Seeking the Kingdom First
Matthew 6: 16-34
Jay Hohfeler

Performative Christianity

- When being SEEN as a Christian is more important than BEING a Christian
- There really are pay-offs. But, that's as far as the reward goes: human admiration

Os Guiness: The Call: Finding and Fulfilling the Central Purpose of Your Life,
Chapter Titled: "The Audience of One."

On the purpose of our work:
"In working out our callings, we are to perform for one audience, the audience of One."

On resisting the pressure to please everyone:
"The question is not whether we have an audience but which audience we have."

On dying to the need for recognition:
Following Jesus requires us to die to our own interests, agendas, and reputations, including our standing in the eyes of the world.

Summary:
"I live before the audience of One—before others I have nothing to gain, nothing to lose, nothing to prove."

Three truths that help defeat performative behavior:

1. **Nothing to gain:** I don't need to secure people's admiration.
2. **Nothing to lose:** I don't need to protect my image at all costs.
3. **Nothing to prove:** My worth is not established by my accomplishments or public

What is a "treasure" to me?

- *What do I value most?*
- *What would I most hate to lose?*
- *What do my thoughts turn to most frequently?*
- *What affords me the greatest pleasure?*

AW Tozer

Lay Up Treasures in Heaven

19 "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

What does Jesus say about treasures on earth? (won't last)
What does He say about heavenly treasures? (Cannot be lost)

Treasures on Earth	Examples of Laying up Treasures in Heaven

• Sweet, but don't last
• Recognized & prized by the culture
• Exalt self
• Stoke Pride
• Cannot keep them
• Can bring enslavement
• Define us to the culture
• Here & now
• What we can see
• Security apart from God
• Significance apart from God
	• Generosity for God's sake
	  ○ Time
	  ○ $
	  ○ Possessions
	  ○ Talents
	  ○ Energy
	  ○ Creativity
	• Pursuing what matters to God
	• Forgiveness
	• Evangelizing & witnessing for Christ
	• Renewing our mind & heart
	• Obedience & joy under God
	• Using financial resources for purposes that align w/ God's eternal purposes
	• Living sacrificially for Christ's sake
	• Giving sacrificially to the Kingdom:
	  ○ Churches
	  ○ Pastors
	  ○ Ministries
	• Serving God by serving the Body
	• Seemingly small acts of service that only God sees
	• Using my gifts for God's glory (not mine)
	• Seeking the praise of God, not men

Why should we figure out where our treasure is?
Because Jesus said to figure it out.

[21] For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Whatever our heart desires-----our life will pursue

[22] "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light, [23] but if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

The **EYE** becomes the <u>conduit</u> that fills the heart with what each person focuses on.

[24] "No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.

QUESTION: when engaged in a battle where we want **one** thing intellectually, and **another** thing with our hearts & emotions, which one wins?

ANSWER: that which captures our heart.

This is where many of us are now—who cannot give our wealth away with joy.

- We have 2 lovers: money is the mistress we truly love.
- An idol

Matthew 10:39

"Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life shall find it"

ie: clings to idols **ie: gives up idols**

How do I know I'm engaged in idol worship?

- Expect _____ to take care of me
- Suspect everything will be fine when _____
- Life only has meaning when_____
- I only have worth when _____
- Seeking _____to meet deep needs for identity or security

Principle

When faced with competing priorities, we'll follow our heart in the long run. Where is my heart set right now?

Gauging the condition of my heart regarding finances:

- Did my possessions come from God's hand or my hand?
- Do I regularly give to the Kingdom? Why?
- If I don't regularly give to the Kingdom, why not?
- Do I strive for financial independence? Independence from Whom?
- Do I secretly believe that if I had more wealth I'd be happier?
- What has captured my heart lately?
- Am I storing up heavenly or earthly treasures?
- Am I possessed by my possessions?
- Is there any portion of my possessions "off limits" to God?
- What would it take to be giving sacrificially?
- Am I satisfied with God's provision?

Jesus explains why we should not worry about our provisions:

Truths about God:
- God provides for everything & everybody
- God thinks I'm valuable (v26, 30)
- God knows what I need (v32)
- God gave me the Kingdom—with no regrets (v33)

Truths about myself:
- I cannot provide for myself, even in little ways (v27)
- I'm rich; been given the Kingdom (permanent riches v33)
- I can afford to give away possessions (v33)
- I can store up treasures in heaven (v20)
- Pagans worry, I don't (v32)
- I must determine where my heart is set (v21)

Truths about the world:
- Sets its heart on provisions (v19, 27, 32)
- World's riches are temporary (v19)

Principle:
Anxiety comes from trying to provide for ourselves--forgetting the truth about God's sovereignty & love for us

Typical lies we believe that cause us anxiety about God's provision:

God's Not Able	God Doesn't Care	God Doesn't Know
○ Circumstances are more real than God is ○ God has limits ○ Never around when I need Him ○ It's up to me ○ Full surrender to Him will turn out worse	○ Not good (at least to me) ○ Not as protected as I thought ○ Feel orphaned ○ Given up on me	○ He is not in this ○ This is meaningless; a waste ○ Won't change me ○ He's not leading me anywhere ○ I can't hand this anxiety to God because He's not even aware of it