

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

October 16, 2022 "The great search. How can I find _____? What does a great search look like?"

I Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work through from the message Sunday. Whether you were able to participate in this service or not, this devotion is free-standing, and you can use it to help you dig deeper into your own spiritual walk. Fall is here and we have several things planned to the end of the year. Our children's program is growing and we're still tweaking ways to love on them well. We also have many ways you can plug into life at NCC. You can find all that through our brand new website, upgraded app, and social media sites. We're so encouraged by your love and presence when you gather with us. A great group of familiar and new faces join us each Sunday. If you're joining us online, we appreciate your presence also. We are 100% committed to our virtual attenders. We are your church family, and if there is anything you need, prayer, ideas or suggestions, please pass them our way. We know the future is still uncertain, but we are committed to making our virtual congregation as central to NCC as our in person group.

II Recap.

This will be an odd recap. Because Kal was out of town the first two Sundays in October, we had two different preachers, and no devotional. Angela brought her own message on Oct. 2nd on serving well, and then Kristen talked about the search for peace last week. A huge thanks to each of them for just crushing it...as always.

III Sunday.

After Kristen gave us a great thing to search for and how that search could look, we backed up and examined what a great search looks like. Before we jump into scripture, we'll ask a few questions and then we'll dig into the passage we hit Sunday.

Think about a time you had to really search for something important ...what did it take?

What did you have to know, understand, to help you in this search?

What did you have to sacrifice or give up for this search?

Our passage was two little stories about seeking in a larger collection of parables that Matthew gathered together to show us what Jesus was doing, and how we could join in. Read **Matthew 13:44-46**, we'll answer some questions, and give some useful helps to what a great search looks like.

What jumped out to you from this passage?

Were there any specifics about 'searching' that you pulled from this passage?

What do you believe a great search requires from us?

What does good searching require? Specifics from this passage.

1. Good searching requires actually knowing what you want and searching for it.

Searching implies treasure, something of value. This is the act of PREDECIDING. I have done a cost/benefit analysis, weighed the pros and cons, and because I have chosen a specific life that matters to me, when I come across better I will know. **This is the life of intentionality, letting your values and desires that preset how you will move through the world.** Because I want my life to look like this, to live this way, then all my choices, behavior, lifestyle will align, be measured by this

FIRST CHOICE to pre-decide. You know something of great value is out there, something that matters, and will get you to where you want to go and who you want to be. You build into your walking around life, this lens to see the world. Which leads us to the process of knowing what we want and need, and are looking for before we begin looking for it. There is a certain amount of intentionality to your life. You know there is something greater, better, more meaningful out there. And sometimes it's just eliminating lesser things that may not be that thing. When the person found the exquisite pearl, he had already positioned himself to be able to acquire it BEFORE he found it.

2. Good searching requires being aware all the time.

This is the action of mindfulness. Paying attention. It seems this first person just found the treasure in his normal everyday life. Also means that so many other people walked by this treasure and just missed it. Treasure is out there. You have to want to find it. Means there still is this inner awareness that good things are everywhere. Even if we don't have something specific in mind, we are always alert to see them when we come across them. That means AFTER pre-deciding what you want, you live in a state of awareness. So, even if you don't know how that thing you're looking for could happen, you'll know it when you see it. Pre-deciding what you want out of life, being shaped by scripture, prayer, and community will help define what you need. And if you are aware, mindful, paying attention as much as you are able, you most likely will run across it in your regular life.

3. Good searching requires us to be willing to make sacrifices to gain what we're looking for.

When we go on a search we have to ask some centering, focusing, questions. Is what I'm searching for something that really matters? If it does really matter, then what am I willing to sacrifice, give up, in order to get it? The more important, valuable, necessary, and 'more' something is, the more we're willing to give up, sacrifice, in order to obtain this thing. But it also means you have to prioritize in your life, determining what is really important, and what only 'feels' important. This is about wants and needs. What do you have now that can be used, leveraged, to help you gain what is more important? What do you have to give to find? Which also requires some head of time work.

IV Challenge.

Why do we do this? Because these stories are really about God's pursuit, hunt, searching for us. We are the treasure in the field. We are the exquisite pearl. God has always placed ultimate value on us. We matter. God knows us inside and out, and knows what we need to be found by him. And God was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for us, let go of the lesser. So, we do this, because we follow a God who did this.

LIST OF ACTIONS.

- 1. PREDECIDE what you want your life to look like. How you want to live.**
- 2. Grow and nurture your ability to be molded, mindful, and pay attention.**
- 3. Live so openly that when you find valuable things, you can let go of the unimportant to gain the more important.**

Because God is always aware and focused on us. God knows what he wants for us. And was more than willing, eager, to make a great sacrifice to purchase us. This is why we go on a great search. Because it's a great search in which we were found.