



gracefellowship

Series: The Kingdom of God
Date: May 14, 2023
13:44-52

Title: The Value of the Kingdom
Passage: Matthew

Scripture: Philippians 3:4b-11

The passage that was just read for us is so powerful and profound for what we are talking about today because it highlights the main idea we are going to be talking about: a relationship with Jesus that places us in His Kingdom is of greater worth than anything else we can imagine. Paul talked about how everything he thought had value in his life before meeting Jesus was actually just garbage. But that's a clean version of what Paul said; Paul believed that all the accolades from his past that he once valued so highly were dung compared to knowing Jesus and being in His Kingdom.

Compared to knowing Christ, Paul said everything else lost value to him! How about you? Is Jesus and His Kingdom that valuable to you? Over the course of this series we have been talking about the Kingdom of God because Jesus found that to be a major topic to cover after His resurrection. If we are citizens of God's Kingdom we need to know how to live under His rule and reign.

Here's why that is important:

People are going to end up thinking most of what they think about Christ because of what they think about Christians. So it matters who and what a Christian is and how a Christian lives.

Do you represent the Kingdom well? More importantly, do you represent the King of the Kingdom well?

- The first week of the series we talked about the Kingdom of God being anywhere the rule and reign of God touches. Jesus came to bring the culture of His Kingdom to earth long before he would bring His physical Kingdom and dwelling place to earth.
- Then we said that God is a patient King who rules over His Kingdom seeking to include as many people as He can into His Kingdom. God

- gives chance after chance for people to receive Him and will only deny us entrance into the Kingdom if we reject His Son.
- Next Kyle taught about the Kingdom as a family movement and highlighted our place in God's Kingdom, not as servants, but as sons and daughters; heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.
 - Last week we talked about how the Kingdom advances and grows around the world and is the only Kingdom that will endure forever. Nothing can stop the forward movement of God's eternal Kingdom!

Today we are going to focus on another set of parables Jesus taught and we are going to see the value of the Kingdom of God.

There are a lot of things we put value on and yet so many of those things don't really matter all that much. Several weeks ago our Life Group was doing a study called "The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry," based on a book and video series by John Mark Comer. One of the sessions focused on eliminating material possessions so we could live with simplicity. As our group talked here's something we found: the average home in America has 300,000 items inside! But when we asked people in our group if their house was on fire and they could save anything, what would it be, the number one answer was wedding photos and pictures of kids! No one was trying to bring their bed or night stand; a couch was not going to be saved; no one cared about their giant TV. The things we think we value, when we are really pressed on the idea, aren't that important.

Which leads to this question: **What value does the Kingdom of God hold in your life?**

In Matthew 13 Jesus uses parables to describe the Kingdom of God and what it's like. Let's look at verses 44-46.

:: Matthew 13:44-46

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Jesus basically says the same thing twice- but with some subtle differences.

It's a big deal to belong in God's Kingdom! But not everyone will be there, as we will see in the next set of verses. The Kingdom of God is not like earthly kingdoms. If you could see His Kingdom, you would sale everything joyfully to obtain it!

The Hidden Treasure

In the first parable Jesus said a man found a treasure hidden in a field. He just stumbled upon it.

While in the second parable Jesus said a merchant was looking for fine pearls. His search led him to a great discovery.

When they found this treasure they recognized it's value and sold all they had to get it.

This week I read an article from 2013 that said this:

In February 2013, a northern California couple were walking their dog in their backyard. While casually walking around they spotted something in the moss under the shadow of an old tree. A closer inspection revealed it to be the edge of a rusty can.

After digging it out, they found a hoard of 1,427 gold coins adding up to \$31,000. There were six cans in total, containing coins in \$5, \$10, and \$20 US denominations. All the coins were dated from 1847-94.

According to experts, most of the coins found in the can were in uncirculated, mint condition. Some of them were so rare that they fetched more than a million dollars apiece. The net worth of the coins are estimated to be around \$11 million.

The couple in this story weren't treasure hunters, they just stumbled upon a fortune! But when they found the cans with old coins inside they didn't set them aside and say, "Well, that's probably worthless." They had the coins inspected and discovered they were holding an incredible treasure! They stumbled upon it, but it made them rich!

I think in the context of what Jesus is talking about here, He is saying, some people are going to find the Kingdom of God, not because they were looking for it, but because it fell in their lap. Maybe a friend tells them about Jesus, or they pick up a Bible in a hotel room, or they get invited to a cookout, not knowing it's a gathering for a Life Group, and they meet a bunch of people who love Jesus and they are won over by the love and grace they experience. These people weren't intentionally seeking a relationship with Jesus, but they found Him and it changed their lives! When they find Jesus it becomes very apparent how great a discovery this is and they leave everything behind to follow Him.

