we experience anxiety in our world today, and how we can overcome them.
 - He gives the cause then the cure.

Point 1:

- First, the reason we become anxious is because we seek after wrong treasure.
 - Jesus says:
 - ***Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal...For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*** Matthew 6:19-21
- Here, Jesus isn't saying you can't save money or store up for the future.
 - Proverbs 21:5 states, ***The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.***
 - The Bible encourages wise planning.
 - Joseph advised Pharaoh to set aside grain during times of plenty, so they would have grain in times of famine.
 - It's wise to save for the future.
- Furthermore, Jesus isn't saying you can't be rich.
 - Both Abraham and Job were rich.
 - In fact, it's clear that God was the one who made them rich.
 - So, God isn't commanding us to take a vow of poverty.
 - Less money doesn't equal, more godliness.
- Rather, Jesus is warning against trying to find wholeness in earthly possessions.
 - This word "treasure" literally means "a storehouse."
 - And so, Jesus is warning against selfish storing up.

- He's warning against trying to find security by accumulating things on earth.
- In other words, he's not saying that it's wrong to possess things, but for things to possess us.
- I also want to point out, he's not only speaking about money, but different kinds of treasures.
 - Notice how this word, treasure, is plural.
 - He's warning against putting your security in a job, or power, or your reputation, or your friends, or marriage, or even family.
 - There are many kinds of earthly treasures.
- And the reason storing up earthly possessions causes anxiety is because they're not eternal.
 - They don't last.
 - Jesus says that moth, rust, and thieves destroy.
- By moth, he's speaking about nature, or natural disasters.
 - Moths would eat up cloth and ruin clothes.
 - And although our clothes may not get eaten up by moths.
 - Fires, and floods, and tornados, and earthquakes may ruin our possessions.
- By rust, he's speaking about time.
 - If nature doesn't destroy, time will.
 - Overtime, everything begins to decay.
 - The car gets rusty, the body gets old, the milk smells sour.
 - It may take a lot of time, but in about 5 billion years, the sun will run out of hydrogen and become a super-giant star.

- And all things on earth will be swallowed up.
- All things will rust and decay.
- Not only nature and time, Jesus also talks about loss.
 - He says that thieves will come and steal.
 - People may steal what you have.
 - But most of the time, you'll lose your money to others.
 - In many cases, the first generation builds the wealth.
 - The second generation maintains the wealth.
 - And the third generation loses the wealth.
- Nature destroys, time decays, and over generations, wealth is eventually lost and given to others.
- The point is this, when you put your security in things that don't last, you'll find yourself trying hard to protect what can't be 100% guaranteed.
 - And when you try, instead of peace, you'll feel anxiety.
- Think about King Saul.
 - King Saul treasured his position as king.
 - He didn't want to lose his power.
 - He wouldn't accept that God chose another king.
 - And so, he became anxious.
 - He became paranoid and jealous.
 - And instead of obeying God, he did everything he could to keep his power.
 - He wasn't able to move forward.
 - He lost his peace.

- Not only your position, but if your family becomes your treasure, you'll live to please your parents, or your children, and not God.
 - Of course, we need to spend time with our family and love our families.
 - We need to honor our father and mother.
 - But in Matthew chapter 10 Jesus says, ***For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.***
 - Jesus isn't saying that we should hate our family or neglect our family.
 - He's saying that, following him may cause division in the family.
 - He's saying that, he needs to be our priority, even above our families.
- Remember Isaac and Rebekah?
 - They tried to control their kid's future instead of following God's will.
 - Isaac favored Esau.
 - Rebekah favored Jacob.
 - And this caused anxiety in their family.
 - It got so bad, Jacob had to run away.
 - Isaac and Rebekah weren't able to obey God, they weren't able to move forward, because they put their children first.
- Or do you remember the story of the rich young ruler?
 - He wanted to secure his place in heaven.
 - But he loved his money too much.
 - And he wasn't able to move forward and follow Jesus.

- In fact, the Bible tells us, he went away sorrowful.
 - He loved his money, and it didn't lead to happiness, rather it caused sorrow.
 - When you treasure money, you won't be able to enjoy it.
- But it's the exact opposite when you treasure Christ.
 - Proverbs 10:22 states, ***"The blessing of the Lord makes rich, and he adds no sorrow with it."***
 - When you love Jesus more than money, instead of sorrow over your money, you'll be able to enjoy God's blessing.
- Treasuring earthly possessions, whether your family, or position, or money will keep you from moving forward in your faith.
 - It'll keep you from serving God.
 - It'll keep you from serving others.
 - Seeking the wrong treasure leads to anxiety.

