

The Treasure Test

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Preacher: Sam Bunnell

[0 : 0 0] All right, church. You ready for this? We practiced this last Sunday. Here we go. I say, I And then you respond. Ready? God gives. We can do better. God gives. How do we give back?

There you go. All right. I hope that can take root in our hearts as we dive back into this series called Jesus on Generosity. Listen, if we want to talk about something, we should probably see what Jesus had to say about it first. So that's what we did in our series on his parables about stories of the kingdom over the summer, and we are jumping right back into what Jesus had to teach us when we consider this idea of generosity. Now, do y'all know what I have been watching a lot of the last couple weekends? You're a really smart crowd. Yes, I have been. You know why? Because fall means football, y'all. It's what it means. Whether it's the Bearcats here locally, or maybe you're from another school district and you're cheering on your team. Maybe it's your college. I've been watching the Longhorns.

Yesterday was a whole lot better than the other Saturday. If you don't know what we're talking about, don't worry about it. We're still going to win the national championship this year, all right? And then NFL happened, and you know, I expected the Cowboys to get blown out Thursday night. They actually stayed in it, had a chance to win. That was better than I expected, so standards are lower these days, all right? But football's fun, and football is almost like a religion in Texas, but look, it's not just Texas. It's all around the country. Everybody has their thing. For many, it's football or some other sports, but the truth is people commit their time and their attention, often their resources, to something that they just crave and love and they think will make them happy.

And I'll tell you, in my football cheering career, I've probably been sad more than I've been happy, all right? That's just part of it, you know? And you could probably resonate with that.

Truth is, football's not it. People get excited about all kinds of things. They kind of get a little obsessive about all kinds of things. Did y'all know that people camp out overnight to buy stuff when it's released? It's crazy. The new iPhone, when the iPhone 15, when the iPhone 15 launched, stores sold out of it in hours. Video games, you know, a new PlayStation comes out. In 2020, the PlayStation 5 sold out in 12 minutes. Yeah. The latest great Nike or Jordan shoes, sneakers that drop, they'll crash the websites. They'll sell out in seconds, literally seconds, and then you can resell some of those sneakers for thousands of dollars. Some of you are thinking, man, I got to get in the sneaker game. It sounds like you can flip those for a profit.

[3 : 3 2] Avengers, maybe you're into movies, Avengers Endgame, when that came out, people buying the tickets crashed the website in six hours, broke movie records.

The truth is, we all have our thing. Now, maybe here locally, some of you may not get into some of that stuff as much. Maybe you've got your thing, but I bet you get a little bit excited the night before hunting season officially starts, whatever it might be for you.

Maybe sitting out chairs the night before the Pioneer Union parade. That's always fun to go see. That's right around the corner, isn't it? The truth is, we all chase what matters to us. We will inconvenience ourselves.

We will pour money, time, and effort into what we think will make us happy. Jesus has to teach us something in Matthew 6. Would you take your Bibles and turn there?

Matthew 6. We're going to read from verse 19 down through 24. But as you're turning, I want to share with you Matthew 6, 21. Jesus said, wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.

[4 : 53] I thought this quote was interesting. She says, I don't know what I want, but I want it now. Anybody ever resonate with that? Maybe husband and wife are trying to decide what to eat, and wife just knows she wants something, and the first six things the husband suggests, nope, I didn't want that.

I haven't figured out yet what I want, but I want it now. Part of the marriage code is cracking what she wants, cracking that code. Matthew 6, 21, Jesus said, what you want, the desires of your heart, that is where your treasure will be.

And vice versa. Where your treasure is, that reveals what you want, the desires of your heart. So we're going to put ourselves to the test this morning.

We're going to put ourselves to the treasure test. What is your treasure? What are you treasuring? Let's look at Matthew 6, verse 19.

Jesus teaches us, don't store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. Well, that sounds smart, doesn't it?

