

Living with True Kingdom Perspective

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- [0 : 00] Actually, we're going to turn to our Bibles now to read, and it just reminds me of a story that Peter Adam, who was once the principal of Ridley College in Melbourne, and who was with us this time last year in June, speaking at our conference and preaching to us here, you'll remember him.
- And he was once on the board of an organization that were looking to put up a building. And there were many, many people who had sponsored. And a great plaque was going to be put on the wall with the names of all the people who had sponsored and given money towards this building.
- And the board looked at him and said, Dr. Adam, could you think of an appropriate text to put beside this great list of names of all those who are sponsored? And he immediately said, yes, I can think of a very good one.
- Indeed, Matthew 6, verse 2b. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. Well, that's not the kind of reward we're looking for, as we're going to discover as we read these verses.
- We're going to read Matthew 6, verses 1 to 24, page 811, if you have one of our church Bibles. Beware, says the Lord Jesus, Beware of doing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them.
- [1 : 19] For then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven. Thus, when you give, give to the needy. Sorry, when you give to the needy, sign no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others.
- Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, don't let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.
- And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites, for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and in the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward.
- But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who sees in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. And when you pray, don't heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, the pagans, for they think they'll be heard for their many words.
- Don't be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. You then pray like this, Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
- [2 : 29] Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.
- But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. And when you fast, do not look gloomy like the hypocrites. For they disfigure their faces, that their fasting may be seen by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, that your fasting may not be seen by others, but by your Father who is in secret.

And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where their thieves break in and steal.

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.

[3 : 34] The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. 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. 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. Amen. May God bless to us his word. Well, please turn again in your Bibles to Matthew 6, page 8, 111.

And we're looking particularly at verses 19 to 24 today, which are verses all about living with true kingdom perspective. Continue our study in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus himself is teaching all true followers, and all would-be followers, what it really means to be a Christian, to live as a disciple of Christ.

And having begun in the Beatitudes, those pithy sayings, which lay out in an inimitable fashion the marks of Christ's true people, Jesus shows that it's a portrait, isn't it, of lives that are shaped by the grace and mercy of God in Christ, and lives that therefore share in the experience of Christ.

[5 : 03] Then he goes on immediately to talk about the mission of Christ's true people. They are to be ambassadors who shed the light of God's heaven here on earth and point people to the Father in heaven, as Jesus himself did.

And from chapter 5, verse 17, right through to midway through chapter 7, we have a very detailed exposition then of what I've been calling the manners of Christ's people.

It's what the practice of true Christianity must be like for all those who bear the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And through chapter 5, we've been seeing that true kingdom righteousness is what it's all about.

A true kingdom morality that is lived out by those who have truly heavenly relationships here on earth. Lives that are touched and shaped by the ways of the kingdom of heaven.

And that is visible and tangible here on earth, principally in the relationships that Christ's people have. The relationships among God's people, but also between them and the people of the world.

[6 : 16] And the climax at the very end of chapter 5 sums it all up in verse 48. We are to be perfect with the wide, inclusive, generous-hearted love and purity and faithfulness of our heavenly Father.

Be perfect, of course, doesn't mean morally faultless. Jesus knows very well that we are not morally perfect in that way. But what he is meaning is that we are to be complete. We are to be wholesome.

We are to be expansive. All embracing in our love, in our purity, in our faithfulness. Just as our heavenly Father is. Our righteousness really is to reflect the things that truly characterize our heavenly Father.

And to live like that then is the evidence that we do actually have a relationship. A right relationship with God himself. With God our heavenly Father. And in fact, to live like that is the only evidence that that really is so.

And that right relationship, that righteousness must be expressed in right relationships with others in the world. Those around us, in our lives.

[7 : 27] Those with whom we deal with day to day. Those, whoever we come into contact with in our lives here on earth. But, and this is very important.

There is danger in this teaching. Just as the scribes and the Pharisees manipulated and therefore neutralized the true challenge and the morality of the law of Moses.

