

Jesus Teaches about Money, Worry, and Judging People

SCOTT HOEZEE

During his ministry, Jesus talked about a lot of things, but one subject that came up with a bit more frequency than anything else had to do with money. Of course, back in Jesus' day, economics...what counted as money, how people saved money or made money...all of it was very different than today; but one thing that has stayed the same throughout history is the sin of greed and its undue fixation on wealth. It is not surprising then that matters related to money and property cropped up in Jesus' most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount. Today on *Groundwork*, we will see what Jesus had to say. Stay tuned.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, we are nearing the end, now, of our six-part series on the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5, 6, and 7. This is program number five now of the six. We have already covered a lot of ground: The Beatitudes, Jesus' teaching on the law, words about prayer, including Jesus' most famous prayer, the Lords' Prayer, which was the previous episode in this series. So today, we are coming, in terms of the chapters anyway involved, we are kind of coming to the middle of the Sermon on the Mount. So, let's go to Matthew 6, starting at verse 19.

DARRELL DELANEY

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²²The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, Darrell, here is one of many places in the gospels where Jesus warns about the perils of loving money and possessions too much; and the first thing Jesus says is straight forward enough: One of the reasons not to set your heart on earthly treasures is they are vulnerable...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right

SCOTT HOEZEE

They can be destroyed. Now, when we think of our earthly treasures today, we think about banks and investment portfolios and property maybe and so forth...stocks, bonds...and those things are not usually imperiled by a moth or a rat. So, I think maybe we have some idea of what constituted wealth in Jesus' day

by virtue of the fact that they are vulnerable to moth and rat.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is interesting how Jesus makes the connection from treasure to heart in this passage, and he also knows that the propensity of the human heart is to store up material things; and so, he addresses those things, but I mean, the moths and the vermin and things of that nature you talked about, they are digital these days...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

But back then, they were much more tangible; and he wanted us to make sure that we understood where their appropriate place should be.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I mean, we do still have some possessions that a moth or a rat could ruin, but as you say, we are more familiar with the other things Jesus says: thieves...

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Robbery, right? And you just said digital. Today we know there is identity theft...

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

People go online to get your Social Security number; they get your credit cards, your bank routing numbers, and they steal from you that way; and of course, there is good, old-fashioned robbery, right? Your house gets broken into...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Somebody rips off something out of your car or out of your locker at school. Among the reasons the treasures of earth are vulnerable is they can be destroyed, you can lose them, they can be stolen from you. Now, it is important, Darrell, I think, that we point out at this point that when Jesus says don't set your heart on them, that is not to say you won't have anything in the first place, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Jesus recognizes that we do need food, we need to be able to provide for our children, we need to be able to give things away to help the poor and others; so, it is not as though we don't have money or possessions. The trick is, don't put your *heart* on them, Jesus says.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, what we found based on Jesus' teaching is not that your money goes away, but that it actually is a better servant than it is a master.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Jesus is saying you cannot have two masters. If you make God *and* money your master, you are either going to love one and despise the other or you are going to actually betray the other. So, let's do our best to make sure that money doesn't become our master—that all our time, our energy, our resources aren't going into how much money we are going to make, how much we are going to get...because if we get into that, that is how greed starts to set into our hearts.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And probably one way to try to check our hearts to make sure we haven't crossed that line into letting...as you just said, the servant...money...become our master...is something we come to a lot here on *Groundwork*, Darrell, and that is gratitude.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

If you are grateful to God for everything you have, that is one way to keep your perspective in plumb, right? It is one way to make sure: Hey, my real treasure is God in heaven, not my bank account, not my stocks in the stock market. I am grateful for what God has given, because God is number one in my life.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know what is beautiful about gratitude, Scott, is that gratitude has a long memory. It remembers what God has already done, and what God is currently providing...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, if it pays attention to that, that is actually an excellent way to store your treasure there...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Because if you thank God for what God is doing or has already done, it literally stops you wanting other things. It actually gives you what is contentment; and I think Paul, when he was writing in prison, he talked about the secret of being content in whatever the circumstance—good, bad, or indifferent—and he felt he could do all things through Christ because he found a way to be grateful for what God had been doing, preserving his life...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly.

