

## Worth It All 1-9-05

Matthew 13:44-52 (NIV)

<sup>44</sup> "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. <sup>45</sup> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. <sup>47</sup> "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. <sup>51</sup> "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. <sup>52</sup> He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, a merchant looking for fine pearls, a net let down into the lake that caught all kinds of fish. Have you noticed that most of these parables have begun with the expression, "the kingdom of heaven is like..."? Why is it that Jesus wants us to understand the kingdom of heaven? Why is He illustrating what was taking place from heaven's perspective? It must be of utmost importance that we understand what the kingdom of heaven is like. We are so used to the kingdoms of men. The heavenly kingdom is a very different way of seeing things. These repeated themes we are seeing are Jesus' way of trying to help us see reality. The way we see life affects our way of thinking, acting, and speaking. (Luke 6:45)

Let us see the application of how our mind set affects our actions in the parable of the farmer. If we think that the word of God will grow under any heart condition, we will not be as careful how we hear or of the condition of our heart into which it is sown. If we heard Jesus' parable, we will listen intently and check our hearts to see that nothing hinders us from letting God's word come to fruit in us. Without the instruction of Jesus in that parable, we could easily end up like the seed on the path, the stony or weedy soil. The difference is eternal. Fruit born for the kingdom of God is something for which we will be rewarded. Jesus' desire for us to understand the kingdom of heaven is for our eternal good. (Deuteronomy 5:33)

In the first two parables for today, Jesus is helping us see which priorities are worth everything. Isn't that the one thing every man and woman has in common? We are all searching for something worth living for. It is easy to be wrapped up in just surviving from day to day, focused on food and shelter, especially for those who have little. In most of the world, simple daily provision becomes the priority of life. If we are blessed in having that secured, we look for something more. (Colossians 3:1-2)

Most of the western world turns its attention to possessions. We are daily inundated with advertisements that subtly tell us we must possess this or that thing to be

**Commented [notes1]:** <sup>45</sup>The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.  
Luke 6:45 (NIV)

**Commented [notes2]:** <sup>33</sup>Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.  
Deuteronomy 5:33 (NIV)

**Commented [notes3]:** <sup>1</sup>Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.  
<sup>2</sup>Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.  
Colossians 3:1-2 (NIV)

happy. In these parables, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven with a great treasure, because that is what we can easily relate to.

<sup>44</sup> *"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."*

This one-verse parable is filled with rich analogies. First, the man has stumbled across the treasure. The kingdom of God is a hidden treasure. (Isaiah 33:6) As we saw in the previous parables, we have to have eyes to see and ears to hear as well as a heart that is willing to receive. This beautiful Puritan prayer speaks of the paradox that makes the kingdom of heaven a hidden thing that only those with ears that hear and eyes that see can discover.

"Lord, high and holy, meek and lowly, Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision where I live in the heights with Thee and in the depths with me. Hemmed in by the mountains of sin, I yet see Thy glory. Let me learn Thy paradox, that the way down is the way up; that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit; that the repenting soul is the victorious soul; that to have nothing is to possess all; that to bear the cross is to wear the crown; that to give is to receive. The valley is the place of clearest vision. Lord, in the daytime the stars can be seen from deepest wells, and the deeper the well the brighter Thy stars shine. Amen"

The treasure is hidden in this field of the world. It is hidden in paradoxes that are diametrically opposed to the way of natural thinking. The flesh rejects this treasure as rubbish. Though the world idolizes those who live in abandonment of self to show the love of Christ, individuals cannot see it having any value for their own life. They see it as a treasure for the world, but not for themselves personally. "...*who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?*" the Lord asks in Jeremiah 30:21. Who has eyes to see that the greatest treasure is to know God and be close to Him? Who believes the word of the Lord through Jeremiah in 9:23-24a, "*Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches,*"<sup>24</sup> *but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me...*"? Therefore, we see that the treasure is hidden from unenlightened eyes, but is quite easily found by those who would seek for it. (Matthew 7:7-8)

Then we see that there is a cost. Once we find it, we instinctively know that it will cost everything. Jesus said that unless we give up all we have, we cannot be His disciple. (Luke 14:33) This does not necessarily mean that we sell our home and business and wander around preaching on the street. It does mean that all our possessions belong to God for His use as He instructs. (1 Corinthians 4:7) That treasure was worth so much to the man in the parable that all other possessions were worth sacrificing to obtain it. It is a matter of comparison and priority. When we see the treasure for what it truly is, all other possessions suddenly lose their appeal. If we needed to sell them to keep this one all-surpassing treasure, we would not hesitate. Any hesitation means we have not really seen The Treasure and its true value. (Psalm 29:2) We may have seen the chest the treasure is in, or a picture of it, but if we are not overwhelmed by The Treasure itself, we have certainly not opened the chest and gazed on the wealth in it. Why else would we hesitate to give up all to obtain it? (Matthew 19:27)

