

**Stingy Dad, Generous Dad: Overcoming our Ignorant Resistance
Mathew 6:19-21, Revelation 21: 1-5, 22-25**

Brothers and sisters, this morning I have to start this message with a heads up to my mom and dad, who have been worshipping online with us, to warn them that I'm going to be using them as sermon examples this morning.

But don't worry mom and dad – you both come out ok!

So, brothers and sisters I have to confess that when I was growing up - I was often envious of the things that other kids got which I didn't. Can anyone else relate to that??

Now don't get me wrong – I wasn't a deprived child... it's just that my friend's parents didn't seem mind including things like potato chips, and pop, or Twinkies on the grocery list.

And my other friends got to eat out at McDonalds on a regular basis, or they got the latest brand name shoes for school.

And other families would travel across Canada to see the mountains or the ocean or they would go to places like Florida, or Disney World for vacation.

But we only got pop and chips on our birthdays, and we rarely went out for McDonalds, we got whatever shoes were on sale... and when we went on vacation - we always went to Minnesota – and it wasn't to see the Mall of America – it was to visit our relatives... on the farm!

And when I was a teenager – I was the only one without cable TV, in fact we didn't even own a TV until the winter Olympics came to Calgary, and then my parents managed to get an old 1970's floor model with rabbit ears that some TV Store was trying to get throw away...

We didn't even ask about getting a VCR or a video game system. That's what we went over to our friends' houses for.

And growing up like this shaped me in two ways.

On one hand, I felt like I was missing out on the plastic pop culture of North America. So when I grew up – I made certain that to make up for all that stuff I thought I missed out on. I ate at McDonalds as much as I wanted too☺ I got cable TV, a video game system, and I bought season passes to Canada’s Wonderland.

But on the other hand, as a kid I learned that I didn’t really need all that stuff.

So when my daughter – at age 10 – was asking me if she could get a cell phone ... I heard my parents speaking through me as I answered back *“You’re only 10, you don’t need a cell phone!”*

It was the same when she wanted specialty cartoon channels.

I answered back with *“basic cable has plenty of cartoons and kids shows we don’t need pay extra for the deluxe package... and I know the latest Play Station Gaming system is amazing – but our other one is only two years old and it still works fine!”*

I could hear myself repeating what my parents had said to me. Have you ever caught yourself doing that with your kids?

It’s interesting to see how our parents’ attitudes about these sorts of things are passed on to us and how they affect the way we parent our children, isn’t it?

And that’s the whole idea behind a called book “Rich Dad Poor Dad” written back in the late 90’s by Robert Kyosaki.

Kyosaki explores how our attitudes towards possessions – and especially money and success are passed on to our children – by the kinds of comments and choices we make.

And He shows us how they are implicitly picked up by our kids and shape their attitudes about wealth and success.

And Kiyosaki believes that while most people are well educated in reading, writing and arithmetic, they lack a basic understanding of how our current economic system works and the financial smarts to take advantage of it.

The goal of his book is to make people aware that the traditional path to success - of staying in school, studying hard, getting good grades in reading, writing, and arithmetic so you can put them to use in a good job and make good money - doesn't lead to financial success in the current economic system.

He's not trying to say that we shouldn't send our kids to school and have them study hard – but rather that we can't rely on this traditional path to give our children the riches, or financial freedom that could be theirs or ours...

So in Kyosaki's terminology the "dad" who doesn't realize this is the poor dad. The Poor Dad still believes that its possible to be frugal and thrifty and save your way to financial freedom – but his life tells otherwise.

In fact he struggles all his life worrying about money, making the statement "I can't afford it!"

By comparison, Kyosaki's rich dad understands how the system works and is able to work the system so that money isn't an issue. His different mindset is revealed in the fact that he doesn't say "I can't afford it," but instead he asks "how can I afford it?"

The Rich Dad doesn't save money – He invests it, he puts it to work so that it grows. He learns about the tax laws so that he is able to take advantage of tax credits and benefits offered by the government.

He is enterprising, outgoing and is willing to take risks, and if they pay off he will gain more wealth - but regardless of how much wealth the rich dad has he is financially free because he is not controlled by money, but in control of his money and he makes it work for him.

Do you see the difference?

Now – at first glance I would think that in my own life my parents were more like the poor dad. They didn't strike me as

risk takers or entrepreneurs, or people who were concerned with the ability to generate wealth and financial freedom, and they often told me they couldn't afford certain things.

But, while I may have thought my Dad was stingy when it came to things like Mc Donald's, junk food, and cable TV and fashion fads, I now realize that it was so He could be extremely generous and invest as much as he could in the Kingdom of Heaven – or as our scripture passage this morning puts it *“store up for yourselves treasures in heaven”*

The reality was that I had a spiritually rich dad – which I'll call a Generous Dad, who knew how to take the material blessings which God had given him and leverage them to produce Spiritual results.