DARRELL DELANEY

He has given us life, health, strength, food, clothes, shelter. He continues to be a providential Father, and we can thank him for that.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and before we leave these verses in this part of the program, one other thing: We dig into scripture, and sometimes it is a lot of fun to dig into scripture because you find something you didn't know before, and I found that to be true in these verses through something I learned from my colleague at Calvin Seminary, Mariano Avila, in a class he and I co-taught a few years ago, because in the middle of these verses in Matthew 6, verses 19 to 21 talk about treasures on earth; and then 24 talks about you cannot serve God and money; but then right in the middle there, in verses 22 and 23, Jesus seems to change the subject. Now, all of a sudden, he is talking about the "eye is the lamp of the body, and if your eye is healthy, then your body is full of light. If your eye is unhealthy, your body is full of darkness. It is like, what does that have to do with money? Well, it turns out, Professor Avila pointed out to me, it has a lot to do with money because in Jesus' day, what Jesus talks about if your eye is bad, he says: That is an evil eye. An evil eye, in Jesus' day, belonged to a greedy and stingy person, which is really, really interesting. In fact, it comes up later in Matthew 20, in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard; remember Darrell, the owner pays the one-hour workers the same wage as the twelve-hour workers...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And the twelve-hour workers get all, you know, unhappy and grumpy; and the master says: Hey, why are you giving me "the evil eye?"

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, yes!

SCOTT HOEZEE

What is it to you if I am generous with my money? So, it turns out, this eye is the lamp of the body stuff in Matthew 6, is still about greed.

DARRELL DELANEY

So then, actually, we need to ask God to give us a new eye or either pluck that one out, based on the teaching we get immediately after this section, when he talks about if your eye causes you to sin; and I believe that we can continue to allow God to help us in the way that we give our eye to people. Hopefully, that eye is full of light. But we are going to continue to dig deeply into this scripture for some more teaching from the Sermon on the Mount, so stay tuned for that.

Segment 2

SCOTT HOEZEE

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, we have a lot to cover in this next part, so let's get right into it, Darrell. We are right in the middle of Matthew 6, starting at verse 25.

DARRELL DELANEY

It says: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?"²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not

much more valuable than they? ²⁷Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? ²⁸And why do you worry about your clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³²For the pagans run after these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. ³⁴Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, these are, for a lot of us, pretty familiar words, and the bottom line is easy: Don't worry; food, drink, clothing, any other everyday concern you might name, Darrell, Jesus is saying it is in God's hands. Birds don't worry because God feeds them, and at my house, out in the country, I can tell you, God feeds them through me; and they are walking away with a lot of my money...those birds; but it is good to feed them. Flowers don't worry. God has decked them out with fashion better than anything in Paris or New York. So, seek first God's kingdom. That is the main thing.

DARRELL DELANEY

You know, I think in this passage where he talks about the things that are necessities: food, clothing, water...

SCOTT HOEZEE

They are not unimportant.

DARRELL DELANEY

They are important, but the essence of the problem is that we are worrying about them; and when you worry, it actually means you are not trusting in your providential Father, who takes care of these created things, and you are much more valuable than they. To not trust in God's ability to provide is the problem of worry, and that comes from fear; and I don't think this passage is saying: Don't worry; be happy...hakuna matata...it is not saying that, but it is saying that there is something more important to focus on, which is the kingdom of God, and how he does things and how he takes care of his children.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And what does it mean to seek the kingdom? Well, it is everything Jesus has been talking about so far in the Sermon on the Mount. It is leaning into the Beatitudes; it is seeing the deep application of the law and how God wants us to be changed in our hearts. It is praying to God on a regular basis, which we saw in the previous episode in this series. All of those are kingdom hallmarks, instead of running around and just worrying all the time and making yourself just sort of a blur of activity to feather your own nest when God says: Look, I've got your back. So, I think that is important. One thing we sometimes miss, though, is the rather surprising way this ends, because Jesus says each day has enough trouble of its own. Don't worry about tomorrow because each day has enough trouble of its own. I didn't expect Jesus to end this section that way.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, when we took preaching courses at Calvin Seminary, we would get marked down if we left the sermon hanging like this. Jesus is not a part of preaching classes, and the way he taught was the way he did it intentionally and impactfully; and he wanted them to know that you don't have enough bandwidth to worry about today's trouble and tomorrow's trouble, too. You actually only have bandwidth to worry about what is going on today; or not be worrying in general, as in not trusting God and his providence, but actually pay attention to and take notice of being fully present today; and not worry about what is going on in the next day. So, we need to make sure that we keep our bandwidth focused on what we have right in front of us.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But I might have expected Jesus to say: The reason you don't need to worry about tomorrow is because it will be just as great as today, right? I mean, you sort of expect Jesus to say: Look, you are sunk neck-deep in blessing today; I mean, don't worry about tomorrow...you are just so blessed. He doesn't say that. He says: You are sunk neck-deep in trouble already today, so don't worry about tomorrow. You know, God's got both. So, Jesus is being, I think, really realistic. Jesus is saying: Look, I know life isn't always easy. I am not telling you not to worry because your life is easy; I am telling you not to worry because I know your life isn't easy, but you have to trust me, and we have to work together. I think that is amazing, Darrell, because again, I would have half expected Jesus to say: You are so blessed, you know; why worry about tomorrow? Today is great, isn't it? Isn't today great? No; he says today is bad. He doesn't say it is evil, right?

