

Lent Day 8: Wednesday, March 1

Matthew 6:16-21

EXAMINE THE INTENTIONS OF YOUR HEART

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Think back to a time when you desperately wanted to fit in with the crowd. What would you have done at that moment to fit in? Maybe you wanted something from the same brand that everyone else had, maybe you tried to throw in a couple of jokes to be a part of the conversation, or maybe you agreed to add more work to your schedule to seem more cooperative and win those people over. Have you ever done things when you have tried to win people over this way, and it didn't ever seem to last very long before you found yourself feeling like you had to do it again?

Today's Scripture is Matthew 6:16-21, which is a passage that is a part of Jesus' *Sermon on the Mount*. In the first three verses (16-18) Jesus is telling the people that when they fast, they should not make it obvious that they are doing so. Instead, he wants the people to dress and act as they usually would, and not draw extra attention to themselves. In the second three verses (19-21), Jesus is telling the people to not store up treasures in this world that will pass away, but instead to store up treasures in heaven that will last an eternity.

In these verses, Jesus is calling the people there at the Sermon on the Mount, and he is calling us now, to be aware of the intentions of our hearts.

Firstly, Jesus is calling the people to be aware of their intentions as they fasted. Were they doing it to honor God, or to receive praise from others?

Secondly, Jesus calls the people to be aware of the treasures that they are storing in their hearts. Will those treasures fade and be destroyed, or will they be everlasting? How are these treasures affecting the desires of their hearts?

During this season of Lent, may we pause and examine the intentions of our own hearts and actions— leaving behind our own personal desires for the things that we want or for pleasing the crowd, in order that we might pursue God's desire for our lives and the treasures he has in store for us.

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the times when my heart has strayed from you and your will for me. Help me to make you the most important treasure of my heart and my life. In your name, Amen.