And they turned it into a religious bondage. So also, it would be possible to pervert even this exposition of heart righteousness and kingdom life that Jesus himself gives us here.

It would be possible to take that and to turn it into mere religious hypocrisy and sham. Don Carson is right. When he says, The greater the demand for holiness, the greater the potential for hypocrisy and self-deception.

Now just think about that and we know how true it is. The human heart is deceitful above all things. That's what Jeremiah the prophet tells us. And our capacity to deceive ourselves even exceeds our capacity at times to deceive others, doesn't it?

[8 : 40] Especially in this whole realm of outward piety, of religious behavior. It can be made to cloak underneath something that is vain and empty and false.

But it can be hidden underneath a cloak of religious respectability. And that's why Jesus goes right on from chapter 5 into Matthew chapter 6 to show that not only must we grasp the heart of God's law of righteousness, not only must we get a grip of that searching, piercing nature of true kingdom morality, but we must also get a grip on what it means to have a true kingdom mentality and heart and spirit out of which that true righteousness must come.

That's why the first word of chapter 6 is beware. Beware, says Jesus. It's not just obedience to Jesus.

It's not just doing his radical commands for holiness that counts. It's all about the motivation for doing these things. Yes, real righteousness of the kingdom is expressed in a true kingdom morality, real heavenly relationships here on earth.

But the truth is that will only be real if it is evoked and is born out of a true kingdom mentality. We'll only live our lives day by day displaying these heavenly relationships on earth if we're living with real heavenly priorities in our hearts day by day all the time.

[10 : 16] And Jesus knows our hearts. So there's no room is there for hypocrisy with Jesus. He's not interested at all in outward show. He sees right to the very heart. Religion, of course, is so often about outward show.

But Jesus says kingdom righteousness must be lived out from the heart. It's from the heart. Remember, he says in Matthew 15, we've quoted it several times.

It's from the sinful, natural human heart that comes so much, that defiles a person so much that's sinful and wrong. But likewise, it is also from a heart that is touched and changed by God's grace and possessed and directed by Christ's Holy Spirit.

It's from a heart like that that precedes the righteousness that is the true life of heaven, the life of heaven flowing into this dark world through Christ's people as we live out heavenly ways now in the midst of this earthly life.

And that is the mark of real kingdom people according to Jesus, real disciples, real Christians. It's what the prophets looked for in the days of the new covenant as we read a little earlier.

[11 : 29] That the law of God would be truly in flesh. That it would be embedded, written deep within the heart of God's redeemed people. The law would be planted within them by the spirit of triumphant holiness.

The spirit of the risen, vindicated, perfect human being. The Lord Jesus Christ, the King of heaven. The new man. The new humanity. That spirit poured into our hearts.

So we could sum it up this way. True kingdom righteousness is all about love from the heart and love for the Father. That's what we see in the earthly life of the Lord Jesus.

The perfect son of the Father. And he calls each one of us who is born again by his spirit, who's born from above, who's born with a heavenly birth. He calls us to share that heart righteousness.

To love truly from the heart. And to love truly the Father in heaven. And that's the key to all Christian living. As we live lives in the kingdom that Jesus has begun on earth.

[12 : 37] And as we wait for its final consummation when he comes at last to reign. Seeing for whom we're living. And who we're not living for.

And to please. And seeing what we're living for. And what we're not living for. In terms of gain and reward. That's the key to life today for us as Christians.

In our work. In our careers. In our family. In our relationships. In all the priorities that we face in life. And so this next section of the Sermon on the Mount.

From chapter 6 verse 1. Right through to chapter 7 verse 12. It helps us to get it all clear and plain. Helps us to understand what it means to have this heavenly mentality.

What it means for heavenly realities to be in control of our hearts. And remember when the Bible speaks about our hearts. It doesn't mean our feelings and our emotions just.

[13 : 32] The Bible thinks of the heart as the very center of our being. Our control center. Our thoughts. Our words. All our actions. It's our mentality.

