

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 13:44-46 | The Treasure Hunt
Sunday April 21, 2024

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 13.
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My notes are also in the foyer if you want to follow along.

REVIEW:

We are studying Matthew's Gospel verse by verse—and in chapter 13, we find ourselves learning about "Kingdom" based parables.

Parable: *a simple story that illustrates a profound spiritual truth.*

The parables that Jesus teaches in this chapter are special and unique because they teach us about God's Kingdom on the Earth—today—right here and right now.

Lord's Prayer—*Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.* (Matt. 6:10)

Last Sunday, Jesus taught us that the Kingdom of Heaven is like that of a mustard seed.

A mustard seed is very tiny (the size of a piece of salt), yet over time, a mustard tree can grow up to ten to fifteen feet tall.

Jesus also said that His Kingdom is like yeast growing on the inside of bread.

Now, when I think about God's Kingdom, I don't think about mustard seeds or yeast.

And that's the beauty of studying God's Word—because God's ways are unlike ours.

The prophet Isaiah says that God's thoughts *are not our thoughts—nor are His ways like our ways.* (Is. 55:8).

So, spiritually speaking...the profound spiritual truth from last week was...

LW KEYPOINT:

The mustard seed illustrates the outward physical expansion of God's Kingdom, while, simultaneously, the leaven represents the inward expansion of evil.

And we discussed how these two parables are a paradox.

A paradox is something that *seems* contradictory yet remains true.

Lastly, I gave five reasons how the parables of the mustard seed and leaven/yeast impact your life today:

1. Don't be discouraged by small beginnings.
2. God deliberately lets us misunderstand Him!
3. The Christian life involves getting out of your comfort zone.
4. God isn't looking for perfect faith, but rather tiny faith in a perfect God!
5. God has a plan, and it's our job to join Him with His plan.

That's all review

INTRODUCTION:

The following two parables in our study of Matthew's Gospel today only occur only in Matthew.

The other Gospels don't include them.

That's an important point right from the start.

Remember that Matthew is writing to Jewish Christians (audience), and his theme in writing this Gospel is that Jesus is King.

Today, we're studying the *Parable of the Hidden Treasure* and the *Parable of the Priceless Pearl*.

Today is like a treasure hunt.

However, the big question becomes—what is the treasure?

Do you truly know what it is?

And do you care about someone else's treasure?

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 13:44—'The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.'

Matthew 13:45— "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.

Matthew 13:46— When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it.

These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.

PRAY:

I rejoice over your promise like one who finds vast treasure. (Psalm 119:162)

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 13:44—'The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.'

As Jesus did in the other parables, He builds this simple story around a familiar experience for those listening.

For us to understand this parable, we have to have some context—because we usually don't bury our money in the backyard.

Now, those in the first century did, ^{because} and at that time the National Bank of Israel did not exist.

We do read about the money changers in the Temple. (John 2:14-15, Matthew 21:12).

These were not actual bankers but exchanged different forms of currency.

They would also loan money at interest.

Regardless, there were no formal banks as we know them today.

Think about it—no checking, savings, debit or credit cards, safe deposit boxes, 401(k) or IRA's.

So, how did people keep their money safe?

Most people kept their savings and treasures in a secret spot buried in the ground.

When they needed money they would go to that buried place at night, dig up the secret box or jar, take what they needed and reburied the rest.

That is the scenario Jesus is referencing in this parable.

Matthew 13:44(a)—"The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure.

2 things:

- ① God's Kingdom is God's administration through the Lord Jesus Christ today and forever.

Today = spiritual hearts

Soon = literal physical Kingdom

② **Question:** What's the treasure?

Is it money? Gold, silver, land?

Those earthy and worldly things are way too shallow for a Kingdom-centered parable.

The book of Proverbs makes that clear.

Is the treasure Jesus?

Wait, how can Jesus (the best-known Person in history) be hidden?

Also, how can a sinner "find" Jesus?

In both the Old and New Testaments, Scripture reveals that no one "finds" God—*there is no one who seeks God*. (Psalm 14:1-3, Romans 3:11-12).

+ **Matthew 13:44(b)**—"The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field."

Question: What's the field? Is it a literal field or does it represent something greater?


