

BUILD YOUR HOUSE ON THAT!

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Matthew 6.19-34
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I. Connecting With One Another

Have you ever been *commanded* to do – or not to do – something? How did you respond? Conversely, have you ever been *invited* somewhere? How did you respond?

Why did you respond differently to these two situations?

Before continuing in this study, spend some time in prayer:

- a. For the community of Good Shepherd: that we continue to connect with God, grow in faith and serve in love.
- b. For the fall programs that are kicking off in a few weeks: that adults would seek to grow deeper in faith and willing servants would hear God's call to minister to the children and students of Good Shepherd.
- c. For this weekend's three worship gatherings: that in hearing God's Word read and proclaimed we would respond faithfully.

II. Introduction to this Study

Last week we saw how the Lord's Prayer functions like "a two-way road in the middle of town," in that, right in the center of Jesus' sermon, he invites us to ask for help in living such countercultural lives. His prayer, as we discussed in our study and during our gatherings, brilliantly corresponds to each part of his over all message.

This week's passage, then, recalls the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." In what reads literally as a commandment reveals an invitation as well; an invitation to a new kind of life where we let go of the human tendency of anxiety and instead trust God to fulfill our needs.

III. Study the Text

- a. Read Matthew 6.19-24 aloud. Is there anything interesting or thought provoking in these words? Is there anything that is troubling?
- b. Commentators note that Jesus' statement in the original language features a sort of play on words in verse 19, reading literally, "Do not treasure up treasures on earth," or "Do not hoard hoards." His immediate explanation reveals why: Because moths and rust destroy, and thieves break in (literally "dig through" mud-brick walls of first century Palestine) and steal. Of course, we know this to be true. Have you ever lost possessions to decay or thievery?
- c. Instead, we are instructed to "store up treasures in heaven." The main point of Matthew 6.19-24 is then stated, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Why is this so? Do you agree or disagree? Try putting this concept into your own words. How have you

seen it at work in your own life?

How, then, are we to understand “heaven”? Is that only the place of eternal life? Or is Jesus referring to something else? What does it look like to store treasures in heaven? Try to jot down five different ways you can do so:

- d. Read Luke 12.13-21. In what ways are you tempted to be like the farmer?
Does that mean we can't save up for a rainy day? For our kids' college education? For our retirement? Why or why not? Check out Proverbs 6.6-8. How does “considering the ant” add to our study?
From another perspective, what do you think it means to be “rich toward God”?
- e. Though it seemingly begins a new section in Jesus' sermon, 6.25-34 is intimately intertwined with verses 19-24. Read 25-34 aloud. What connections do you see with what we have already looked at in this study?
Do you see any connections with other parts of Jesus' sermon?
Are there other passages of Scripture you're reminded of?
- f. What mental image do you get in verse 32? Any particular Olympic athletes come to mind (if you've been tuning in!)? How does Jesus' statement about those who don't know God “running after these things” help you understand this part of his sermon? How does it connect with 6.22-23?
Notice the juxtaposition is between faith and anxiety! Being overly anxious, in essence, takes God out of the driver's seat of our lives, questioning whether He will provide for our needs.
- g. Read Luke 10.38-42. Why does Jesus counter-culturally allow Mary to sit at his feet (meaning she was welcomed as a disciple!) while telling Martha that she was “worried and upset about many things”?
What is the one thing that is needed?
- h. Read 1st Timothy 6.3-19.
How – if at all – is verse 11 an example of how to “store up treasures in heaven”?
How can we most appropriately live out verses 18-19?

IV. Reflect and Respond

- a. In what ways have you been tempted to take God out of the driver's seat of your life? Why do you think you've been tempted to do so?
- b. Have you ever taken time in silence and solitude to reflect on the many ways you've been blessed by God? Take some time to do so today, even if it's only a few minutes. Before doing so, ask God to help you recall all the ways He has provided for you.
- c. In what ways could you follow in Mary's footsteps, seeking to be Jesus' disciple instead of being filled with anxiety like Martha?
- d. How could you be increasingly “rich toward God”? Is God calling you to increase your giving to the church or another charitable, Kingdom-based organization? Is God calling you to give generously of your time for his ministry? Is God calling you to share your talents with others?