In a sense. Our attitude. And again. Matthew has carefully organized this material. With this crucial teaching of Jesus. To give a great sense of balance. And of symmetry.

He does that to aid our understanding. He does it so many places throughout his gospel. And it helps us see how everything hangs together. And I've put it on a handout for you. Just diagrammatically. And if you look at that.

You'll see I think. How Matthew wants us to understand this. The key point is right in the middle. That was often the way. In the more ancient teaching.

It wasn't sort of headlines at the top. Like you get in the newspaper headline. And then the detail. Often. The heart of the thing was in the middle. And that's the key point here. And verses 19 to 24. Really sum up.

[14 : 27] The whole section. And hold it all together. It's the key for everything that goes before. Verses 1 to 18. And everything that comes after. From verse 25. Down to chapter 7. Verse 12.

So these verses are about showing us true kingdom perspective. And what that means for all of life. And then that is what will govern all of our thinking about true kingdom piety.

Chapter 6 verses 1 to 18. Things that we think of in our devotional life. Where he talks about prayer. And fasting. And giving. And that sort of thing. And that kingdom perspective will also govern our thinking about our true priorities.

In all of our daily life. And that's the sort of thing Jesus speaks about from verse 25. Right down to chapter 7 verse 12. Practical issues like food and drink. And clothes. And our daily needs.

And how we think about other people. Our perception of them. And also our perseverance in our Christian walk with God. So if you like to put it simply. We need to live with a true kingdom perspective.

[15 : 29] To guide our daily worship in relation to God. And to guide our daily walk in relation to the world. That's the shape I think of this section.

We're going to look at it in some detail over the next two or three weeks. But today I want to focus on this key paragraph. Verses 19 to 24. Which press home. The kingdom mentality.

Which is perhaps our best way of thinking about. The attitude of mind and heart. That Jesus wants us to think about. And that true kingdom mentality begins. When we have learned to live with true kingdom perspective.

True kingdom sight. You see. These verses are all about having a healthy eye. They're all about seeing clearly. Having a right outlook on life. That is heaven's outlook on life.

And not earth's outlook on life. And you'll only do that. Says Jesus. If heaven is rooted deeply in your heart. If your heart and mind and will.

[16 : 33] Your whole mentality. Is being molded and shaped in every respect. Not by earth. But by the heavenly kingdom of God.

That's a kingdom perspective. It's as simple as that. But that is, isn't it? A vast difference from mere religion.

That is a real relationship with the Father in heaven through Jesus Christ. It's so important, isn't it? To grasp the difference between mere religion and a real relationship that lives with the living God.

Because outwardly often. The kind of morality that God demands of us. It looks to some people. As just like religion. And the two things can look very similar outwardly.

But no. Jesus says these things could not be more different. Even though both of them perhaps do involve obedience to God's commands. You see, religion is all about the dead obedience of works.

[17 : 38] And God's commands become a killing burden. The whole of life is all about keeping commands. Whereas if you have a relationship with God, it is all about the joyful obedience of faith.

And we see that God's commands are about life and for life. They're life-giving commands. Not life-sapping commands. It's the difference, remember, between those two different referees in the game of rugby.

One who lives for the game and wants it to flow and uses the rules to make a great game. And the other who cares nothing about the spectacle of the game. But is only there to make sure every dot and tittle of the rule book is not transgressed.

But God's commands for those who understand the Lord and know him as a heavenly father, God's commands are sweet like honey to the taste.

And for true kingdom people, the reality of God's wonderful heavenly kingdom has penetrated in that way right to the very heart of our being. And it's taken control of our whole personality, our whole way of thinking.

[18 : 39] It possesses our control center, our decision making, our attitudes. What Jonathan Edwards called the affections. Again, not just meaning emotions, but every part of us.

Our thinking, our perspective, our understanding, our motivation, the power of our will. That's what the Bible means by our hearts. The very nerve center of what makes us tick.