[6 : 08] Don't store your stuff up in a sketchy place. How many of you would take your valuables and store them in an open cardboard box in front of your house? That seems unwise, doesn't it?

And Jesus is kind of telling us, hey, listen, investing your earthly treasure into the things of the earth will give you a similar return.

It is foolish, it's unsafe, and it's not going to bring the treasure, the happiness that you think it will. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves don't break in and steal.

Sounds pretty obvious. Okay, yeah, give me the one where they aren't going to steal it. Give me the place where it's not going to fall apart and turn bad.

Verse 21, we read it a moment ago, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light.

[7 : 20] He didn't just change topics. It might seem like he all of a sudden jumped into a different conversation. It's all linked together. So stick with it here. But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness.

So if the light within you is darkness, how deep is that darkness? We'll get back to that in just a minute. No one can serve two masters, since either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and money. Let's pray together. God, enlighten us from your word. Let your spirit take your words and the words of my mouth and apply them, personalize them for each one of us here.

Show us what we need to take away from this morning. In Jesus' name we'll pray. Amen. Test number one. Test number one from Matthew chapter 6 and verse 19 is how safe is your treasure?

How safe is your treasure? So that's what we're going to be talking about today. How safe is your treasure? Earthly wealth is temporary.

[8 : 41] Heavenly treasure is eternal. Look back at what he said. What did he say? Look at verses 19 and 20.

Y'all talk back to me. What did he say could happen to your earthly treasure? Could get stolen. What else? Rust and moths could destroy it, right?

So, this is a real danger. How many of you have had something stolen before? How many of you had something rusted or start to decay? How many of you had pests or moths or some other kind of pest get in and destroy something you held valuable?

Yeah. So we can resonate with this, right? We can understand what Jesus is talking about. So, when he says these things could happen to the things you value on this earth, we understand it.

Well, they did too. They lived in an era where they had less safeguards available to them than we have today in 2025. And so I'm sure it was even more common or more frequent for things to happen to what they held dear.

[9 : 50] That's why we're going back a little ways, but that's why it's said for... Many people would go and bury their valuables in the ground, especially when they were going out of town. Their house was really left unprotected, and so they would go and find a hole where they only knew the location of and bury their valuables in the ground.

So, they understand what Jesus is saying, that there is nothing sure on this earth. You think you have a certain amount of money. You think you have a certain amount of possessions, but in reality, it's all unsafe.

It's all insecure. And people will invest so much of their money into security, security systems, insurance, etc.

But in reality, none of it is all that safe. So Jesus is saying, listen, recognize that nothing you have is completely safe on this earth.

And at some point, it will all go away. So it might go away in your lifetime, or it might go away after you're dead.

[11 : 02] But at some point, it's all going to go away. John chapter 9 and verse 39. John chapter 9 and verse 39.

Sorry, I didn't tell you to turn there, but if you can, flip over a few books to John chapter 39. Chapter 9, verse 39. Jesus told him, I entered this world to render judgment.

Sorry, y'all, I skipped ahead. We're going to get there. Hold a finger in John chapter 9 and go to Luke 12. So hold a finger in John 9. We're going to get there. But look at Luke 12.

Luke chapter 12 and verse 33. We're trying to hit all these different teachings that Jesus had to say on this topic. So in Luke 12, he says, verse 33, sell your possessions and give to those in need.

Can we stop there for a second? What if I came to your house and said, sell everything you own and give it to the people who need things? That'd be tough, right?

[12 : 08] Excuse me? You can't tell me what to do with my possessions. That's right, but that's kind of what Jesus did here. He said, sell your possessions and give to those in need. This will store up treasure for you in heaven.

And the purses of heaven will never get old or develop holes. Your treasure will be safe. No thief can steal it. No moth can destroy it.

It's kind of referencing back to what he taught back in Matthew chapter 6. Wherever your treasure is, the desires of your heart will also be.

I love how the different gospel records give slightly different tweaks or slightly different perspectives on the same moments of Jesus' teaching. So I like to compare what Luke had to say with what Matthew had to say.