+ **Matthew 13:44(c)**—"The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied."

Question: Who's the man? Who is our main character?

Does this man represent you and me?

If it does, then this parable is super easy to understand (and this will be a very short sermon).

Let's reread it with a focus on us as the main characters.

 **Matthew 13:44**—'The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.'

If the man represents you and me—the point of the parable is simple—

The treasure in the field is Jesus.

We are the man.

Like the man who found the treasure, when we discover Jesus, we should forsake everything to follow Him.

Does that sound Biblical to you? Does that sound theologically correct regarding the Kingdom of Heaven?

Let me say this way—

That somehow we're not even looking for God—we're just stumbling through life and the Gospel trips us up and somehow we're to buy the Gospel with all our money.

Does that sound like the Kingdom of Heaven to you?

Remember the definition of a parable.

 **Parable:** *a simple story that illustrates a profound spiritual truth.*

Is selling all we have to obtain something greater—

Is that truly a profound spiritual truth—even if "the something greater" is the Gospel?

Kinda sorta...yes and no.

Another question: Is it accurate to suggest that someone can buy the Gospel/ salvation (even in a parable?) ^(us)

There's a powerful story in Acts 8, where Simon the Magician offers to buy the Gospel/Holy Spirit from the Apostles.

Acts 8:18— When Simon ^{—not Simon Peter} (the Magician) saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money,

Acts 8:19— saying, "Give me this power also so that anyone I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit."

Acts 8:20— But Peter told him, "May your silver be destroyed with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"

Acts 8:21— You have no part or share in this matter, because your heart is not right before God.

Acts 8:22— Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, your heart's intent may be forgiven.

So, that's one of many examples of how Heaven is not for sale.

In the OT, we see prophets refusing money and gifts for any service rendered from God.

- Elisha refused money from Naaman after he healed him of leprosy. (2 Kings 5:16).
- Daniel refused money and gifts from King Belshazzar after Daniel interpreted the handwriting on the wall. (Daniel 5:17)

So, no, Heaven is not for sale. Of course not!

*It's dangerous to even suggest such a thing in a parable.
Even if the selling everything allows to picking up your cross.*

If the treasure is not Jesus—if you and I are not the man in the parable—then what's going on?

Let's look at this with fresh eyes this morning.

Matthew 13:44—'The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.

What's the treasure?

Old Testament symbolism helps us in our interpretation.

God speaks to the nation of Israel through Moses and says...

Exodus 19:5 LSB—'So now then, if you will indeed listen to My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

The Psalmist agrees...

Psalm 135:4—For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself, Israel as his treasured possession.

KEYPOINT 1:

The treasure is the nation (people) of Israel.

Matthew 13:44—'The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field.

The nation of Israel was placed in the world (aka field) to bring glory to God through evangelism, but Israel failed.

Israel became a nation hidden— Its treasure was not invested/stewarded well by its leaders.

Keypoint 2: Israel buried its evangelism

Rather than engaging other nations, they separated themselves.

Matthew 13:44—*The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied.*

So if you and I are not the man? Who is?
Who's the main character?

Once again, if the man represents you and me—let me close in a word of prayer.

But, what if this parable is not about us?

What if the man— is the Son of Man?

What if Jesus is still talking about Himself?

The parable directly before this one— is the *Parable of the Weeds*—where Jesus identifies Himself as the man.

That changes everything—and yet, it's also starting to make a lot more Biblical sense.

First, it means that Jesus finds the treasure, which is Israel—who has been hiding. *its evangelism.*

We see an example of this with Jesus and a Jew who has completely turned his back on His God and nation.

This Jew is not only a tax collector but a chief tax collector.

Luke 19:1—*He (Jesus) entered Jericho and was passing through.*

Luke 19:2—*There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.*

Luke 19:3— He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able, because of the crowd, since he was a short man.

Luke 19:4— So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus, since he was about to pass that way.

Luke 19:5— When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is necessary for me to stay at your house."

Luke 19:6— So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully.

Luke 19:7— All who saw it began to complain, "He's gone to stay with a sinful man."

Luke 19:8— But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord. And if I have extorted anything from anyone, I'll pay back four times as much."