And the kingdom perspective has gone deep into our hearts because we have had our eyes opened to understand where our greatest treasure really is.

Look at verse 21. Jesus says, you see, it is our treasure that possesses us. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Now you see, in this world, our thinking is all about treasure now. That's verse 19, isn't it? Laying up treasures on earth.

[19 : 40] That is what matters to people. That's what the elections have all been about this week, isn't it? Which party has offered us this treasure or that treasure in order to win our votes? Less cancel tax, better hospitals, better schools, whatever it might be.

I was looking for a party to offer us better weather, but I've definitely voted for them. They can't deliver on that one. But it works, doesn't it? Because whatever we're interested in, we will vote for because we want it, to keep it.

Protecting treasures that we already have, perhaps. Or just as likely, wanting to have a bigger slice of what you don't have and what somebody else has. That's what drives a lot of our politics, isn't it?

The politics of envy. But you see, despite all of our efforts in all of that, look at verse 19. Jesus says the reality is that all this earthly treasure will in the end decay and fade away.

Or it'll be stolen from us ignominiously. I don't know if you've ever had moths. When we lived in London, having moved from Aberdeen, I had a very big cupboard full of woolly jumpers.

[20 : 43] Very necessary up in the northeast of Scotland. I never wore them once, I don't think, the whole time we were in London. But when we moved back to Glasgow the first winter, I went to my cupboard to get them out and start wearing them again. And blow me, the whole lot had been munched by moths.

I mean, a dreadful infestation of the southern moth that came up with us to Glasgow. So it all had to go in the freezer and chemicals had to be sprayed everywhere. It was a rotten business. Every single one of them, virtually. But that's life, isn't it, in this world?

Things get eaten by moths. Or your garden chairs. Yes, that when you buy them, they say these can be kept out all year long. It didn't mean in Glasgow. And your rust-free trailers, when you go out to sit on them on the one sunny day that comes in the summer, you discover they've actually rusted when they weren't supposed to.

That's life in this world, isn't it? Or the thief breaks in and steals it. Some of you have known the misery of being burgled and what that's like. That's earthly life.

Or the rust here is probably actually talking about farmers and their crops and big silos of grain that gets tainted with mold and rust. And that's where your wealth is stored, in your produce.

[21 : 50] You go to the barn and it's all useless. Nobody wants to buy it. Plenty of people in recent years have woken up to discover that their pension has been pinched.

They thought they were going to have a happy retirement, but no, their company goes bust. And what do you find? Well, the pension fund wasn't funded. And all of a sudden, life's not going to be as good as you hoped it would be.

That's earthly life, isn't it? It's in the newspapers every day. It's happening all the time. It's all around us. And friends, even if you might have a charmed life where the moths never get your jumpers, and your pension pot is full to brimming, and nobody ever steals or breaks into your house, and nothing like that ever happens, in the end, the last great thief is going to come for you.

The thief of death. And even if you're not a materialist, some people are not materialists. They're not that interested in wealth and money and gold and possessions and these sort of things.

A lot of people, though, are very interested in their body, aren't they? I don't think we've ever lived in an age when there's so many gyms everywhere, and people obsessed with exercise and eating, you know, soya beans and sawdust for breakfast and all these sorts of things.

[23 : 06] Ultimately, you will not beat your mortality. It won't be the moths, but it will be the worms when you're six feet under.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust. That's life in this world. And Jesus is saying to us, friends, kingdom people are people who see all of that very, very clearly.

They see clearly the reality of this earthly transience. But not just that. Not just that. They see something even more important than that.

They see the reality of heavenly permanence. And that is Jesus' first point here in verses 19 and 20. You see, only the kingdom of heaven is real and permanent.

Don't lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in and steal.

[24 : 13] Heaven is where our true and permanent home really is, because, well, because that is where our Father is. We pray, verse 9, to our Father in heaven.

