

## A HARMONY OF THE GOSPELS

### XLV. The Sermon On The Mount: False And True Righteousness J. Christ's Righteous Practices In Contrast To Unrighteous Practices 4. The Righteous Versus Unrighteous Handling Of Money (Matthew 6:19-24 et al.)

#### I. Introduction

- A. Christ's great Sermon on the Mount provided valuable insight on God's true righteousness, what Israel's religious leaders greatly lacked as seen in their dead traditionalism.
- B. To illustrate the contrast between the unrighteous practices of the Pharisees with truly righteous practices, Jesus gave six illustrations, with the fourth illustration dealing with the issue of handling money in Matthew 6:19-24 (among other passages). We study this passage for insight, application and edification (as follows):

#### II. The Righteous Versus Unrighteous Handling Of Money, Matthew 6:19-24 et al.

- A. Jesus' directives on money and wealth in Matthew 6:19-24 were given to a Hebrew society that had the philosophy that "'Whom the Lord loveth, He maketh rich.'" (J. Dwight Pentecost, The Words and Works of Jesus Christ, 1991, p. 184) Thus, "their highest goal in life was to accumulate material wealth." (Ibid.)
- B. With such a high priority on money and wealth, one's dependence on and worship of God Who provides material blessings can shift to his dependence upon and worship of the material blessings God provides, a form of idolatry (1 Timothy 6:17b; Colossians 3:5b). To counter this spiritually harmful shift, Jesus countered the unrighteous handling of money with the righteous way of handling it in Matthew 6:19-24 (as follows):
  1. Instead of accumulating treasures on earth where they can be lost to thieves, moths or rust, believers need to accumulate treasures in heaven where thieves, moths or rust cannot harm them, Matthew 6:19-20.
  2. Where one's treasure is, there his heart will be also, so if one is laying up treasures in heaven in his worship and service of God, he is free of the sin of idolatry, Matthew 6:21.
  3. Jesus explained that the Pharisees had an idolatrous lust for earthly treasures "because their spiritual eyes were diseased (Matt. 6:22). With their eyes they were coveting money and wealth. Thus they were in spiritual darkness. They were slaves to the master of greed, and their desire for money was so great they were failing in their service to their true Master, God. Money is the translation of the Aramaic word for 'wealth or property,' *mamona* ("mammon," KJV)." (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 33, Matthew 6:22-23)
  4. Accordingly, Jesus added that no one could serve two masters, one being money ("mammon" KJV) and the other God. Either he will hate one and love the other or hold to one and despise the other. A believer must simply love and hold to God to avoid making money into an idol, Matthew 6:24.
- C. However, Jesus' teaching here does ***not remove God's requirement*** that a believer ***accumulate adequate earthly resources to fulfill his duties to his dependents*** as noted in other Scripture passages (as follows):
  1. 2 Thessalonians 3:10 directs that a believer must work to provide for his own livelihood needs instead of living in dependence on others. This directive as applied to heads of households makes them responsible for providing for the material needs of all of their households' dependents, 1 Timothy 5:8.
  2. Along with 1 Timothy 5:8, 1 Timothy 6:6-10 directs heads of households to be responsible to earn enough for the subsistence and housing and clothing cover of their household dependents, what may require a significant amount of accumulated wealth in view of today's inflationary pressures and long-term needs:
    - a. 1 Timothy 6:8 KJV directs us to be content with "food" and "raiment," what is an imperfect translation:
      - i. The Greek word for "food" is *diatrophas*, that in the plural as here refers to "the means of subsistence" or also "food" (Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 189)
      - ii. The Greek word for "raiment" is *skepasmata*, meaning "clothing or housing cover" (Ibid., p. 761).
    - b. Thus, heads of households are to meet the means of subsistence and housing and clothing cover needs for the long-term care of their household dependents, what likely involves a sizeable accumulation of wealth.

***Lesson:*** *Though God calls heads of households to provide for the long-term means of subsistence and housing and clothing cover for their dependents, He wants all believers to love and to serve Him over the material things He provides, that their goal be to lay up treasures in heaven versus getting rich in this life as an end in itself.*

***Application:*** *(1) As we meet the long-term livelihood needs of our dependents, may we keep our devotion on God Who gives us all things to enjoy versus shifting our devotion to the things He provides, 1 Timothy 6:17. (2) May we give of our time, attention and resources to God's causes to lay up treasures in heaven, 1 Timothy 6:18-19.*