Of course, Luke was not one of those disciples early on. He spoke into it afterwards based on accounts that he was told. And so this is fascinating to see this different angle on it.

[13 : 14] Sell your possessions, give to those in need. The purses of heaven never get old or develop holes. God never runs out of resources.

We will. We can. So examine your daily investments, your time, your energy, your money. It's a good place to start.

Where are you storing your treasure right now? There's a principle here. You can't lose what you give to God.

You can't lose what you give to God. Like that's what Jesus is trying to teach us. So parents, some of us have a hard time not being helicopter parents and constantly just holding on to our kids and we don't want to let them go.

Give them to God. You can't lose what you give to God. There might be a burden on your heart that you just can't set free.

[14 : 20] You have to keep trying to fix it and you're beating your head against the wall out of frustration just trying to figure out how to solve this problem this burden you're carrying and I can promise you if you give it to God you won't lose that battle.

God will help you win. You can't lose what you give to God. So if a tornado hit if a thief broke in the stock market crashed everything we have materially speaking on this earth could be gone.

but treasures invested in God and his kingdom prayer generosity acts of Christ like love those are safe forever and the results of that are safe forever so you can't lose what you give to God.

Test number two test number two is what you see is what you get. How do we know what our treasure is?

How do we know if we're being generous? Listen to this principle what you see is what you get. John chapter nine again told you to turn there I told you we'd get there John chapter nine verse 39 Jesus told him I entered this world to render judgment to give sight to the blind and to show those who think they see that they are blind.

[15 : 52] some Pharisees who were standing by near him told him and said asked him say are you saying we're blind? If you were blind Jesus replied you wouldn't be guilty but you remain guilty because you claim you can see.

Did you hear what they just said? Jesus has said I didn't come to give sight to those who think they can see I gave sight to those who are blind I'm here to show those who think they can see that they're actually blind.

In the Pharisees it was no secret that he was talking about them. So they said you're saying we're blind? How dare you? You're saying we're spiritually blind?

We don't have spiritual understanding when we read the scriptures? Are you kidding me? This is our life's work. From early on training up through rabbi school we've been dedicating our lives to this we know what we're talking about.

It's kind of the unwritten words that they're trying to communicate to Jesus. He said if you were blind you wouldn't be guilty but you remain guilty because you claim you can see.

[17 : 03] Back in Matthew chapter 6 our text I told you we'd get back to it verse 22 the eye is the lamp of the body. If your eye is healthy you'll be able to see.

Your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is bad you'll be blind. Your whole body will be full of darkness. So if the light that you think is inside you is actually darkness how deep is that darkness?

It's the same principle that he's teaching the Pharisees here. It's not just that you're spiritually blind and you know you're blind. You think you can see. You have light.

light. And I pray that none of us in this room are in that boat where we think we've got it all figured out. We think we've got Jesus figured out.

We've got him in our nice little box. We think that we have spiritual sight and Jesus is way over there. And he's telling us you are blind.

[18 : 11] You don't have the sight you think you have. Once you realize you're blind then he can help you.

Then he can save you. Then he can give you sight. So spiritual blindness happens when you think you're seeing clearly but you're actually walking in darkness.

Like those Pharisees you and I are able fully able to wander in religion. Wander in church attendance.

Wander in acting like a nice person. But inside our hearts are far away from Jesus. There's a principle here that I want to share with you.

It's called bounded set versus centered set. Now stick with me here. It's getting a little analytical, a little out there but stick with me. This bounded set means I will base my religion on who is inside my lines.

[19 : 26] I will create lines and I will say this is what it takes to be a part of my religion. You've got to think like I do. You've got to look like I do. You've got to act like I do.

and I'm going to determine what the lines are. Then there's a different type of religion. It's the centered set thinking. And it doesn't judge people based on whether they're inside or outside the lines.