We've been praying as a fellowship very much in recent months for our missionary in South America, Roy Murray. And we've been praying, haven't we, very specially, that he would have a base, a home. He's having to travel all around the continent.

And we're praying that he'd have a home to go back to, a place where he can rest and feel stable and feel as a home. But I recall some years ago, actually, when Roy was back on home assignment here, talking to him about this.

It wasn't that long after his father, Ian, had died. And I remember Roy saying to me, we've lived all over the world in different countries, even as children, as missionaries. And in some senses, it always was a strange thing to actually wonder where your home was.

But it was always easy for me, because home was always where my dad was. But now that my dad has died and gone to heaven, I don't know where my earthly home is.

[25 : 20] But it makes me even more conscious of where my real home is. And I recall the words of Hudson Taylor, who after his wife died, wrote about her passing and said, it was the blow, but for a little while makes the desert more dreary, but heaven more home-like.

Heaven more home-like. Because his beloved, loved one, was now there. And you see, for the Christian believer, our great beloved, our God and Savior, he is our real treasure.

And where he is, is where home is, surely. And to have real treasure, is to know that we have a home there with him.

And kingdom perspective, you see, grasps that. It sees where the real solid joys and the lasting treasures that we were singing about are to be found. And it lives there for the whole of life in that glorious light.

Because once you've seen that, well, you can't possibly live any other way, can you? In fact, that is really the test, actually, of whether we've understood the true message of the gospel at all.

[26 : 34] And so all through this chapter, you will see that there's a contrast between life lived with an earthly eye, an earthly perspective, and life lived with a heavenly perspective, with heavenly sight.

And Jesus is challenging us. He is saying, what is really in your heart? And I'll tell you the answer, he says. Your heart, and your heart's orientation, and your heart's perspective, will be found by looking for where your treasure really is.

I don't know if you like watching that program, Grand Designs, you know, with Kevin MacLeod, and the people are building a dream home, usually some extraordinary building in an extraordinary place.

I really quite enjoy it. Perhaps it's because most of our ministry seems to become a building site and a building project. But nevertheless, I love that program. And I remember watching one episode some years ago. I forget exactly what the project was, but it was a very grand design indeed.

And of course, it charts the history and all the ups and downs and the crises and so on. And this family, who were building this house, were living on that building site in this little old caravan all the way through the renovation.

[27 : 52] And it was just chaos. And it was a mess. And the caravan was falling apart. And it was an extraordinary thing to watch. And yet, that family had the right perspective, didn't they?

Because to invest in that caravan, to make that caravan a luxury interior so that their time during the building phase would be absolutely wonderful, that would be absolutely ridiculous. The whole point is that that caravan was just temporary.

They were living in that caravan for the day when at last they would open the door of their grand design and proper life at last would begin. That's where their heart was, in their ultimate home.

That was their treasure. And so they were content to live in chaos, to live with a lot of mess because they were building for the future. And, no doubt, at the same time, they became increasingly dissatisfied with caravan life and longing more and more for life in the grand design for their true home.

And so, you see, if the kingdom of heaven is our true home, then it should be the same for us. That from the heart of our being will come the desires and the concerns and the practices of that kingdom, our true home.

[29 : 14] Because we know, don't we, that only that is permanent. Only that is going to be worth investing our whole life in. And that's what will possess our thinking. That is what will give us our whole outlook on life, a true kingdom perspective.

And that will rule the way that we see everything in our earthly life. And it will determine everything that we do in our earthly life. And that's Jesus' second point in verses 22 and 23, you see.

If we're true kingdom people, then it will be the desires and the cares of our permanent home, not our temporary home, that will shape our perspective on life in this world.

To use Jesus' picture here, we'll see clearly, verse 22, we'll have a healthy eye which will light up our whole outlook on life. In other words, we will think straight.

We'll make right decisions and right judgments with right perspective about this world. We won't have blurred vision, verse 23, darkened vision that makes us confused and befuddled about what's really important in life and what isn't.