I love what Jesus says in connection with this parable. When the man finds the treasure buried in the field, he hid it again and then in his Joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

Selling everything he had to buy the field wasn't sad for him because he knew what he was getting in return! It's a happy trade-off!

In the world Jesus was living in this parable made a lot of sense. Israel had been a nation under siege many times in the centuries before Jesus. It wasn't uncommon to learn that a military power was coming against you and to have

people go out and bury their treasures in the ground or in caves, hiding it from the invaders. In later years if a treasure was discovered again you had to share the wealth with the person who owned the land. That's why Jesus said this man went out, sold everything he had and bought the land.

- On the front end that might have looked crazy to his friends and family members. Here's one thing I learned from my time in Israel...it's a giant rock! The ground is incredibly rocky! Buying a field comes with a lot of hard work to make it a place you can live or farm or raise animals.
- But this guy knows something no one else knows- he knows there is a hidden treasure that will make selling all he has totally worth it to get this seemingly worthless field!

The Pearl

Then we turn to the second part of this parable and find another scenario. In this story there is a merchant who is looking for fine pearls. This guy's job is to search intently for things of worth. When he finds a pearl of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Again, as we think about what Jesus is communicating when it comes to His Kingdom, I think He is saying there are some people who are intentional about looking for truth and finally find it in Jesus. We hear stories all the time about people who say they tried all kinds of different religions looking for the purpose and meaning of life and finally hear about Jesus and come to believe that He is the one source of life and hope that changes their lives.

But in their search and discovery it often costs them greatly to accept Christ and come into His Kingdom. Some people lose relationships; some people lose jobs; some people lose their lives.

When I read these two parables that Jesus teaches here's the big thing I take away:

Being in God's Kingdom has immeasurable value! We should do whatever it takes to be part of this Kingdom.

No matter what it costs you to embrace the rule and reign of Jesus in your life, it's worth it! But the reality is, not everyone will see the value of being in God's Kingdom. The kingdom of this world and our own personal kingdoms have incredible pull over our lives.

Two Kingdoms:

The Kingdom of the World

Self-centered/Individualistic

Caters to comfort

Hold tight to Personal rights

Jesus is an advisor

God's Word is optional

The Kingdom of God

Christ-centered/Family focused

Invites us to suffer for Christ

Lay down my rights

Jesus is King

God's Word is essential

Jesus tells one more parable in connection with this teaching in verses 47-52.

:: Matthew 13:47-50

47 "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish.

48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away.

49 This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous

50 and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

I'll admit this is hard. None of us like to think about this or talk about this, but Jesus is clear: some people will embrace the Kingdom of God and will enjoy it forever, while some people will reject the Kingdom of God and will be separated from it forever. Right now we are all swimming in the same pond, but a day of separation is coming. God, in His sovereignty, will hold a day of judgment and He will divide between those who are part of His Kingdom because they have embraced Jesus as their Savior and those who are not part of His Kingdom because they have rejected Jesus and have resisted the reign of God in their lives.

This is why it's so vital for us to live as citizens who represent God and His Kingdom well. We are the Jesus the world sees. We share our faith with people in hopes that the Spirit of God will draw them into His Kingdom as they embrace Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

I'll end with this story today and then we are going to sing one more song together.

If you think back to Easter this year we had a prayer service on Saturday and someone on our Creative Team had suggested that the night before at our Maundy Thursday service we should have people right down the names of lost friends and family members so that we could pray for them on Saturday. Saturday afternoon and evening this stage was covered with names of people

and many of you prayed over those names that day. The week after Easter I got a text message from Lisa Smith. Lisa lost her husband Tom to cancer earlier this year and her family was here for the funeral. On April 18th Lisa wrote this:

“Hey, Pastor Joel, I wanted to share some huge praise information. Right after my sister-in-law was here visiting I really felt led to write her a letter and ask her about eternity. I know Tom was concerned about her salvation and her husband. Well, long story short, I just heard from her and she got my letter and both she and her husband prayed to receive Christ! Two names that were on the alter Saturday! I just wanted to share my joy!”

God is still moving people out of the Kingdom of darkness and into the Kingdom of light! This morning you may be asking yourself which kingdom you are in. If you can't answer with 100% certainty that you belong to Jesus and are firmly planted in His Kingdom I want to encourage you to settle that today once and for all! God has made the way into His Kingdom possible through His Son Jesus. Will you surrender to Him today? No matter what it costs you, it will be worth it! That doesn't mean everything is going to be easy and your life is going to be a dream moving forward. It just means that you will have citizenship in the Kingdom of the eternal God who will one day wipe away every tear and right every wrong. On that day you will find eternal joy and happiness that will never be taken away as you rule and reign with Jesus forever.

- Response
- Pray