It judges people whether they're moving toward Jesus or away from Jesus. So there's two different kinds of thinking. The Pharisees were absolutely bounded set.

they set the lines. Some of it they took from Old Testament teaching and then they took that and they ran with it. And they set their own lines. They created their own boundaries.

And they said you're either in or you're out depending on how well you live inside our boundaries. Jesus came to them and said no.

[20 : 33] You've got it all wrong. that's never what it's been about. It's always been about God. It's always been about your relationship with him. It's always been about whether your heart is toward him or away from him.

So you can live inside the boundaries on the bounded set religion. You can be inside the fence. You can make your life look like those around you.

But your heart is never moving toward Jesus. and Jesus says that's not my religion. That's not what I came to this earth to bring.

And so many people and so many churches will name Jesus' name but they're living in bounded set religion not centered set religion. And they're actually doing more harm to the true religion of Jesus than good.

So I don't judge you and you shouldn't judge me based on if we're inside or outside whatever these lines are because everybody's lines are in different places.

[21 : 39] We should judge one another whether our hearts are moving toward Jesus or away from Jesus. How do you know that? The fruit of our life will show it.

Who was Jesus? That's who we should be like. We should have his true heart for people. We should have his real compassion. We should have his grace, his mercy, his kindness.

That should be what our lives should be showing out. Not this bounded set but centered on Christ.

So Jesus said it's like you're spiritually blind. It's like you're spiritually asleep. Imagine sleepwalking through your house at night.

In your dream you're walking through a field, you're running down a football field, whatever it is, I don't know, wherever you are and you feel like you're navigating safely.

[22 : 50] The truth is you're bumping into walls, tripping over furniture. Hopefully you're not walking outside your house and into the street, right? Anybody have a sleepwalking problem? You don't have to raise your hand, that's alright.

But that's what life looks like when you think you're spiritually awake and in reality you've been asleep for a long time. And you keep bumping into things and you keep tripping over things and God puts things in your path to wake you up but you don't want to wake up because you're just fine where you are, you think you can see.

So my question is are you really following Jesus or are you spiritually sleepwalking? Maybe the Holy Spirit today through His Word can wake you up.

Now it's not fun to wake up when you're sleepwalking and it can be a little dangerous but God's got you, alright? And we've got you and we're here to help you. If you're spiritually sleepwalking, wake up now and we'll help you as a church together be more centered on Jesus.

See the blindness and let God restore sight. Are you following Jesus or spiritually sleepwalking? Test number three and we're almost done. One master, one treasure.

[24 : 19] One master, one treasure. Back in Matthew chapter six, our text, no one can serve two masters. He's either going to hate one and love the other or he'll be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and money. There's a truth here. Who you serve tells you what you'll chase. Who you serve tells you what you'll chase.

Why? Because they dictate everything in your life. your master tells you what to be interested in. Your master tells you what's valuable, what's important.

Your master sets the rules that you then have to follow. You say, well, I've got no master. I'm my own master. You're deceiving yourself. You are mastered by something.

Even if it's your own pride, you're mastered by something. If it's your desire for money, if it's your desire for popularity, if it's your desire for importance or power or control, if it's your desire for safety, comfort, stability, whatever it is, you are mastered by something and that determines what you'll go after.

[25 : 39] what you'll pursue, what you'll chase. And so you've probably spent your life chasing whatever your master told you to chase.

Jesus wants to be your master. And he's going to tell you to chase something. He's going to tell you to chase him. He's going to tell you to spend time in the gospels, reading about who he was, what he did, how he did it, why he did it, and chase after becoming like him.

The difference in Christ being our master and anything else being our master is he will always lead us to greener pastures.

He will always lead us to still waters. The path through that might be the valley of the shadow of death. It might be hard and rocky mountains, but we will always arrive at a place where we look back and say, God worked all that together for good.

He told me to chase after this. I wasn't even sure if I really wanted it. I wasn't sure if it would bring me what I thought it would bring me. But I followed my shepherd, my good shepherd.