For example, he could see that by being thrifty with other things he could afford to invest in a Christian education for myself and my three sisters - and that investment has paid off in giving us all a strong Christian worldview and faith.

So brothers and sisters we need to ask ourselves - are we stingy or generous when it comes to using what we have to store up treasures in heaven?

And we might not know if we are stingy or generous because we might be ignorant of the fact that we can actually store up our treasure in heaven.

In the same way that Robert Kiyosaki is convinced that people need to overcome their ignorance of how our economic system works so they can profit from it, I'm convinced that we need to overcome our ignorance, or whatever stereotypes we have of “Going out and blessing someone” so that we understand how it is possible to invest materially in order to store up our treasures in heaven.

Now I'm not going to write a book about this, but it is the point of this sermon and that's why I've called it – Stingy Dad, Generous Dad...overcoming the resistance of our ignorance.

As you know – Valleyview has received a generous donation.

And it was specifically given to us so pass on to help and bless other people, but as I've mentioned this is proving to be a bit of a challenge for us. To be honest – we've been a bit slow on the uptake with this.

Someone asked me the other day "How are things at Valleyview in the midst of this pandemic?" and I answered back "You know – they are good – my biggest challenge right now is getting the congregation to go out and personally give someone else a blessing of \$100 in Jesus name!"

Can you believe that is our biggest challenge right now!?

Well it is – and so this month we're looking at how we can overcome some of the things that block us from going and doing this... and I think we may experience some resistance because we don't know that we can invest money in other people to produce spiritual results, or how to do this?

So to correct this Jesus teaches us – *"Do not store up for yourselves treasures **on earth**, where moths and vermin*

*destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures **in heaven**" (Matt 6:19)*

It's interesting to note that what Jesus does not confront the practice of storing up wealth... only where we store it.

You see in the ancient world it was common practice for wealthy people to take all their treasure with them to the grave. The ancients believed in the afterlife, and so they stored up their wealth for it and it was buried with them – they enjoyed their riches in this world and they expected to continue to do so in the next.

But that mentality was flawed – not only because it's not true, but as Jesus warns, when we store up treasure on earth *"moths and rust destroy and thieves break in and steal."* Just think of all the tombs of Egyptian Kings that were looted...

So, even if it was true that your worldly wealth could benefit you in the afterlife – it was at risk of decay, or being stolen, and it wouldn't last.

Now, our thinking has changed a bit since Jesus time.

First - we don't take the afterlife seriously anymore, and so we've become even more focused on storing up treasure on earth, and many believe that it's the only thing that gives meaning to this life.

So we say "you can't take it with you when you're gone!" or "you only live once!" So enjoy it while you can.

However from time to time we come to the realization that our material blessings can be "eaten by moths, destroyed by rust and stolen by thieves" and they don't seem to give meaning to our lives like we thought they would...

And in reaction to this we take a "low view" of wealth and possession and we attempt to rid ourselves of our desires and attachments to material things - and focus on what really matters – like relationships or people...

But we've made three mistakes friends...

First, we ought to take the afterlife very seriously - Jesus says to us "*store up treasure **in heaven***"

Second, if we take the afterlife or our next life seriously we'll realize that the purpose of material possessions is to invest in the next life – not hoarding them or enjoying them only "on earth"

And third, the solution to the limitations of our material possessions to provide meaning is not to rid ourselves of desire and attachment to material things and become Buddhists... but to learn how to invest them spiritually.

And notice that Jesus doesn't say **pick a different treasure** - a spiritual, immaterial treasure that won't decay. The problem isn't with what you treasure – it's where you are storing it!

Store up your treasure in heaven and you will have something to live off in the next life – guaranteed, and it won't decay or get stolen.

It's like how we invest now – while we're earning income so that when we retire we will have something to live on. Only when you store up in heaven there is nothing – not even economic uncertainty caused by a pandemic can affect it.

We **can** invest in the afterlife because we **can** take it with us when we're gone, we don't live once – we only die once!

The scriptures are quite clear that what is coming in the afterlife is this world -- made new once again, this world -- made free of human sin and rebellion.

In the afterlife we live in this restored world, interacting with the creation and worshiping God face to face.

So, friends if you are a follower of Jesus Christ what you are storing up in Heaven is everything that you've ever done for God's glory... including that time you went out to bless someone with \$100 in Jesus name.

Everything you've ever used to work towards helping others believe in Jesus Christ...

Everything you've ever done to steward and take care of this world and everything you've ever done to prevent sin and evil from affecting how you live and love and work.