Luke 19:9— "Today salvation has come to this house," Jesus told him, "because he too is a son of Abraham."

Luke 19:10— For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

Zacchaeus was lost—he didn't know who he was.

He hid his identity as Jew under the guise of worldly titles and treasures.

Jesus came to earth as a man to find him—and looked what happened—Zach's heart was changed and his worldly lusts and treasures now mean nothing.

He gives them away!

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KEYPOINT 2:

God's people are God's treasure.

Matthew 13:44—"The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure, buried in a field, that a man found and reburied. Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field."

So, with fresh eyes on this parable this morning—

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KEYPOINT 3:

What if it is Jesus who gives up everything He owns (His life) to purchase (redeem) this world (field) and reclaim us as His treasured possession?

Is that what the Kingdom of Heaven is like?

It seems that these parables build upon one another.

In the first parable, Jesus taught about the four soils.

But *the profound spiritual truth* is that those soils represent human hearts.

In the second parable, Jesus taught us about wheat and weeds.

But *the profound spiritual truth* is that the wheat is Believers, and the weeds are unbelievers, living side by side until the harvest.

In the third and fourth parables, Jesus taught about the mustard seed and the yeast.

But *the profound spiritual truth* is that while the church starts off tiny and grows slowly, it does grow into a massive fellowship.

Still, at the same time, there is evil and sin within the Body itself.

And now, with the fifth and sixth parables, it seems that Jesus is demonstrating that He Himself will do something about the evil and sin that disrupts and demoralizes His treasured possession.

Today, we are so used to hearing the Gospel presented this way—Jesus died in our place to pay for our sins.

It's called penal substitution—Christ died a substitutionary death on our behalf and has paid our moral sin debt to the Father.

And because Jesus, as God, paid man's sin debt, God's righteous wrath has been satisfied.

Because of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we as sinners have been redeemed and have peace with God and eternity in Heaven.

That's the Gospel, and it's absolutely and positively true.

However, before the Protestant Reformation, the church explained the Gospel differently.

Before:

- Sola scriptura: "Scripture alone"
- Sola fide: "faith alone"
- Sola gratia: "grace alone"
- Solo Christo: "Christ alone"
- Soli Deo Gloria: "To the glory of God alone."

Before the beautiful anthem of the Protestant Reformation, there was— *Christus Victor*.

Christus Victor is Latin for "*Christ is the conqueror,*"

In other words, the Gospel used to be presented as—

Christ is first and foremost victorious:

Jesus conquered sin, conquered death, and conquered the devil.

How did Jesus do all of that?

Satan rules the world—Yet, Jesus, as the Son of God, came to earth and defeated Satan in his own backyard on the cross and by the empty grave.

Therefore, Jesus Christ is the conquerer!

That used to be a more common way to understand the Gospel.

It's different ways of looking at the Gospel.

However, if we look at this parable as Christ being victorious, look at what happens...

Back to our parable...

Matthew 13:44 (b)—Then in his joy...

Question: Who's joy? Jesus! How do we know?

Hebrews 12:2—For the joy that lay before him (Jesus), he endured the cross, despising the shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus' joy comes from being victorious over Satan, sin and death—on the cross and through the resurrection.

Matthew 13:44(c)—Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has...

Who is the only one who can legitimately and Biblically sell all he has for the Gospel?

Philippians 2:6—who (Jesus), existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.

Philippians 2:7— Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. *-Humiliation*
And when he had come as a man,

Verses 7/8 is how Jesus “sold” everything He had.

Philippians 2:8— he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.

Philippians 2:9— For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

Philippians 2:10— so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—
in Heaven and on earth
and under the earth—

Philippians 2:11— and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus Christ, as the second Person of the Trinity, sold everything He had—

Which is His honor and glory as God.

Matthew 13:44(d)— Then in his joy he goes and sells everything he has and buys that field.

Jesus didn't only buy the treasure—He bought the whole field (aka the world.)

What's the most famous verse in Scripture?

John 3:16—For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

And in God the Father giving us God the Son, Jesus sold/bought/redeemed us through His own blood.

1 Corinthians 6:19/20—You are not your own, for you were bought at a price. (1 Cor. 7:23, 2 Pe .2:1).

And that price was the temporary death of God Himself through the Person and work of Jesus Christ.