DARRELL DELANEY

Right.

SCOTT HOEZEE

He uses the Greek word *kakia*, which means badness or something that is a little nettlesome. It is not *porneia*, which is world-class evil; but he is just saying: Look, sometimes life is tough. It is disappointing. I get it, but seek first the kingdom anyway.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I think it is beautiful that you call Jesus a realist, because he doesn't want us to look at the world with rose-colored glasses and just pretend nothing is happening. It is not a Pollyanna, pie-in-the-sky deal. Life is hard, and we need to learn how to walk with God in the mountain high and the valley low of our life...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly.

DARRELL DELANEY

We walk through the valley of the shadow of death, trusting in our providential Father, who saw us through yesterday, who is going to see us through today and tomorrow because he is the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. So, we get to trust him; even when we cannot trace him, we get to trust him when we don't even see that next provision coming. It is a way to follow him in faith.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Which is good news. The realism of Jesus admitting that each day has enough trouble of its own is beautiful, as you just said; and it is hopeful to me, because if I thought that the only time I could seek first the kingdom of God, as Jesus says we must...if I thought the only time I could do that is when every duck was in a row, when everything in my life was settled and smooth, there are not a lot of days, then, I would think I could seek first the kingdom, because I don't have too many days where all my ducks are in a row and I don't have any trouble or anything, you know, that is nettling me. Most days, as Jesus said...most days do have enough trouble of their own. That is okay. That doesn't mean Jesus isn't there; that doesn't mean the kingdom isn't seekable, right? For me, Darrell, his ending this section by saying each day has enough trouble of its own or sufficient onto the day is the evil thereof, as the old King James used to say, that is hopeful to me.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is beautiful because it gives us the opportunity to trust him in all circumstances; and we need to learn how to trust him in days when things are going great and in days when things are not going great, because seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness only means you need to go back through these teachings that Jesus is saying in the earlier parts of this chapter and put it into practice, because that is what God requires of us; and in just a moment, we are going to turn our words to Matthew 7 and wrap up the rest of the program, so stay tuned.

Segment 3

SCOTT HOEZEE

I am Scott Hoezee, along with Darrell Delaney, and you are listening to *Groundwork*. We have been spending some time here somewhere near the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, even though this is the second to the last program of our series. So, Jesus has been talking about, I think, Darrell, what we could call everyday concerns: money, property, food, drink, clothing—the stuff we need to live day to day; and God wants us to know he’s got it. Jesus is saying it is in God’s hands; so, let him take care of that and you seek first the kingdom—you live a kingdom life.

DARRELL DELANEY

If we live according to the way God calls us to live, then we need not worry about the things that he is going to provide. That is his department anyway...

SCOTT HOEZEE

Right.

DARRELL DELANEY

And we need to focus on our relationships and honoring and obeying him and doing what he commanded us to do; and so, when Jesus goes into this final chapter of the Sermon on the Mount, he is going to keep it early; he is going to continue to keep it practical; but then, these are things that actually cropped up in Jesus’ day.

So, it says here in Chapter 7:

“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. ³Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁶You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, here is a classic passage, and there is a vivid image here that we will get to in a second; but Darrell, one thing that a lot of us have experienced at one time or another in our lives is somebody lobbing Jesus’ words, “Do not judge,” at us, right? And we are not talking about, you know, being at a restaurant and you judge that the hamburger wasn’t very good. No; I mean, it is usually if you say something like: You know, Joe; I think the way you treated that other guy earlier today wasn’t very Christlike. Or, you know: George, every time you post something on Twitter, you come off as proud and arrogant. Or, you know: I know you like that preacher on TV, but I think his sermons are way out of bounds and they don’t contain any hope or grace, right? It is when you say stuff like that, that some of your friends might say: Hey, now; watch it there, Scott. Remember, Jesus said, “Do not judge.” I don’t think that is quite what Jesus meant.