[30 : 25] We'll be people, no, who see everything with the light and clarity of eternity. And when that is so, that means two things. First, it means that what really matters in life is that we are living in God's sight with His view being the thing that really matters.

In other words, we know that He alone is our true treasure and He's our rewarder. And therefore, everything that matters in life is only down to what God sees and what God thinks and what God has of us as a valuation, not what this world thinks or anybody else.

And that's the refrain if you look all the way through verses 1 to 18. It's our Father who sees even what's done in secret and it's He who rewards His true children. And so we're living for His eyes and His praise, not for this world's praise.

You see it there in verse 4 and verse 6 and verse 18. Each paragraph, it's about what God sees and how God rewards. That's what matters. And so that means that life on this earth for us is not going to be living in other people's sight, caring what their valuations are, worrying what they think of our priorities in life.

It's all going to be about what God thinks. What a liberation that is. We live our lives in God's sight. Only His viewpoint matters. And that's what counts in the end.

[31 : 49] But secondly, a real heavenly perspective means that we will know that we live with God's sight. That is, our eyes also are open to the invisible, to the permanent, to the unseen reality of heaven.

And it's that that will give us clear and true perspective on everything that's visible but which is in fact merely temporary and temporal and earthly. and that will transform the way we view all our earthly relationships in terms of material things, in terms of the judgments that we make about other people and in terms of the worries and concerns that we have about the future.

That is the refrain all through the second part of this section from chapter 6 verse 25 onwards. Our whole lives, you see, Jesus says, are to be illumined with heavenly light. So you don't need to be anxious because you can see and you know that your Father knows you and knows your needs and will provide and you know that so you have heaven's perspective.

You can live with that heavenly sight. You know that you can seek first the kingdom of God and all the other things that you do need in this earthly life. God will give to you and not deprive you.

Now we're going to look at those two things in more detail over the next couple of weeks but do just notice today, notice Jesus' clear conclusion to all of this talk about perspective. Look at verse 24.

[33 : 10] It's the third thing and it's vital. It is only when you see clearly, says Jesus, with heaven's true perspective on life on earth. It's only when you see clearly that you can serve faithfully heaven's true purpose for you on this earth.

Verse 24, no one can serve two masters. Notice he doesn't say you must not try to serve two masters. He says you cannot serve God and money.

Mammon is the old word. The material things. This earthly world and all that is passing within it. You cannot serve truly heaven and earth is what he's saying.

Just as you can't sink all your savings into your caravan and into your dream home. You can't. It's impossible. It cannot be done. But you see, the trouble is, friends, the trouble is that often our vision is blurred and we think that we can.

Blurred vision is a very dangerous thing. Usually it's a sign of quite serious underlying pathology. It might even be the sign of a brain tumor or something. But even the symptoms of blurred vision are dangerous, aren't they?

[34 : 23] I know that. I wear contact lenses sometimes and if they move around in my eyes, I get blurred vision. I can't see. That's why I don't wear them when I'm preaching. I get nervous. It's even worse when you're driving, isn't it? It's dangerous to have blurred vision.

And see, all too often as Christians, we don't see with the clarity that we ought to. And we have blurred vision and our eyes are bad. And that leads to disaster because it hides.

But we're not seeing clearly that there's an underlying pathology in our hearts, that our hearts are actually divided, that we think we're being spiritual but in reality it so often is earth and not heaven that we're prioritizing in our lives.

Isn't that right? Think about your priorities. Think about your priorities for your money, for example. Are you and am I really investing in our eternal home or just in this temporary caravan a bit too much?

It would be a very subtle concept. Think about our children. What are we wanting for them? What are we investing in for them? Well, often it's education, it's training and so on, isn't it?

[35 : 33] Of course that's important. Don't get me wrong. But we need to ask ourselves, don't we, about our children and our grandchildren? What is the chief goal? What is the education and the training and all that for?

