

Tom Gilbert - Matthew 6:20-21

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But I've been asked to comment on a couple of the verses that lead up to that passage. You can see it on the screen, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

This is a very, very powerful truth for the Christian. I think it is easier to understand this truth later in life than earlier in life, and what I'm going to say may be a gross generalization applicable only to those living comfortably in what we might call the middle class or higher. I realize that many seniors and people of all ages are still struggling economically. They have a place to live, buy food, pay for health care, particularly since the beginning of the pandemic.

But in this generalization, I would say when you're younger and starting out in life, you have more of a focus on acquiring material possessions, most notably a place to live, reliable transportation, and then things that will make your life comfortable, efficient, enjoyable. For me, once having those things secured, their value became more utilitarian. How they could serve to support the things I wanted to do with my life, what they could do to support the maturing purpose I saw for my life, that being serving the Lord and the needs of others. Ultimately I realized that these earthly possessions and accumulations have no real lasting value. Having been through the closing down of the lives and households of two sets of parents with Sister Jan, I realize that no one is going to care about all of my possessions and collections.

The photos, the mementos from moments and events in my life will be things to simply be discarded by those tasked with sorting through my things. No one will want them. No one wants to fill up more space in their home with these things. Yes, a few token remembrances may be kept. Chan and I have sometimes felt very guilty about throwing away so much that represented our parents lives.

But it helped us understand the powerful truth of our text. The only things that our parents left this earth with was their character, their godly character, and that is all we will leave with. So we best focused our energies on on building godly characters, doing the things that God will include in the record he keeps of our lives. Another perspective on this point was shared by Brother Carl Hagensik.

Years ago, after he took a trip around the world to visit brethren, Brother Carl related a conversation he had with an elder in one of the ecclesiastes he visited.

Brother Carl commented to the brother that their young people and children were very attentive in the meetings, more so than he observes in the United States, the brother responded, we have a natural advantage over you Americans. We're poor and our faith is the only thing of real value that we have. That is a powerful and instructive perspective. I'll close with two other scriptural passages that contain a similar thought to the text on the screen. One is Colossians 3, verses 1 and 2, which reads, since then you have been raised with Christ.

Set your hearts on things above where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things, and then 2 Corinthians 4:16,18 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

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So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.