

October 27, 2024

Matthew 13:44-52 ESV

44 “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. 47 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. 48 When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. 49 So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous 50 and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 51 “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.”

Scriptures for further study:

Isaiah 6:3

Psalm 96:7-9

Psalm 145:13

Romans 14:17

Hebrews 9:22

“The mainstream Reformation was not concerned with establishing a new Christian tradition, but with the renewal and correction of an existing tradition. On the basis of their assertion that Christian theology was ultimately grounded in Scripture, reformers such as Luther and Calvin argued for the need to return to Scripture as the primary and critical source of Christian theology.”

-Robert Kennerson



Following Jesus: Kingdom Reception and Proclamation Matthew 13:44-52

BIG IDEA: If the kingdom of God has unparalleled value yet a fleeting opportunity to enter, let us leverage all to receive and proclaim it.

OUTLINE

1. Unparalleled Value

2. Fleeting Opportunity

3. Leveraging All to Receive

4. Leveraging All to Proclaim

SERMON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These "Sermon Discussion Questions" are designed for study during the week for believers in a wide variety of ages & stages in their walk with Christ.

1. Have you ever been presented with a deal you couldn't refuse? What made the opportunity valuable to you? Did you have to give up something to get it?
2. What is a treasure? What pictures come to mind when you think about that Word? Read Matthew 13:44. What is compared to a treasure in this verse? How did the man who found the treasure respond when he found it?
3. Read verses 45-46. What would motivate a merchant to sell everything to buy one pearl? In this parable, Jesus uses metaphor to describe the worth of the Kingdom of God. What treasures of God can you find in Psalm 96? How are these treasures more valuable than anything else?
4. Can you identify choices that you have made that point to a heart belief that "I'm going to live forever"? How can you tell when you or those you love are thinking, "The world has no end"?
5. Thinking about verses 47-49, what categories are the fish sorted? Why are the fish not sorted until "the end of the age"? What does Jesus say will happen at the "end of the age"? How can this shape what we do today?
6. Read Romans 10:8-11. What difference does it make that the One sorting the fish is the hope and help we need to grasp the treasure of the Kingdom of God?

"Before banking was generally established, to hide wealth in the form of coins, metals, or jewels in a jar or chest in the ground was a recognized way of securing it..."

-R.T. France

"The critical question for our generation—and for every generation— is this: If you could have heaven, with no sickness, and with all the friends you ever had on earth, and all the food you ever liked, and all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed, and all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted, and no human conflict or any natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven, if Christ were not there? Christ did not die to forgive sinners who go on treasuring anything above seeing and savoring God. And people who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there, will not be there. The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God. It's a way of overcoming every obstacle to everlasting joy in God. If we don't want God above all things, we have not been converted by the gospel."

-John Piper

“And now the Lord, after having taught them in this kind and familiar manner, warns them at the same time, that his object, in taking so much pains to instruct them, was not merely that they might be well informed, but that they might communicate to others what they had received.”

-John Calvin

Praise to Jesus. Spend time praising God for the treasure that He is. As you read verses from Psalm 92, turn each verse into a prayer of praise.

2 Sing to the LORD; praise his name. Each day, proclaim the good news that he saves. 3 Publish his glorious deeds among the nations. Tell everyone about the amazing things he does. 4 Great is the LORD! He is most worthy of praise! He is to be feared above all gods. 5 The gods of other nations are mere idols, but the LORD made the heavens! 6 Honor and majesty surround him; strength and beauty fill his sanctuary. 7 O nations of the world, recognize the LORD; recognize that the LORD is glorious and strong. 10 Tell all the nations, "The LORD reigns!" The world stands firm and cannot be shaken. He will judge all peoples fairly. He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world with justice, and the nations with his truth.

Repentance through Jesus. Spend some time in silent confession and repentance. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to confess and repent. What is God calling you to walk away from today to experience more of His kingdom treasure?.

