

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Sermon on the Mount

Week 22

Eye of Our Heart

Matthew 6:22 - 23

Opening Prayer:

Our Father

A Reflection

Our Father Who Art In Heaven – O Creator, You made all things in love. All of creation is a blessing emanating from You.

Hallowed Be Thy Name – Help us to let go, to clear the space inside of busy forgetfulness so that You can come and reside within us.

Thy Kingdom Come – Let Your counsel rule our lives; unite our “I can” to Yours so that, together, we can bring forth a new world of peace.

Thy Will Be Done On Earth As It Is In Heaven – As we find Your love in ours, let Your heart’s fervent desire move us beyond ourselves to help bring about a new way of being.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread – Grant what we need each day in bread and insight; sustenance for the call of growing life.

And Forgive Us Our Trespasses As We Forgive Those Who Trespass Against Us – Loose the cords of mistakes that bind us, as we release the strands we hold of other’s guilt.

And Lead Us Not Into Temptation But Deliver Us From Evil – Don’t let surface things distract us; free us from the things that hold us back from our true purpose.

AMEN

Reflection

Last week we were invited to take a look at the “treasures” in our lives and the importance we place upon them. Jesus asks us to examine our motives and intentions behind the decisions we make about our time, talent, and treasures. Why? What difference do motives and intentions make? Jesus understood that we human beings get emotionally and spiritually attached to our “treasures on earth”, that there is something about those things we identify with, that give us a sense of who we are, what we are about, and our place in the world. Jesus calls this attachment our *eye*:

The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, 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

Jesus is drawing attention to the attachment between external “worldly treasures” and internal self-identity, which is often very subtle and difficult to see. Media, social media, work environments, and, perhaps circles of friends send messages constantly about our role and identity in the world. What tends to happen is that those messages become the voice of authority and influence how we relate to ourselves, each other, and our world. Without even knowing it, we internalize and become very invested in or attached to these messages. The shift happens slowly, in millions of tiny ways, as we interact with the culture around us. Again, it is not that any of our worldly treasures or even these messages are bad or wrong; Jesus is focusing on the way we tend to over-identify with them and the ways that they influence how we see ourselves. If we stay absorbed in this false identity with its culturally accepted ways of thinking and doing, we ultimately lose touch with who we really are, who we were created to be, with our true identity. Jesus refers to this as *darkness*.

Jesus longs for us to embrace our true identity, which is not in what we have, the job we hold, the volunteer activities we do, the reputation we have, or the status we hold in the community. Our true identity is in God, and the only attachment Jesus wants for us is attachment to God and the heavenly treasures God offers, such as faith, hope, and love. When we live out of this identity, how we approach our time, treasure, and talents changes. It’s not even that we make different choices around these, though that is entirely possible; rather our intention or motivation around these decisions change and become more God-centered. This is the treasure that will bring about God’s kingdom, i.e., God’s light, here on earth.

So what will help us detach from our worldly treasures? We start small. Perhaps you already know an area of your life you would like to shift – watch less TV, pray more, eat healthier, etc. Take small steps to change your habit around that activity. Notice the feelings you experience when you take that small step. Notice what draws you to your worldly treasures and how they shape your life; then notice how you feel about that. Often, silence helps us gain this awareness. Contemplative prayer quiets the clamor in our minds and helps create the inner silence necessary to listen to our inner voice. Being better aligned with our true selves, we are able to allow God’s light to fill us.

Reflection Question: What will help me detach from my worldly treasures?

Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.