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The Gospel According to Matthew

Where is Your Treasure – The Infinite Value of the Kingdom

March 10, 2019

Sermon Text: Matt 13:44-46, 51-52

Scripture Reading: Matt 13:36-58

In His parables about the kingdom of heaven, Jesus is dealing with what is really the major theme of the Bible. The king and His kingdom. The Scriptures present it this to us in various images, each emphasizing certain aspects of the kingdom which we must know.

- Right now there are many false sheep in the kingdom in its present form
- The King will one day come and His angels will sort out the wheat

and the tares, the bad fish from the good.

- The kingdom is growing larger and larger as the seed of the gospel is preached.
- Many people will look like they have accepted the gospel (ie, look like good soil in which the seed sprouts) but in fact they return to the world when following Christ begins to be costly
- Real Christians, true citizens of the King's kingdom, bear fruit.
- The devil is always at work trying to prevent the growth of the kingdom
- One day the kingdom will fill the entire world; it is the new heavens and the new earth

In these two little parables which we are considering this morning, the King emphasizes still another characteristic of His kingdom – *its infinite worth*.

Listen once again:

Mat 13:44-46 "The kingdom of heaven

is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy **he goes and sells all that he has** and buys that field.

(45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding one pearl of great value, **went and sold all that he had and bought it.**

Mat 13:51-52 "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." (52) And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

Treasure. Worth. Value. These are the things Jesus is emphasizing. Doing whatever we need to do, paying whatever we need to pay, to get into the kingdom.

Now, of course you cannot buy citizenship in Christ's kingdom. Jesus is not talking here about literal purchase with money. [Although there have been and still are myriads of religious criminals who extort money from people with the promise of "salvation." Rome is a classic example].

But Jesus' metaphor here of people selling all that they have speaks of the

value of His kingdom and of doing everything we can, *no matter what the cost*, to enter His kingdom.

Most people do not see the kingdom as something of ultimate value. We saw this in the parable of the Sower:

Mat 13:20-21 As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, (21) yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away.

What are the costs required to see the kingdom of God? Well, they include:

- Being born again and thus,
- Being put to death in Christ and then rising with him,
- Giving up houses and lands and family – anything that would hinder following Christ
- Living out our new life in Christ, putting to death the deeds of the flesh by the Spirit
- Experiencing persecution, hated by the world

All of these things are the fruits of real faith, the evidence of a regenerated heart. Jesus explains the cost of His kingdom many times. Here is an example:

Mat 10:34-39 "Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. (35) For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. (36) And a person's enemies will be those of his own household. (37) Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (38) And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me. (39) Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

Unless we see and understand the infinite value of the kingdom of God, we will never be able to pay the price.

Look at the parables again:

Mat 13:44-46 "The kingdom of heaven is like **treasure** hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy **he goes and sells all that he has** and buys that field.

(45) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, (46) who, on finding **one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.**

Treasure. One Pearl of great value. Once the men who found these things

saw them, for what they are, they readily gave up everything to get them.

You are Rich

If you are a Christian, if you genuinely know Christ and have been made a new creation in and by Him, then it is vital for you to understand, at least to the best of our ability in this present life, *that you are fabulously wealthy*. Is that not one thing the Lord is telling us in these parables?

- YOU have this Pearl that is more valuable than anything else,
- YOU have this hidden treasure that is so valuable that the riches billionaires would be fools not to give up everything they own in order to possess it. YOU have it.

It's true. That is what Scriptures like these mean:

Col 2:1-3 For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and for those at Laodicea and for all who have not seen me face to face, (2) that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, **to reach all the riches** of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which is Christ, (3) **in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**

Pro 2:1-5 My son, if you receive my

words and treasure up my commandments with you, (2) making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; (3) yes, if you call out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, (4) **if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures**, (5) then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God.

If you know Christ, then you are a son of God and therefore *an heir*. *You have an inheritance of such infinite value that there is no heir or heiress in this world who even approaches its glory:*

Eph 1:13-14 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, (14) who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

But Esau Chose the Oatmeal

So, why do the vast majority of people choose the world over Christ? Because they do not see His value. And this also is the work of the devil:

2Co 4:3-4 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. (4) In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, **to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the**

glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Christ in all His glory, is *veiled* from the sinner's sight. The words of this hymn are meaningless to the unregenerate man:

1. Fairest Lord Jesus, Ruler of all nature,
O Thou of God and man the Son,
Thee will I cherish, Thee will I honor,
Thou, my soul's glory, joy and crown.
2. Fair are the meadows, fairer still the woodlands,
Robed in the blooming garb of spring;
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer,
Who makes the woeful heart to sing.
3. Fair is the sunshine, fairer still the moonlight,
And all the twinkling starry host;
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer
Than all the angels heav'n can boast.
4. All fairest beauty, heavenly and earthly,
Wondrously, Jesus, is found in Thee;
None can be nearer, fairer or dearer,
Than Thou, my Savior, art to me.
5. Beautiful Savior! Lord of all the nations!
Son of God and Son of Man!
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,
Now and forevermore be Thine.

The beauty of the King, you see. The beauty of His kingdom. If you don't see it, then you aren't going to be willing to pay the price for it. And to see it, we must be given eyes to see. Only Christ can open our blind eyes,

lift that veil that blinds the sinner to the glory of Christ, so that we *see*.

Let's see if we can translate these parables into an image from our day.

Let's say that someone you know regularly buys tickets for some "megabucks" multi-million dollar lottery. And you happen to know that they never check to see if the tickets are winners. Maybe this is some eccentric old guy relative and you happen to know that he buries the tickets in his backyard.