Point 2:

- The second reason you may be anxious is because you're not seeing the wrong treasure your heart is desiring.
 - You're not able to see that your heart is misguided.
 - Again, Jesus says:
 - ***The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!*** Matthew 6:22-23
 - The point is that the eye is like a window that allows light into the body.
 - If the window is good and clean, much light will come in.

- If the window is bad and dirty, no light will come in.
- John Stott points out how in the Bible, the eye and the heart are often the same.
 - To set the eye, is to set the heart.
 - Ecclesiastes 2:10 states, ***And whatever my eyes desired I did not keep from them. I kept my heart from no pleasure...***
 - The eye and the heart are connected to each other.
 - The eyes fill the heart, and the heart directs the eyes.
- And the point is this, if your heart is set on wrong things, you'll be anxious, because you'll keep seeking the wrong things.
 - You'll keep filling your heart with earthly treasure.
 - And instead of living in the light, you'll keep living in darkness.
- In college, I had a friend who lived in Chebanse, Illinois.
 - It's about a 2-hour drive, going south.
 - It's a rural area and there aren't many lights.
 - In fact, there's probably no street lights.
 - And to scare us, one time my friend took us in her truck, and turned off the lights, and started driving in the cornfields.
 - It was so dark.
 - I could feel my body tense up.
 - My friend thought us city people were so weak.
 - I was so scared by her prank.
 - It was probably a dumb thing to do, but it was scary cause I couldn't see what was in front.

- If your heart is set on all the wrong things, it's like you're driving in dark with no lights.
 - And it doesn't matter how much stuff you acquire in the dark, because what you need is the light.
 - 1000 earthly investments don't, add up to 1 heavenly investment.
- And here's the difficult part about treasuring the wrong things, it's very difficult to see.
 - The 7 deadly sins are: pride, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, laziness, and greed.
 - And if I were to ask everyone here to rank these in order.
 - I imagine, most people would put greed at the bottom.
 - The reason is because greed is difficult to see.
 - Lust, anger, and gluttony are easier to see.
 - Most people would even confess how prideful they are.
 - But greed is deceptive.
- Think about Judas.
 - He must've been someone people trusted, because he was in charge of the finances.
 - But when Mary came and took a pound of expensive perfume and anointed Jesus' feet, Judas became angry.
 - And he said, ***Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor?*** John 12:5
 - At the moment, Judas probably believed what he was saying.
 - He thought he was being concerned for the poor, when he was really just thinking of himself.
 - Judas was doing a lot of good works, but he was blind to his greed.

- And what does this look like for us?
- For us, we can turn a blind eye to greed, when we measure our worth and identity by the size of our home, or the amount of our salary.
- We can turn a blind eye to greed, when we excuse our overspending by calling it “just enjoying life,” while ignoring those in need.
- We can turn a blind eye to greed, when we maintain friendships with those who can benefit us financially or socially, but neglect to maintain relationships with those who can’t give back.
- We can turn a blind eye to greed, when we work at a place that cuts corners, and lies to their customers, but we keep working.
- We can turn a blind eye to greed, when we work so much in the name of providing for our family, and we sacrifice our marriage, and our children, and our church.
- We can turn a blind eye to greed, when we marry someone for financial security, instead of looking at their faith and our love for them.
- We can turn a blind eye to greed, when we’re not willing to be generous to God.
- Blindness to our heart’s desires, can lead us to experience anxiety, instead of peace.
 - The Bible says:

- ***The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?*** Jeremiah 17:9
- It's possible that we're worried, because we're not seeing our own selfishness.
- We may be seeing the symptoms, but not the cause.
- But by confessing our selfish attitude towards our possessions, we can begin to overcome our worry.
- It's by confessing our attachment to this world that we can be set free.
- And learn to serve God with all our heart.
- We can become anxious when we're blind to selfishness.

Point 3:

- Third, you may feel anxious because you're not serving God, but money, when you serve the wrong master.
 - Jesus says:
 - ***No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*** Matthew 6:24
 - Money has power to take control of your life.
 - It offers many comforts, but it leaves you empty.
 - Money is a wonderful servant, but it's a terrible master.
 - And when you serve money, it'll make you anxious.
- If money is your master, it can ruin your life.
 - ***But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*** 1 Timothy 6:9-10
- If money is your master, it can weaken your faith.

- ***For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith...*** 1 Timothy 6:9-10
- If money is your master, it can keep you from salvation.
 - In Luke 12 Jesus speaks a parable about a man who's land produced extra gain.
 - And so, he tore down his barns, and built even bigger ones to hold all his goods.
 - And he said to his soul, ***Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.*** Luke 12:19
 - ***But God said to him", Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?"*** Luke 12:20
 - This man had money to enjoy for many years, but he didn't have many years to enjoy his money.
 - Instead of seeking God, he was serving money.
 - Money can cause great anxiety in our lives, because it can't buy salvation.
- So, what can we do?
 - How can our worry, turn to worship?
 - How can our anxiety turn to peace?