**Commented [notes4]:** <sup>6</sup> And wisdom and knowledge shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation: the fear of the LORD is his treasure. Isaiah 33:6 (KJV)

**Commented [notes5]:** <sup>21</sup> Their leader will be one of their own; their ruler will arise from among them. I will bring him near and he will come close to me, for who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?' declares the LORD. Jeremiah 30:21 (NIV)

**Commented [notes6]:** <sup>7</sup> "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>8</sup> For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. Matthew 7:7-8 (NIV)

**Commented [notes7]:** <sup>33</sup> In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple. Luke 14:33 (NIV)

**Commented [notes8]:** <sup>7</sup> For who makes you different from anyone else? What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not? 1 Corinthians 4:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes9]:** <sup>2</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness. Psalms 29:2 (NIV)

**Commented [notes10]:** <sup>27</sup> Peter answered him, "We have left everything to follow you! What then will there be for us?" Matthew 19:27 (NIV)

It is with joy that the man sold all he had to purchase the field. He was not grudgingly giving up his goods because it was the right thing to do. He was filled with joy to do so. Note that it was part of what he had to do to obtain it. I am not advocating a works salvation, but I am saying that sometimes we have to let go of the world before we can grab hold of Christ. If you would cling to Christ, you cannot hang on to the world. Jesus said that is impossible. (Matthew 6:24) You will let go of one or the other. You will ultimately value one or the other because the two are such a contrast in values, temporal versus eternal, pride versus humility, and flesh versus spirit. (Galatians 6:8) The Spirit of Christ will so convict you that you will have to let go of the world or Him. If you have truly seen Him with eyes of faith, you will joyfully let go of the world. What an incomparable treasure He is to those who have found Him! (Song of Songs 8:7)

<sup>45</sup> "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. A typical Hebrew way of showing emphasis is to repeat the idea in a different picture form. This time, instead of man finding treasure in a field quite by accident, a merchant found something he had been searching for. Some people are searching not knowing exactly what it is they are searching for. Our city is full of people in that category. Some of you may be in that category. If you think you have found it in the warm and loving folks that attend the church, you have not found it. If you think it is in our doctrine or interpretation, you have not found it. The pearl of inestimable worth is a person; He is the man Christ Jesus.

Why is it again repeated that everything must be sold to obtain it? When you come to Jesus, when you just stop all your routines, let your guard down, sit down, and talk to your Creator with an expectation that He will talk with you, nothing can be more important than Him. To be distracted in His presence would be like fiddling with hand held game while the President of the United States tried to speak with you. The Bible calls this kind of behavior idolatry. Nothing is more important than what He might say to you. Any reservations or boundaries you might insist upon are not only out of place, they are an insult. (Romans 1:25) To put anything God created before the Creator is the height of rude and selfish behavior. (Matthew 4:10) Our culture no longer understands the fear of the Lord and its value in our life.

These men sold all that they had to obtain what they desired, because they saw the intrinsic worth of the treasure was greater than anything in this world. Have you seen the pearl? Have you gazed upon the treasure? Have you sat in His presence and let Him speak to your heart? When was the last time you sat down and talked to Him as if He were sitting next to you, waiting for you to share your heart and to share His with you? If you have, then you know in your heart He is worth it all. You know that focusing your life on anything else is absurd. Whether you were looking or just stumbled across Him by the grace of God, there is nothing else that even is comparable in value. (Luke 18:22)

When I say "value", I mean it in three ways. Intrinsic value is the first meaning. Even if there were no humans, He is priceless, the most worthy, the perfect One,

**Commented [notes11]:** <sup>24</sup> "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. Matthew 6:24 (NIV)

**Commented [notes12]:** <sup>8</sup> For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Galatians 6:8 (KJV)

**Commented [notes13]:** <sup>7</sup> Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned. Song of Songs 8:7 (NIV)

**Commented [notes14]:** <sup>25</sup> They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator--who is forever praised. Amen. Romans 1:25 (NIV)

**Commented [notes15]:** <sup>10</sup> Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. Matthew 4:10 (KJV)

**Commented [notes16]:** <sup>22</sup> When Jesus heard this, he said to him, "You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me." Luke 18:22 (NIV)

and nothing can compare. (Psalm 86:8) The second meaning is value to us personally. There is nothing that could have a greater positive impact on our life. If you think that is selfish, you are missing the point. His value to me is His impact in my life, making me more like Him and therefore selfless. His value to me is not in having my way, or getting anything physical, it is transforming my nature to be like His. (2 Corinthians 3:18) It is enabling me to see that the world is transitory while the spirit is eternal. (1 John 2:17)

**Commented [notes17]:** <sup>8</sup> Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours.  
Psalms 86:8 (NIV)

Think about this. If our life is a vapor that appears for a moment and then vanishes away, as Jesus' brother James wrote, (James 4:14) then what could be more valuable to me than getting me to wake up to that reality and live accordingly? (Ephesians 5:14) The only way I can make that leap of faith is to find the treasure, to buy the pearl. I place all that I am and all that I have at His disposal, because He is more than worth it, and I do it with great joy. (Isaiah 12:3)

**Commented [notes18]:** <sup>18</sup> And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.  
2 Corinthians 3:18 (NIV)

**Commented [notes19]:** <sup>17</sup> The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.  
1 John 2:17 (NIV)

**Commented [notes20]:** <sup>14</sup> Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.  
James 4:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes21]:** <sup>14</sup> for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."  
Ephesians 5:14 (NIV)

**Commented [notes22]:** <sup>3</sup> With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation.  
Isaiah 12:3 (NIV)

However, the last way I mean that He is of great value has to do with His saving work on the cross.