DARRELL DELANEY

I think that statement is a catch-22 because you are judging me to tell me I am judging.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Oh, yes; right.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is kind of...it is really a circular argument, but I think that you are getting at something when we confront a person or when we try to speak the truth in love, then some people will not receive it well and consider it to be a judgment; and that is not what Jesus is getting at. I think that if we think about how our hearts are connected to what Jesus is teaching, then we need to think about is it an arrogant attitude, it is a proud attitude, or is it a self-righteous attitude, which we come out like: You’ve got to be like me; or you have to do it this way or else you are wrong. If we have that kind of attitude, I think this is what Jesus is getting at, because that same attitude will come back to us and not give us any mercy.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Measure for measure; if you go around in life making snap judgments on people, don't be surprised if they return the favor, right? That is just, you know...it is going to come back to bite you, too. And then, of course, Jesus says the famous hyperbole here; it is hilarious if you think of it literally: You've got a five-foot long 2x4 sticking out of your own eye. It is a problem in your life; and then you see a brother who has a speck of sawdust, and you are going to say: I am going to get that sawdust out of your eye. Jesus says: Wait a minute; you've got a 2x4 sticking out of your head. Take care of that first, and then you can help your brother. So, Jesus is getting at hypocrisy.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is like when you wear a mask and you pretend to be someone that you are not. He wants us to take all masks off when we come to him, and when we live a life representing him. We don't want whatever we try to create as righteousness to actually make us want to correct folks out of a wrong attitude and spirit. So then, it is literally the pot calling the kettle black, to use a cliché, if you say: I need to help you with that; but if you struggle with that same thing, maybe you are not the best person to help address that issue. You might want to have someone else do that; but you have to also have an ounce of humility. When you ignore the plank in your eye, you are not walking in humility in order to help someone else either.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; but the important point here...again, to get back to the, you know, those who say that, oh, Jesus says never judge...uh, uh, uh, uh. Notice Jesus says: If you *do* get the plank out of your own eye, *now* go to your sister or your brother and help them with their sawdust. He doesn't say once you get the plank out of your own eye, you are done. Then don't worry about the other people in your life with prob... No; he says once you have gotten rid of hypocrisy...once you have actually addressed the problem that you have...maybe even bigger than your sister had...now go help that person. So again, the whole point of this is not to say: never ever, ever judge; never ever take sawdust out of a sister's eye. No; do it cautiously, with humility; but do it. So, judge carefully, but do judge.

DARRELL DELANEY

Judge carefully, judge with humility, judge with understanding that we are all standing under the shadow of grace that is under the cross; and if we understand that we have been forgiven much, then we can love much in situations where it needs love. So, we really need to do a little bit of self-examination to *see* the plank in our eye; and sometimes we think someone is talking about a speck in our eye when they are actually helping us to see we have a plank.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Oh, yes.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, not only do we have to give, but we need to receive correction and reproof out of a spirit of love: They are trying to help me; they are not trying to attack me; they are not "hating on" me, but they actually are trying to encourage me and spur me on to good works. I should be able to receive as much as I can give.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and the issues involved might be the very things Jesus talked about that we looked at earlier in this program. If somebody seems to be serving money, if somebody seems to be hung up with greed, if somebody is *not* living out the Beatitudes, all of these things are worthy of conversation. So, how might we sum up the part of the Sermon on the Mount that we looked at today on *Groundwork*? Seek first the kingdom of God, right? Keep the kingdom and keep the kingdom's king first in our hearts always. Don't let money eclipse God; don't let greed eclipse God; don't let worry eclipse God. Make God all in all.

DARRELL DELANEY

And seeing that Jesus himself is the embodiment of this kingdom that we are seeking, he is the kingdom spokesperson. He is introducing us to the kingdom. He himself was the perfect balance between truth and grace, and the way he lived is the very kingdom of God that he is talking about. So, if we trust him and we follow him and we put into practice those things, then we will honor God in everything we do. Thanks be to God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, thank you for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We hope you will join us again next time as we study Jesus' final warnings that conclude his famous Sermon on the Mount. Connect with us now at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

DARRELL DELANEY

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