

# The Sermon on the Mount

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES FROM THE  
MEN'S MORNING FELLOWSHIP

**Matthew 6:22** "The lamp of the body is the eye. If therefore your eye is good, your whole body will be full of light.

**Matthew 6:23** 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!

**Matthew 6:24** "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.

Perhaps Jesus had Proverbs 28:22 in mind:

**Proverbs 28:22** A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, And does not consider that poverty will come upon him.

It's a good description of a get rich quick scheme. How many have put all their money into one place only to lose it all?

Investing only on the earth – even if your investments are diversified – are like putting everything you have in one place. The place you're investing is earth where moths, rust, and thieves will spoil your fortune and future. Diversify by investing in Heaven. In fact, seek first the kingdom of God.

In the preceding verses Jesus used your heart as His illustration. He said,

**Matthew 6:21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

If I have treasure in heaven, guess where my attention will be? If you want to be more heavenly-hearted **send your treasure ahead!**

Now He uses your **eye** to illustrate. Jesus says **if therefore your eye is good**. The definition of **good** is important. It is a word that can mean *generous* or *bountiful*.

Jesus may have been saying, *if therefore you look to be generous*. It fits the context because, after all, when we talk about investing in Heaven we're talking about giving towards the Lord's work. If I'm looking around to be generous and benevolent I will give to the Lord's work and be investing in Heaven. I will do it first, before I invest in corruptible things on the earth.

For the sake of His illustration the Lord suggested you are either generous or you are not. He gave no middle ground.

With this info to guide us let's see what these verses might mean.

**The lamp of the body is the eye**. That's the first illustration. My eye lets in light which my brain translates into sight. I am able to navigate through the material world thanks to the light my eye receives.

Investing in either Heaven or on the earth is compared to my eye taking in light. Generosity and benevolence excite certain spiritual receptors that illuminate my walk with Jesus.

If I am investing in Heaven then I am like a man with perfect vision. I see my way around; I'm not bumping into things; I'm not a blind leader of the blind. I can walk properly and see where I am going, avoiding pitfalls and perils.

What if I am not generous and benevolent?

**Matthew 6:23** 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!

A **bad** eye would be one that no longer sees clearly, if at all. In Jesus' illustration if I am not generous and benevolent then I have nothing to excite my spiritual receptors. My walk is taking place in darkness. I do not see my way clear. I stumble at the perils and fall into the pitfalls.

Jesus suggested that **the light that is in you is darkness**. What might Jesus have meant? A Christian who is not generous and benevolent nevertheless thinks of himself as being in the light.

I was told the other day that you get your night vision after about 45 minutes of being in the dark. On a physical level you can see pretty well with night vision. One thing you need to do, however, is to guard your night vision. If you suddenly look into a light source your night vision is gone.

I'm not sure if Jesus had all this in mind but it is interesting. If I walk as a Christian long enough without giving to God I will get a kind of spiritual night-vision. I think I'm doing fine – when really I'm in the dark. When I encounter spiritual truths, rather than leading me or exciting me they temporarily blind me. I am halted in my progress.

We make all manner of excuses for not giving to God, thinking it is not so bad after all. But the Lord says it *is* bad! We are walking in a kind of darkness and don't even know it.

Let me pause for a moment and make this observation. Jesus has been emphasizing three spiritual disciplines: Praying, fasting, and giving. We immediately understand that lack of praying will hinder or halt our spiritual progress and growth. But when it comes to fasting and giving we have a kind of blindness. We don't think of our lack in these areas as affecting our walk in any negative way.

**How great is that darkness** when we do not even recognize it for what it is!

Jesus passes quickly into another illustration:

**Matthew 6:24** "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.

A servant could not have divided loyalties. You could only take orders from one master.

As an investor you are not your own master. You are a servant of your investment portfolio.

Let me give you an example. It's a limited example because it only affects those who once felt a call into full-time ministry. But it's a good one.

I've known more than one person who felt a call to full-time Christian service. When the call came, they had a choice to make: Continue on the material path they were following or begin to scale back in order to be ready to heed the call when a ministry opportunity presented itself.

1. Those who continued along their same material path bought bigger homes, more cars, and ended up passing by many opportunities because they just could not afford to take the cuts that were necessary.
2. Those who scaled back, who were serious about serving God, were able to transition into full-time service.

Not every Christian is called to full-time vocational ministry. But other ministry opportunities come along: regular giving to your Church, special Church projects, and missions are just a few. Unless you are scaling back you will **never** help fund them. You will be walking around with night vision.

Jesus said you either serve God or **Mammon**. It's really another illustration. **Mammon** is a word that personifies riches, wealth, and worldly gain. As a Christian you'd never think of yourself as worshipping an idol. You worship God. But Jesus said that if you invest only on earth, and if you develop night vision, you are serving another god and are indeed an idolater.

The resolve for all this is to look around with an eye that is generous and benevolent. It is to give to the work of God. Giving is an investment in your ultimate future that will enhance your ability to walk on the earth with victory and power.