Application 1:

- First, give generously to God.
 - ***Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth...but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.*** Matthew 6:19-20

- This is the first commandment Jesus gives in this passage.
 - But how do we do this?
 - How can we lay up treasures in heaven?
 - The Bible says in 1 Timothy 6:17-19
 - ***They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future...***
 - One way we lay up treasure in heaven is by being generous with what we have, and being ready to share.
- The New Testament never says that you need to give 10% of what you make, to give a tithe.
 - Rather, to the rich young ruler, Jesus told him to sell everything he had.
 - In another case, Zacchaeus gave half of what he owned, and gave it to the poor.
 - In another case, a poor widow gave 2 copper coins, which make a penny.
 - And Jesus said, ***“This poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the offering box. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had...”***
Mark 12:43-44
 - Paul states in 2 Corinthians 9:7, ***Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.***
 - So, how much does God want us to give?
 - God doesn’t give us an amount, he just wants us to give from the abundance of the heart.
 - If he gave an amount, it would be like we’re paying our taxes.
 - Paying taxes is the law, it’s not worship.

- But God wants us to give, because we love him, and long to honor him.
- It's the same as praying.
 - God doesn't tell us exactly how many minutes or hours we need to pray.
 - He says that God is our heavenly Father.
 - And he wants us to pray, because we love him.
 - Because we desire him.
 - Because we depend on him.
- It's the same with our giving.
 - God desires that we honor him with our wealth.
 - And so, the question is, when you stand before God on the last day, can you truly say that you honored God with your wealth?
 - That you didn't give what was left over, but that you gave from our heart?
- When you give to others instead of focusing on yourself, you'll see that your worry turns to worship.
 - Because you'll see how God multiplies your efforts, 30, 60, even 100 fold.
 - You'll see how instead of being ruled by treasure, you're using treasure to help others.
 - You'll find contentment in Jesus, rather than in the world.
 - Like Zacheaus, you'll see that Jesus Christ himself is the greatest treasure.
 - Proverbs 3:9-10 states, ***Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the first fruits of all your produce; then your barns will be filled with plenty, and your vats will be bursting wine.***

Application 2:

- Second, seek to please God.
 - Jesus says in verse 33: ***But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.***
 - This is the last command Jesus gives.
 - And this verse basically means that we need to put God's priorities first before our own.
 - It means that we sacrifice our time, to serve his people.
 - It means that we live for eternity, and not for now.
 - It means that step out in faith, to trust his will, even in difficult situations.

- When I told my family that I had decided to go into ministry, many of my family members weren't very happy about my decision.
 - As many of you know, my mom was a single parent, and we were in a difficult financial situation, and my family members expected me to provide for her.
 - And there was logic to their concern.
 - They weren't being unreasonable, or angry.
 - She worked very hard to raise my brother and I, and I needed to help her.
 - My grandfather, my uncles, and I'm sure even my mom wasn't necessarily happy about me going into ministry.
 - They wanted me to seek a higher paying job.
 - But at the same time, I had this strong call, that God wanted me to be a pastor.
 - And so, I said this prayer, *"God, I will go into ministry, but I need you to provide for my mom and my family."*
 - *"And if there's any time my mom or my family needs, help, then I'll take a break, and do something else."*

- *“Because you even commanded, that I need to provide for my family members.”*
- *“But as long as you provide, I will continue to serve you.”*
- And let me say, I’m amazed at how God has provided for my mom and my family these past 20 years in ministry.
- There was a time when my mom was sick and she couldn’t work, and he provided for us.
- There were seasons when we didn’t know how to get by, but in the last moments the Lord would provide.
- There was time when my wife lost her job, when she was pregnant with our first born, but God provided.
- When I didn’t know how I’d pay off my tuition, God provided.
- Sometimes, we may need to draw clear boundaries with our family members.
 - Serving God, may mean we can’t make them happy.
 - Because sometimes, God’s will and their happiness may be opposed to each other.
- Sometimes, we may need to step out in faith, when the way forward isn’t clear.
- Sometimes, seeking God’s kingdom may mean serving in a busy season of life.
 - When it rains, it pours.
- But let’s remember this, the safest place you can be, is in the will of God, seeking his kingdom.
 - Because when you live by your will, that means life is up to you, and that’ll make you anxious.
 - But when you live by his will, your life is up to him.



- And when he's in control, you don't have to worry, because you're his child.
- He's the Father who provides.
- He even gave his Son for you, the Son gave his life for you, and the Spirit's going to make sure, you make it home.
- And so, you don't have to worry, you don't have to be afraid.
- ***But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.***