

**Title: Which Master?****[Slide 1]****Text: Matthew 6:19-24****Which Treasure?****Lot's Choice:**

Two men stood side by side on a hilltop in the land of Canaan. The younger of the two, a man named Lot, had come to live with his uncle Abram. Over the years Lot had become rich like his uncle – raising sheep and goats on the hillsides of a land that God said would one day belong to Abram.

Now, both men had been so richly blessed that they had to part company: the land could no longer support their herds and flocks. Abram took the lead, saying:

**[Slide 2]***Genesis 13:8-9 NIV*

*"Let's not have any quarreling between you and me, or between your herders and mine, for we are close relatives. Is not the whole land before you? Let's part company. If you go to the left, I'll go to the right; if you go to right, I'll go to the left."*

Lot looked at the semi-barren hills around him, then down into the lush plain surrounding the Jordan River. He could see a landscape that was "well-watered, like the garden of the LORD, like the land of Egypt." (Gen. 13:10). He chose the "whole plain of the Jordan."

Let the old man carry on with his delusions of inheriting these dusty hills. Lot would go for the good life.

So it was that:

### **[Slide 3]**

*Genesis 13:12-13 NIV*

*Abram lived in the land of Canaan, while Lot lived among the cities of the plain and pitched his tents near Sodom. Now the people of Sodom were wicked and were sinning greatly against the LORD.*

### **The destruction of Sodom:**

This past November scientists announced that they had discovered evidence of a massive explosion that had happened 3700 years ago in the plain of the Jordan. A meteor had crashed into the earth's atmosphere and exploded some 3000 feet above the plain, releasing 10 times the energy of the atomic bomb that leveled Hiroshima.

Archaeologists excavating what they believe to have been ancient Sodom found pottery that had been turned into glass on one side – the side facing the exploding meteor. For a brief instant, the temperature had rivaled that of the surface of the sun. The explosion leveled the city and surrounding towns. It brought tidal waves of Dead Sea water that poisoned the valley for the next 700 years.

Here was scientific confirmation of the Bible's story of the destruction of Sodom and the other cities of the plain of the Jordan. Poor Lot found himself caught in the middle of the disaster. God's messengers managed to convince him and his daughters to leave the city just before the city was destroyed. He escaped with the clothes on his back. Everything he had brought with him to Sodom was gone. Everything he had acquired while living there was gone. So much for the riches of this world.

### **Which treasure?**

Jesus gives us a stern warning about the choices we make when it comes to our treasure:

**[Slide 4]**

*Matthew 6:19-21 NIV*

*"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, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*

Like Lot, we are faced with a choice: what will we treasure most? Will we decide to value most God's promises to us? Or will we choose to acquire earthly treasures as the highest good?

Jesus reminds us that like Lot's treasures, the treasures of this world do not last. Moths and vermin destroy them. Thieves cart them away. A recession can crater your retirement savings. Or you may simply never live to spend what you tried so hard to acquire!

You make the choice. Whatever your desire the most in your heart is what you will go after.

**Which Attitude?****Behind every choice...**

Behind every choice we make is an attitude. Our choice reflects what's going on deep inside. It reveals us for who we really are.

Jesus goes on to say:

**[Slide 5]**

*Matthew 6:22-23 NIV*

*"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are generous, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are greedy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"*

People in the ancient Near East had an expression for a greedy person. They said that such a person had an "evil eye." The eye stood for how we can covet something that isn't ours. We see it; we want it.

### **Abram and Lot:**

When Lot looked down on the well-watered plain of the Jordan Valley, you can almost see the glint in this eye. "Can Abram really be so dumb as to let me choose first? Well, that's his problem. I'm going to look after #1. I'm going for the place where the money is."

Abram, on the other hand, while older and entitled to have his way, chose to show generosity to his nephew. Why? Because he trusted that God had a bigger plan! God had promised to take care of him and make him the heir of the entire land.

### **Which Attitude?**

I grew up in a home where every slice of meat was carefully assigned to us. Dad cut the roast at Sunday dinner. The boys got two pieces of meat. The girls got one. I remember one Sunday afternoon when we had a young man at the table who was interviewing to be the youth pastor. When he finished his first helping of roast beef, he happily picked up the carving knife and cut himself some more. The rest of us watched in horror, not sure whether dad would explode or the ceiling would fall down. The very fiber of the universe had been violated!

Here was a young man who had not been raised to be stingy with food. We didn't even have a category for him. He might as well have been from Mars. And he didn't get the job, needless to say.

It took me a long time to shed an attitude of stinginess over food. It had become a deeply ingrained attitude – one that made me dark inside when I could have been filled with the generous light of the Father in Heaven!

Attitude determines how we choose!

### **Which Master?**

#### **Who is going to run the show?**

Choices matter when it comes to treasure. Attitudes determine the choices we make. And the choices we make determine whom we will serve.

Jesus says:

**[Slide 6]**

*Matthew 6:24 NIV*

*"No 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."*

Did you ever try to work for two bosses at the same time? It's impossible. You will always have to choose which one is most important. That's what Jesus says here about the choices we make over our treasure.

We must choose who will be Lord in our lives. Will it be the God who created us and loves us? Or will it be Money? With God you will never be without. With Money you will never have enough. One or the other will run the show.

**Which Master?**

Jesus has shown us 3 treasures – three things that bring God's richest rewards in our lives. All three run against the current of our world. Giving instead of getting? Secret prayer instead of a big show? Fasting instead of feasting? And all are to be done in such a way that no one but God knows what we're up to. Live this way, and you will find yourself serving God as your Master.

Abram chose this Master. When he did, God said to him:

**[Slide 7]**

*Genesis 13:14-17 NIV*

*"Look around from where you are, to the north and south, to the east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever. I will make your offspring like the dust of the earth, so that if anyone could count the dust, then your offspring could be counted. Go, walk through the length and breadth of the land, for I am giving it to you."*

God didn't just give him a tent site in a lush valley. He gave him the whole land. He didn't give him a flush bank account. He gave him offspring that could never be counted. Then he told him to take walk through the length and breadth of the land – it was all his.

You can't out-give God! Choose to make Him your Master and your treasure will never run out.

It's your choice!