<sup>47</sup> "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. <sup>48</sup> 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. <sup>49</sup> This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

**Commented [notes23]:** <sup>40</sup> "As the weeds are pulled up and burned in the fire, so it will be at the end of the age.

<sup>41</sup> The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will weed out of his kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil.  
Matthew 13:40-41 (NIV)

Two weeks ago, we looked at this coming time of separation. In that parable, it was a separation of weeds from wheat. (Matthew 13:40-41) In this parable, it is of edible fish from those that are worthless. One has value to God. The other has none. Surely, the people of this city in which Jesus spoke the parable had often seen the fishermen engaged in this work. One day the angels will separate the wicked from the righteous. The greatest value that God is to mankind in a very practical sense is salvation from judgment. He was the only One that could have paid my debt. He is the only One that could make me righteous, so that when that day of separation comes, I will be counted as valuable. I will be worth keeping. Everyone who trusts in His righteousness will be worth keeping. (Jeremiah 23:6) What is that worth? What price tag would you place on that? Is there anything that you would not give for that? (Mark 8:37) Moreover, how could we withhold anything from Him when He has made that possible at such an extraordinary cost?

**Commented [notes24]:** <sup>6</sup> In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteousness.  
Jeremiah 23:6 (NIV)

Judgment approaches. For over 150,000 souls, the moment came in an instant a few weeks ago. One minute they were lounging on the beach, and the next minute they were in eternity. What price could one of those souls pay to have the righteousness of Jesus? Do you think they would give up their dream vacation to have it? Do you think they would give up a secure job and the wealth it brings to have it? Is there anything they would not now give to have the righteousness of Jesus when they stand before the Judge of all souls? But sadly, for many of them it is too late. Did the supermodel's boyfriend, the cameraman, know the Judge would have to decide whether or not his life was of value? That same week, in our own community, Pastor Hutchison and two of his sons stepped into eternity. The pastor

**Commented [notes25]:** <sup>37</sup> Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?  
Mark 8:37 (KJV)

of the largest evangelical church in the Verde Valley is in the net with the cameraman. Only one thing will determine whether each one is placed in the basket or tossed aside, their relationship with the King of the kingdom of heaven. Only one thing will determine the same for you and me when it is our turn. What is our relationship with the King? (John 3:36) If we are in a relationship with Him, we will have put Him above all other things in our life because He is worthy. Do you see Jesus' urgency to have us understand the Kingdom of heaven?

**Commented [notes26]:** <sup>36</sup> Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."  
John 3:36 (NIV)

<sup>51</sup> "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. <sup>52</sup> He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

"Have you understood these things?" Jesus asks us. I trust we too can reply, "Yes." If you cannot, I ask you, I plead with you, to sit down with your Maker. (2 Corinthians 5:20) Talk to Him. Let Him speak to you. See His incomparable worth. If you cannot see it, ask Him to help you find it or to guide you into the field where you will stumble across it. He is priceless!

**Commented [notes27]:** <sup>20</sup> We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.  
2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)

One of the ways we see Him is in His word. His word reveals His nature. His word shows us His wonderful character. In Jesus' day, there were those who devoted their lives to understanding God's word. They were teachers of the law. Those teachers who had been instructed about the kingdom of heaven by the Holy Spirit have old and new treasure. They can draw from the stories of Scripture truth about God and His ways and they can see the deeper meanings that are implied by the Holy Spirit. They have old treasure and new. They have a storeroom in their hearts and minds that is full of treasure. The traditions and ways of the Jewish people were often based on a desire to please God and obey the commands of God. They were just carried to an extreme and became a means of obtaining power over others by some who did not understand the kingdom of heaven.

People like the Apostle Paul were in the category of teachers of the law who became instructed in the kingdom of heaven. They had the revelations of Christ and His kingdom and so could interpret the Old Testament teachings correctly. They had old treasure and new. They had a whole storeroom of treasure.

How is your storeroom coming? First, it must have the greatest treasure, a living and vital relationship with the Lord Jesus. Then it needs to be filled with eternal truths from God's word. Are you valuing the things that are eternal? Are you living for the One who is worth it all? Have you found the treasure, the pearl? Have you joyfully placed every other desire a distant second to knowing Him? He alone is worth it all. Who is he who will devote himself to be close to me?