The only thing you won't bring with you is your sinful nature and the sickness and disease and suffering which have resulted from our Sin affecting the good creation.

So "taking it with us" or "storing up treasure in heaven" is all about what we do with the material blessings and wealth that God that gives us now.

So the question we need to reflect on this morning is "Are we investing them for that time when all things will be made new? Are we really storing up our treasures in heaven?" Because that makes all the difference in how we manage those treasures on earth – and the ideas we will come up with to go out and bless someone in Jesus name!

Now normally when I would talk about this – I would try to be broad and inclusive in my applications.

I might say something like storing up treasures in heaven is about pursuing our jobs, our studies and our lives with intentionality to prepare for living in the New Creation

So do a good job with your skills and knowledge as an engineer, a teacher, an accountant, an artist no because you are proud of your reputation – but to prepare and hone your skills and knowledge for worshiping God in the New Creation in ways we can't even imagine yet.

And I hope that the Holy Spirit uses this to move us towards being more broadly focused on storing up treasure in heaven with our overall lives.

And then I might get a bit more specific and talk about how storing up treasure pertains to investing the material blessings we have such as food, shelter, and money to do charity work, and helping the poor and needy and the homeless...

But emphasizing how we must be intentional about doing it in such a way that it is evident we are not trying to save the world, but bearing witness to the fact that one day the world will be saved!

Christ will return to establish the New Creation – and remake this world a place where there will be no more poverty, hunger or homelessness.

So when we give of our resources we communicate this truth to give this hope to those we help – and in doing so it also strengthens our Hope.

This is what I would normally talk about to help us apply what we have learned about storing up treasure in heaven and normally you would all agree with this and say amen to it.

But the truth is brothers and sisters that its often easy to agree with some broad applications in principle – its when it comes down to something specific and precise... like going out and storing up treasure in heaven by blessing someone in

Jesus' name with \$100 in some way – that we find it harder to put it into action.

So I believe God has given us this very specific task in order to help us grow – so that as we take a specific step in this regard, it will begin to help us take those broad generalities that we agree with about our resources and careers and jobs and blessings, and start to act in more specific intentional ways there as well.

And to put it all in perspective as we wrap up here – the most specific way that you can store up treasure in heaven with this blessing project is if someone you bless in Jesus' name – ends up in heaven!

Now I'm not suggesting the cost of admission into Heaven for someone is \$100 – but brothers and sisters, we believe and we know that the Holy Spirit is working the lives of people whom He brings across our path and into our lives...

And the gesture of blessing someone with this money in Jesus' name will be used to further the work of the Holy Spirit in their life in some way that will bear the fruit of faith in Christ at some point. That is storing up treasure in Heaven.

So, if you've been stuck on this project because you don't really know anyone who is in dire financial need – maybe start praying about who needs a blessing in Jesus' name to help further the work of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, to encourage the development of their faith in Jesus Christ?

Let me give you my specific example – and I'm believing and trusting the Lord will use it to cause you to think of something specific that you can do as well.

A couple weeks ago, I was working here in the office and the fellow who parks his gravel truck in our lot called me and asked me for a boost. He was out in the parking lot working on his gravel truck and his pick-up truck wouldn't start.

So, I went out to give him a boost and he told me he was having a terrible day. He'd gotten a ticket because the tires on his gravel truck were too worn down, and now he was replacing them, but the tire technician had broken a bolt and messed things up, and his pick-up had stalled on the Deerfoot earlier that day and now it wouldn't start again.

Now maybe you aren't aware that I let this fellow park here because he gives us free gravel every spring for our parking lot – that's the deal. But I also see this as an opportunity for building a relationship for sharing about Jesus.

So – hearing about his terrible day I felt a little prompting from the Holy Spirit to bless him. I had some of the blessing money with me and I pulled out \$50 and said *“Here, you sound like you could use a blessing, this for you from Jesus”*

He said *“no I can't take that”* I said *“if you don't need it, then use it to do something nice for someone else.”*

His face lit up with a big smile and he said *“Grant this makes my heart so happy, I'm going to do something nice for somebody.”* Then he took the \$50 and kissed it and said *“my lucky money”* to which I corrected him and said *“Its your Jesus money”* – right he said *“my Jesus money!”*

Now I don't know exactly how the Holy Spirit is going to use this – but I do know it's a seed planted in faith, it is treasure that is being stored up in heaven - and I did my part to pass on the blessing when it was needed and the Lord will take it from there – and it will give me more opportunities to talk with him in the future and continue to witness to him.

So brothers and sisters, we have some treasure – let's go bless some people with it and store it up in heaven, in anticipate of the New Creation.

Because what our Lord said is true – Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Go out and Be the Blessing – Amen.