

# Jesus' Greatest Hits

## *The Incorruptible Treasure*

Part 12 – August 26, 2007

[VIDEO: NORTH SHORE SANDBLASTING]

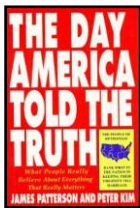
Rust is a huge problem. It slowly but surely corrodes and destroys. Whether it's an I-beam, a hinge, or your favorite pair of pliers, rust will rob them of their usefulness, their integrity, and their beauty. And the sad truth is: no matter what we do, from sandblasting and sealing, to priming and painting, eventually the rust *will* win.

In the parable of "The Incorruptible Treasure" Jesus warns us not to invest our lives in the things we can't hold onto.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters. 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 both God and Money. - *Matthew 6:19-24 NIV*



The Powerball lottery was \$300,000,000 last night! It's only \$200 million *after* taxes; but still, I could live on that. What would you do *with* \$200 million? What would you do *for* \$200 million?!



James Patterson and Peter Kim conducted extensive surveys for their book: *The Day America Told the Truth*. They examined what people would do for \$10,000,000: 25% would abandon their entire family ... forever. 23% would become prostitutes for a week or more. 10% would withhold testimony to free a murderer. 7% would take the life of a stranger!

I remember a *Twilight Zone* episode where a couple agonizes over pushing a button on a box that'll bring them riches but kill a stranger; someone they've never met. They end up activating it. A mysterious man brings them their money and takes the box. They ask him where the box will go next and he says, "To a stranger." And then he grins and says: "Someone who has never met *you*!"

Christian author Steve Farrar says our country is infected with a cultural disease he calls: "Affluenza". The symptoms include: The desire for more and more, no matter how much we have; a driving impulse for success, divorced from contentment; and the inability to accept less than the best of *everything*.

We all struggle with money. We work for it, budget it, worry about not having enough and daydream about having more. God isn't against earthly wealth. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon were very wealthy. In fact, God provides riches:

Wealth and honor come from you ... - 1 Chronicles 29:12 NIV

Two things will help us understand this passage. First, the term "store" means to "hoard", and then notice what follows:

Do not store (hoard) up **for yourselves** ... - Matthew 6:19 NIV

God isn't against saving responsibly, but hoarding selfishly. The question is: Do I own my possessions or do they own me?

Possessions weigh me down in life; I never feel quite free. I wonder if I own my things, or if my things own me. - Anonymous

Jesus doesn't want to *deprive* us of treasure, but to direct us toward the only type of wealth that brings true and lasting joy. Our investment strategy should be J.O.Y. (Jesus, others, you). It's good to have a savings account and a home and a retirement plan. But our first priority should be our post-retirement plan!

Q: You might have an I.R.A., but do you have an E.R.A. (*eternal* retirement account)?

Jesus uses three pictures to show money's temporary nature:

The moth  the rust  and the thief 

In Jesus' day, clothing was one of the main ways people could publicly display their wealth. Garments were loud and lavish and sometimes stitched with real gold strands.

And this is long before stainless steel and galvanized metal. And homes were made of mud-bricks, clay, and loose stones, so it was fairly easy for a thief to simply burrow through a wall.

Between the moth, the rust, and the thief, you have that which consumes, that which corrodes, and that which captures. Together they demonstrate the comprehensive foolishness of making earthly material accumulation the meaning of our lives.



A wealthy believer died and as Jesus walked him to his mansion the Lord pointed out impressive homes along the way. One belonged to his deceased chauffer (a godly man); another to his devout maid; another to his gardener. Finally, they come to this ramshackle shed and Jesus proudly says, "This is yours!" Indignant, he says, "This is all I get?!" Jesus says, "We did our best with what you sent ahead!"



I can send it ahead or leave it behind in a box. Ever been to an estate auction after a death? People picking through piles of junk, and pawing through stacks of stuff that made up someone’s life; and for a few dollars you can usually get a box that’s been stuffed with some jumbled assortment.

Jesus wants us to think outside of the box!



Do you know what’s changed since Jesus first spoke these words? We’ve invented moth balls, Rust-Oleum, and security systems!

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. - *Matthew 6:21 NIV*

Our possessions begin to possess us because we have to maintain ‘em, sustain ‘em, and protect ‘em. If you own a boat you know this all too well! The more I hoard, the more my attention, my energy, and my commitment is consumed, corrupted, and captured.

- God doesn’t need my money, but He demands my heart!

For where your treasure is, that’s what we’re going to be thinking about, focusing on, and concerning ourselves with. When you die, will you be *going* home or *leaving* home?

The eye is the lamp of the body. - *Matthew 6:22a NIV*

Jesus uses the eye as a metaphor for how we look at life.

If your eyes are good [i.e. healthy, generous], your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad [i.e. unhealthy, stingy], your whole body will be full of darkness. - *Matthew 6:22b-23 NIV*

The “**good**” eye views life as an investment opportunity for heaven. Because it’s focused on Christ, it brings in “light”. The “**bad**” eye is blinded to what life is truly all about and exchanges eternal riches for luxury, laziness, and excess.

This admonition isn’t about wealth, it’s about greed. You’ve heard of “pink eye;” this is “green eye”. And a person on welfare can suffer from it just as easily as the rich can.

So, how “good” so you think your eyes are? I think we need an eye exam! You give ...

**Proportionally:** The more you make the more you give because you see that the more you bless the more you’re blessed.

**Sacrificially:** You see that true sacrifice will often require a personal cost of the giver.

**Anonymously:** You don't see the need to call attention to your giving; and in fact, you enjoy blessing others secretly.

**Expectantly:** You see the truth: that you are giving what you cannot keep to gain what you cannot lose.

**Generously:** Your eyes are on the goal; it's not to raise our standard of living, but to raise our standard of *giving*.

**Cheerfully:** You enjoy seeing the *difference* your life can make.

**Regularly:** You see to it that first things are kept first.

**Faithfully:** You see obedience in giving as worship; and you give in order to communicate to God that money is not your master.

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. - *Matthew 6:24a NIV*

Attachment to money leads to a detachment from God. Material possessions will fight for supremacy in our lives. They're like a god: they promise security, freedom, and power. The word Jesus uses for "money" is a proper noun – a name. He *personifies* it. That's why the NIV capitalizes the letter "M".

You cannot serve both God and Money. - *Matthew 6:24b NIV*



It's impossible to be a part-time disciple.

We can trust or we can rust!

It's all about keeping my money in the lower case!

Every act of worship; every expression of charity; every time we choose love over hate, kindness over rudeness, honesty over lying, purity over immorality, we're investing in true treasure.

Let's see how well you've been listening; answer *true* or *false* when I ask the questions. In this passage, we've learned that:

1. God wants to raise our standard of giving.
2. More and more stuff brings more and more happiness.
3. We don't have to be wealthy in order to be materialistic.
4. Expenses will always expand to fill the income.