[26 : 57] I followed my master. I chased after it. And look what he's done in my life. Anybody testify to that? Look what God has done in my life. Amen. So, what is God telling us to chase?

What is he telling us to pursue and focus our lives on? Deuteronomy 10 gives it to us plainly. What does the Lord your God ask of you but to fear him, to live in obedience to him, to love him, to serve him with all our hearts, with all our souls, and to obey his commands and decrees that he's giving us today for our own good?

It's for our own good. He works all things together for our good. Yes, man, y'all are right there. I love it. So, our master determines our treasure.

Who or what we serve dictates what we'll chase, what we'll value, where our hearts go. Does money matter?

Does money matter? It does. Money matters. Should money master? No. Money cannot master.

[28 : 21] It's a cruel master. It can be a useful tool, but it is a cruel, unfair master. promises everything, but it steals what's truly important.

That's why people say follow the money. You ever heard of that? Follow the money, man. Why? Because so many people are mastered by money. And so they'll compromise their ethics.

They'll do things that they would never have otherwise done because their master told them what to pursue. Their master told them what to chase. You've got to get this promotion.

You've got to keep this out of the press. You've got to keep this private. You can't let this get out. You've got to go get this.

And so they'll pursue it at all costs because they're mastered by it. things. But when Jesus is your master, you follow his way, not your wallet.

[29 : 25] When Jesus is your master, your treasure aligns with his kingdom priorities. You want to know what his kingdom priorities are? Go back and listen to the series on stories of the kingdom. He was very clear.

You don't even have to listen to the series. Just open up the gospels and read the parables where Jesus told us all about the kingdom of God. What is important in the kingdom of God? It's opposite of what's important in our little kingdom.

So, Joshua 24 15 issues us a challenge. Choose today whom you will serve. Choose today whom you will serve.

The wonderful truth is you can choose a new master. Why? Because Jesus died on the cross. That's why you can choose a new master.

Before that, you were a slave to sin. Humanity was in slavery. We had no way out. But then Jesus broke the chains of sin.

[30 : 24] When he died on the cross laying himself down as the punishment for our sin and he didn't stay dead otherwise he just would have been a man like you and me. But he rose from the dead proving he's different, he's supernatural, he's powerful, he's divine, he's everything he said he was.

He really is God. So he broke those chains and he said you can stay a master to everything else or you can choose me as your master.

I'm offering a different way. I'm offering a different path. I'm offering a different life. wealth. So what have we learned?

Heavenly wealth is eternal. Earthly wealth is not. It's very temporary. Open your eyes to what God is doing.

You might think you're spiritually seeing everything. You've got it all figured out. God wants to show you you've been sleepwalking. Maybe you're still spiritually blind.

[31 : 32] You're still a slave to sin and Jesus wants to open your eyes for the first time. Or maybe you're a child of God but you've been sleepwalking through this life completely blind to what God's doing around you and he wants to open up your eyes and say you come over here and walk with me now.

You'll be tripping over less stuff. And then number three money matters but it cannot master. It cannot master. So what do we do this week? Maybe you need to give your life to Jesus for the first time.

Say I don't want to be a slave to sin anymore. I want to choose my own master and I want it to be Jesus. Because I trust him. He's different than everybody else. He's different than I am. He's different than all of you.

He's the only one that I can really get behind and say yeah that's what my life needs to look like is who Jesus was. And still is today. So what do we do? Give something away.

Stop holding on so tightly to the things of this earth where rust and moth and thieves can get to it. hold it loosely. Eyes up. Hands open.

[32 : 38] Hold it loosely. Give something away. And then pause to pray. Pause to pray. Stop. Eyes up. That first part was hands open.

This part is eyes up. Looking unto Jesus. He's the one who started all this. And then you ask God where to look right now. Say God I don't want to be sleepwalking through my day.

I don't want to be spiritually blind or asleep. Wake me up and open my eyes to see what you see. Maybe you're sending someone across my path that I can be generous to. Maybe you're showing me something about myself that I need to see.