What's our real dream and desire for them? Is it that they'll get top marks and top exams and top degrees and top jobs and a comfortable life and all the things that we have and even more?

And of course we want them to be Christian. But is that perhaps falling into the place of an insurance policy so that we can have all of this and not lose out eternally?

We have to ask ourselves those questions, don't we? What are our priorities for our kids? Is it when they're at school to be full of sports, full of friends, full of a great social circle, full of all sorts of things?

Or is it the growth and training in Christ's way, in Christ's church, prioritizing the things that will do that for our young folk? Many, many Christian parents, you know, many, many Christian parents really don't like the idea very much if one of their children wants to go into full-time Christian work in ministry or mission or something like that.

[36 : 51] I've met many in their applications for Cornhill or apprenticeships who have Christian parents who are not at all keen on that particular path in life that they're taking.

That says something about where their treasures are, doesn't it? And we could have hundreds and hundreds of other examples. What about our time? Well, hobbies, leisure, holidays, all of these things.

Nothing wrong with them. They're necessary. They're good. But are these things serving our chief purpose of serving the church of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Or are they getting in the way and actually hampering and preventing that? Do weekend breaks rank a lot higher up the pole than weekend hospitality for new Christians, for young students, for internationals, and so on?

What are our priorities? How clear or how blurred is our vision? Well, Jesus says, listen, let me speak very clearly.

[37 : 55] You can't serve earth and heaven. You'll end up, as he says in verse 24, despising one or the other. And usually, alas, it means despising heaven, which of course means despising God himself.

And that's why we need real kingdom perspective because only that perspective, only that healthy eye will fill our minds and our hearts with the true light of reality that our treasure is our master and it will either be earth or heaven.

It can't be both. And if it is earth, we will be people who are enslaved to the things of earth, won't we? No matter how spiritual we think we are or other people think we are, we'll be possessed by earthly things and we'll be seeking these treasures and that's what will make us people who are full of worries and anxieties about life.

That is what will make us people who are driven because we're being driven really for earthly treasures. By contrast, if it's heaven that really doesn't master us, well, we'll be people who see that it's God that we serve and that he's the God of grace, that he's the God who loves us and who gives us all that we need for both earth and heaven.

Then we'll be people that are freed from all these kind of worries and anxieties of earthly concerns. We'll be liberated, won't we, from worrying about what other people's attitudes are to us.

[39 : 24] In Jesus' words, our whole existence will actually be flooded with light, not darkness. That contrast is absolute. It's stark. It's heaven or earth.

It's God or mammon. It's light or dark. It's belief or it's unbelief. Which side of those is really true of your heart and my heart?

Jesus helps us in these chapters to examine ourselves as he applies that principle to us throughout the rest of the chapter, looking at our devotional lives, looking at our daily lives and seeing what really is the driving force.

But today, let's just leave ourselves pondering his words and considering our own perspective on life. Is it really the clear sight, the perspective of the kingdom of heaven that fills us with light?

Or is it in practice, no matter what we say we believe and say we do, is it in practice more like the blurred vision of this world's sight? It's a really important question, isn't it, for you and for me?

[40 : 40] Because Jesus means what he says in verse 24, no one can serve two masters. Either he will hate one and love the other or he'll be devoted to one and despise the other.

You cannot serve both God and mammon. well, let's pray together. Heavenly Father, it sobers us to be reminded that you are the God who sees all, who sees in secret, who sees the deepest recesses of our hearts and who knows every motivation of our heart so that even the good deeds that we do in your name, you know whether we are doing them for ourselves or truly for you.

So often, Lord, our vision is blurred. So often the ways of this world crowd in upon us how we need you to lead us every day by the light of your life-giving word.

How we need one another to keep us to the path that is the only pathway of light living in the light of your glorious coming and your kingdom.

So, Lord, help us and help us to help one another that together we might be led by your heavenly light and be people who in all things are shaped by a true kingdom perspective that our hearts might be yours always and forever.

[42 : 28] For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.