In fact, we proclaim this victorious picture when we sing the "Hallelujah Chorus."

*The Kingdom of this world
has become the Kingdom of our Lord
And of His Christ, and of His Christ;
and He shall reign forever and ever.*

KEYPOINT 4:5

This parable reveals our Lord's passion to redeem His people (now the Church) as treasures that belong to Him.

Matthew 13:45— "Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls.

In the first parable, Jesus found the buried treasure of Israel—which is now His Church.

The *Parable of the Pearl* now emphasizes that.

Here, we have a merchant who searches for treasure.

Who's the merchant?

With the background we just discussed, the merchant is easier to identify.

The merchant is Jesus.

What's the pearl represent?

Pearls were the most highly valued gems in the ancient world.

Kings, queens, and the wealthy bought pearls as investments.

Some Egyptians and Romans showed how they valued the pearl by worshipping it.

Wealthy women valued pearls by wearing them.

The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy...

1 Timothy 2:9/10—Also, the women are to dress themselves in modest clothing, with decency and good sense, not with elaborate hairstyles, gold, pearls, or expensive apparel, but with good works, (heart). *Not beauty*

Jesus referenced the value of a pearl through the Gospel message...

Matthew 7:6—Don't give what is holy to dogs or toss your pearls before pigs, or they will trample them under their feet, turn, and tear you to pieces.

The apostle John reveals how pearls are used within the New Jerusalem.

Revelation 21:21—The twelve gates are twelve pearls; each individual gate was made of a single pearl.

KEYPOINT 6:

So the *Parable of the Pearl* represents value.

But notice this isn't just any pearl in the parable...

Matthew 13:46— When he found one priceless pearl, he went and sold everything he had and bought it.

Notice the adjective "priceless" pearl.

Why is it priceless?

Do you know how a pearl is formed?

A pearl is nothing more than a grain of sand formed by irritation or rubbing against the shell of an oyster.

The oyster surrounds the grain of sand with a covering that looks like a crystal.

Over the years that covering hardens and becomes a pearl.

The most beautiful pearls take up to seven years to form.

During those seven years, the piece of sand is hidden away—yet clothed and covered with beauty.

—pearl is us!

That's us! It's no wonder Jesus used this analogy!

KEYPOINT 7:

The church is that irritating piece of sand. Yet, the Lord clothes us in His righteousness.

*Also notice that there is only one priceless pearl.
There is only one church — Christ's!*

Just as no one can see the making of the pearl, no one can see the beauty and splendor of His church.

The apostle Paul presents this picture as marriage.

Ephesians 5:25—Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her (why?)

Ephesians 5:26— to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word.

Ephesians 5:27— He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless.
And Jesus says that it looks like one priceless pearl.

KEYPOINT 6:

Both parables today center around a single individual (Jesus) who sacrifices all that he has (his Godly glory and human life) in order to obtain something that is immeasurably valuable to him (His Church).

PREACH:

This parable teaches us many valuable lessons.

One of the primary lessons is that God's Word is about God—not us.

The Bible is a love story about God's plan to redeem His elect.

from SATAN, Sin, death

We can never put too much emphasis on Jesus.

It's too easy and superficial to read God's Word through the lens of the unholy trinity—me, myself and I.

Unfortunately, with these particular parables today, we have a tendency to make the main character all about us.

But its not! Have you ever known anyone who actually sold everything he ever had.

The Bible is not about us.

It's also not about the United States of America—so be careful with your newspaper based theology/newspaper eisegesis.

What lessons do we learn from these parables?

1. It's a reminder of the cost that Jesus paid.
2. It's an encouragement to Share Jesus—evangelism. Why?
3. Next week's parable—*The Parable of the Net*.
4. Today's treasure hunt is all about Jesus redeeming His treasure—remarkably, His treasure is us.

This thought should drive us to our knees in worship.

It should remind us to keep a short confession leash on our sin.

It should overwhelm us that any “good” in us is because of Jesus.

May we never get tired of hearing the Gospel.

PRAYER

BENEDICTION

*“May the Lord bless you and protect you;
may the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the Lord look with favor on you
and give you peace.” ’ (Numbers 6:24-26)*

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