So pause wherever you are in your day to pray. Before you go to bed at night when you wake up in the morning. Throughout your day when life is just piling on. It's always okay to stop.

It's always okay to take a breath. It's always okay to pause. Look at Jesus and pray. And then finally serve in one small way.

[33 : 43] Maybe you're already serving in the church. Maybe there's a way to serve somebody in the community. Maybe you're not serving in the church. Or maybe God wants you to take another small step.

I'm not saying you've got to go from zero to hero overnight. But I'm saying you do have to take a small step. Why? Because Jesus is always going to be leading you forward.

He's going to be moving you along toward those greener pastures. Toward those still waters like we read about in Psalm 23. Sometimes that path is going to be rocky and difficult and dangerous.

But keep taking small steps. So what's a small step? You can take today. Maybe God wants to make you a more generous person today. What does God want to do with you today?

Phil Wickham sings a song. He's a Christian songwriter and singer and he says, Jesus is the treasure. He is the answer. I choose the Jesus way.

[34 : 46] I love that line. He is the treasure. Too often through this life, we're looking for the reward to meet the effort.

We're saying this Christian thing, what do I get out of it? This church thing, what do I get out of it? And if that's your thought, even if you wouldn't necessarily put it to words, you wouldn't necessarily voice it that way, but you know deep down, you're thinking, what can I really get out of it?

Then I don't think you've encountered Jesus. Because if you've really experienced Jesus, look at him in the Bible, look at who he is. It'll be pretty obvious to you, he's the treasure.

He's the reward. And if you need more than him, you're out of luck. Because there's nothing on this earth that will satisfy like he will.

You can throw it all into family. Because family never disappoints anybody, right? You can throw it all into wealth. Because that's always stable and never goes up or down, right?

[36 : 00] You can throw it all into anything else that people are pursuing. But I'm telling you, Jesus is the treasure that doesn't rust, that they can't take away.

No one can touch it. So our takeaway today is what you treasure tells your eyes where to look, your hands what to do, and when Jesus is your treasure, it's hands open, eyes up.

God gives. Let's try it again. God gives. How do we give back? Amen. Let's pray. God, I pray that right now you would teach us to give freely, to pause, to pray, to serve your church, this church, in some small way.

Hands open, eyes up. Jesus is my treasure today, every day. I pray that you would remind us of that. Jesus is our treasure. You are our treasure. You are the answer.

Let us choose the Jesus way. You were so generous. You held nothing back from us. As we study what you have to teach about being generous, not just writing checks like we talked about last week, but truly being a generous person like you were, teach us this treasure principle.

[37 : 30] Help us pass this treasure test that says you are my treasure. Everything else is a means to an end. Everything else can be useful or useless tools in our journey toward our Savior.

Teach us how to be like you, God. Church, with our heads bowed and our eyes closed, I'm going to give you just a moment to pray. There's someone in the room that says, you talked a little bit ago about Jesus' sacrifice for our sin.

I need Him to save me today. I need to turn from my sin and turn to Jesus for the first time. Would you slip your hand up right now and I'll pray for you. Thank you.

Let me ask another question. How many of you would say, I need prayer about this idea of the treasure? Maybe I've been treasuring the wrong thing.

Maybe I've been pursuing the wrong thing. Maybe I've been spiritually sleepwalking. Maybe God's put something on my heart. Maybe there's a way that I can start serving because I treasure Jesus.

[38 : 45] Now, that's my goal. I want to treasure Jesus. There's something in there that you say, I'd love for you to pray for me as well. Would you slip your hand up right now and I'll pray for you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. God, you see the hands all around the room, but most importantly, you know what's going on in their hearts and minds. You know what's going on in my heart and mind?

I pray that you would keep teaching me and them how to treasure you, God. Wake us up from our spiritual sleep. Remind us what's truly valuable, what truly gives heavenly return on our investment.

And it's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.