Now, let's say that he dies and somehow you happen to know (you can add the story details here of how you came to this knowledge) that one of those tickets is a winner. A megabucks winner.

As the estate is being settled, and his home is going to be sold off, *what would you be willing to do to buy it?*

You could change the details a bit and instead of a lottery ticket, let's say that there is a painting in his attic. And you alone happen to know that this painting is priceless. It's hidden away so that no one else even knows it is there, but the old guy showed it to you once and subsequently you found out by an internet search what this painting really is.

What would you do to get it? What would you be willing to pay? *Once you know the priceless value of the thing, then you are willing to pay anything you can to get it.*

And so it is with the kingdom of God *for those who have eyes to see it:*

Php 3:7-11 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. (8) Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ (9) and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith-- (10) that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, (11) that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

Nevertheless we are all *investing our resources*. And our ultimate resource that no one can escape investing is *our selves. Our lives. Our souls.*

Luk 12:16-21 And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, (17) and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do,

for I have nowhere to store my crops?' (18) And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. (19) And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.'" (20) But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' (21) So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

My father-in-law died nearly 20 years ago. I knew him for 32 years. He was, in the world's measure, "a good man" and we had many good times with him and Verla's mother. But he had no sense of the value of Christ. He did not live for the kingdom of God, but for this present world. He did not see the priceless value of Christ, the Hidden Treasure. He worked hard and invested and amassed a good amount of money. He invested in this present world that is passing away.

And when he died with us present there in the living room of his home, what became of his investments? He was not rich toward God. What good did all his life savings do for him then?

I suppose that on the day of Judgment when Christ appears for every single eye to see, perhaps the wicked who

loved the world will have some regret? I'm not sure. Will they see His beauty or will His glory be hateful to them? I don't know.

When I was a kid, there was a game show on TV. I can't remember the name of it but it involved contestants choosing one of 3 doors, behind which were various prizes. Some were just duds worth very little. Others were worth thousands of dollars. On one episode I remember (I don't know why it sticks in my mind) a contestant choosing the wrong door. The MC then opened another door behind which was a suitcase. He opened the suitcase and held it up to the camera and it was stuffed with cash. He said "he turned down the money!"

Will there be any element of this kind of thing when we all stand before Christ? "Look what you turned down. There is the world going up in flames and everything that is in it. Everything that you chose. "Here is Christ in His glory. Here is the new heavens and earth and eternal life, but you turned it all down."

The Treasure is HIDDEN

Now, perhaps someone here this morning – if they are honest – will say "you know, I am just really not interested in this stuff. Jesus, the kingdom, heaven, the Bible – actually

this bores me. I am interested in other things”:

- Boyfriend/girlfriend
- Getting a car
- What kind of cell phone I have
- Partying
- Extending my earthly life as long as possible
- Making as much money as I can
- Knowledge
- Career success
- Retiring to that dream place
- Just having fun

And on and on the list goes.

Well, Christ is telling us here in these parables that if these things are what we love, what we focus our lives upon getting as our ultimate goal, *then something is terribly wrong with us. We are blind. We are deaf.* What to do about it? This:

“Lord, I am broken. Something must be really wrong with my heart and mind. I don’t see the glory and treasure of Christ. I just don’t see it. I don’t desire to be in Your kingdom. I love this world. Please open my eyes so that I can see You!”

Because, you see, *Christ and His kingdom are **hidden** treasure.* Remember how He explained the purpose of speaking in parables:

Mat 13:12-16 For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. (13) This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (14) Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says: ""You will indeed hear but never understand, and you will indeed see but never perceive." (15) For this people's heart has grown dull, and with their ears they can barely hear, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.' (16) But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear.

If you don’t seek Him. If you continue in your blindness to choose what is easy instead of choosing what is really worth having, if you love the world and are not doing everything you can to find Christ, *then what Jesus is saying here is that you are going to sink into greater and greater and greater darkness.* Until one day it will be so dark you will never come out of that place.

Riches Old and New

Finally, notice these words of Jesus:

Mat 13:51-52 "Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." (52) And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, **who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.**"

Jesus is saying that the Old Testament contains the treasure of Christ and His kingdom. In fact, the OT is the message of Christ and His kingdom. So that no one can really be an "expert" in the OT Scriptures until they have been given eyes to see the kingdom of heaven in Christ. It is really this familiar statement:

"The New Testament is, in the Old *concealed*, and the Old is in the New *revealed*."

In other words, the source of virtually all false doctrine that deceives and confuses people is *teachers and pastors and theologians and other professing Christians, who are not really born again*. They do not have the hidden treasure. They do not have the Pearl of price. They do not have therefore the ability to open up the treasure chest of the Bible and show people *Christ*. All they can show are *cheap costume jewelry trinkets*. That is the very kind of fake jewelry and counterfeit currency that most people

in Christendom are being fed today. Nicodemus and Saul of Tarsus had to be born again before they saw the treasures of Christ. Until then, the Book they thought they knew so well was actually closed to them.

Joh 3:9-10 Nicodemus said to him, "How can these things be?" (10) Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?"

Act 9:3-5 Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him. (4) And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (5) And he said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.

Act 9:19-22 and taking food, he was strengthened. For some days he was with the disciples at Damascus. (20) And immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is the Son of God." (21) And all who heard him were amazed and said, "Is not this the man who made havoc in Jerusalem of those who called upon this name? And has he not come here for this purpose, to bring them bound before the chief priests?" (22) But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who lived in Damascus by proving that Jesus was

the Christ.

And so it is with us. *You must be born again.* If you are, then you are rich beyond imagination. If you are not, then gain this entire world for yourself – in the end you will find it to be absolutely worthless.