

CHAPEL, February 1, 1934

-- President Wright

Scripture Lesson: Matthew VI, verses 14-21

I want you to notice the interpretation that is placed on this "Lord's Prayer" we repeat each morning. It goes to the heart and spirit of the individual. This is the greatest prayer recorded. A few years ago at an international conference on religion it was the one prayer that all nationalities could repeat together; Christians and all other religious organizations stood and repeated it together. It has universal importance and universal satisfaction, because of the spirit that is in it. We ask for forgiveness as we forgive others. If we do not forgive them we are asking that we be not forgiven. It is the spirit in the individual that counts.

Then Matthew takes up some other things current in his day. When you fast, he says, do not be like certain people, of sad countenance, disfiguring your face, in order that you may appear to other people to be fasting. Verily, I say unto you, those hypocrites have their reward. They are seen of men and that is the reward they want. Matthew tells these people to go on in the usual way when they fast, fast not for people to see them, and "your Father in Heaven who knows the secrets of our hearts and souls will give you your reward."

Then comes one of the strongest passages of scripture in the whole sermon on the Mount: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal." This does not mean that one must not accumulate a reasonable amount of goods so he can live as he should; it means one must not make that his object, his purpose in life. "But lay up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." The thing that dominates your life, actuates your human activity comes around the treasure in your life. "Oh, if I had my life to live over again"

we so often hear. It probably would not be so different if we were permitted to live it over, but if we changed the great motive power in our souls it would be entirely different; we would do many things differently if we changed our god. If we make riches our god then we will serve mammon, only. If we make the high motives and impulses of Jehovah our motive power then we are laying up treasures in Heaven. If the nations of the world could only see and realize that the motive power back of what they are doing determines their safety or danger how differently they would act. If the state could weigh values it would find that money invested in right-minded citizens, money invested in the youth of the state, enabling young people to make the highest possible type of citizens with the highest motives possible, would ultimately be worth more to the state of North Carolina than the building of hard surface roads. In the midst of all this depression when we have had this hue and cry of not being able to support the schools properly, of not being able to make sufficient appropriations to institutions of higher learning, we have been annually laying down slabs of concrete and improving highways. Our treasure has been material instead of spiritual values that are eternal. We must get back to the things that are really and truly worthwhile. Hard surface roads are all right. Everybody who has a car is glad to have them. They are a great help, but if we neglect the spiritual side of life and spiritual values we will raise up a generation of boys and girls of low standards who will tear up the highways and tear down the government, who will destroy what we have built. If we fail to build roads and things temporal for a generation, but build good citizens, then the youth of today, when they become the old people of tomorrow will rebuild our roads, will rebuild the temporal things, and will make a better state. We haven't weighed values, because as people our treasures have been things temporal instead of spiritual. It pays to live right. It pays in dollars and cents. Probably you do not see it today but in the long run it pays. But if the motive is to live right because it pays you will not reap the reward. But if we live right because we want to, all these things temporal will be added unto us.