Consecration for Jesus. If the Kingdom of God has unparalleled value yet a fleeting opportunity to enter, determine to leverage all to receive and proclaim it.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Jesus was in Galilee with his disciples. It was late in the day on Sunday, the day of Sabbath, the day of rest. Earlier that day, they walked through a field of grain and picked heads of grain to eat, which is considered "work". This resulted in a confrontation with the Pharisees, where Jesus shut his accusers down when he told them that he was Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus told the Pharisees that He desires mercy, not sacrifice. The commotion continued when Jesus and company went to synagogue where Jesus healed a man whose hand had "withered". When the Pharisees saw this, they decided to destroy Him. Jesus and his followers escaped from the chaos. They encountered a man who was unable to speak and was afflicted with blindness because he was possessed by a demon. Jesus healed him. As you can imagine, this outraged his accusers, who said that Jesus was in league with Satan. Jesus attempted to correct their misunderstanding and their blindness. So we come to the time when Jesus shared the parables that are found in Matthew 13. He was by the sea of Galilee. There was such a crowd that Jesus got in a boat, sat down, and began teaching. Our passage is towards the end of his message.

FOR FAMILIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN

These questions are written to aid parents in leading family devotions with their children.

1. What is your most valuable toy? What makes the toy valuable to you?
2. What is something that is worth a lot of money that you would like to buy? Why?
3. What is “the kingdom of heaven” that Jesus mentioned in verses 44 and 45? (This kingdom of heaven is what Jesus is bringing to the world and is the kingdom for which He rules. In the Sermon on the Mount that we studied in Matthew 5-7, Jesus described what living as His follower in this kingdom looks like. The gospel announcement is the good news of great joy that Jesus proclaimed about this kingdom in His earthly ministry. This kingdom was started by Jesus when He defeated sin and death during His earthly ministry and was most vividly seen with His death and resurrection.)
4. What does Jesus teach about this kingdom in verses 44-46? (He taught that it is the most valuable treasure in the world. He taught that we should be willing to give all that we have for this treasure. He also taught that this kingdom is hidden to some, which refers to the spiritual blindness caused by our sin.)
5. What did Jesus teach in verses 47-50? (He taught about the final judgment by God that we will all face. You will want to make sure that your children understand that the only way to face this judgment with joy and confidence is to trust and believe in Jesus and to repent of our sin.)

Scriptures for further study:

Philippians 3:7-10

Matthew 16:26

Romans 3:23

Romans 6:23

FOR STUDENTS

Scriptures for further study:

Philippians 3:8

Colossians 1:18

Matthew 6:21

1. Take a moment to think about the most valuable thing in your life. What makes that thing so valuable? Is there anything that you wouldn't give up for that thing?
2. What did Jesus compare the Kingdom of Heaven to in this passage? Why is the Kingdom of Heaven considered so "valuable"?
3. In both the parable of the hidden treasure and the parable of the costly pearl, the one who finds the "treasure" in the story goes and sells all that he has to obtain the valuable thing that he found. What are some things that you might need to "sell" in order to follow Jesus more wholeheartedly?
4. Read Philippians 3:8. Paul considered EVERYTHING to be a "loss" because there was one thing that was more valuable than anything else to him: Knowing Jesus. What obstacles are there in your life that keep you from feeling the same way?
5. In Colossians 1:18, Paul describes Jesus as being "preeminent." The definition of preeminence is "surpassing all other things." How should we respond to the truth that Jesus surpasses all other things in terms of value?

FOR SEEKERS AND NEW BELIEVERS

1. First, we must not take the Parable of the Hidden Treasure to mean that we are the ones who “find” Jesus. The gospel is that he seeks after and finds us! “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost” (Luke 19:10). The gospel is that we were, in fact, in rebellion against God, but “while we were yet sinners Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

Praise: Thank God for His grace in taking all the initiative in saving us!

2. For the one who is in a relationship with Jesus, he is to be like the man in the Parable who responded wholeheartedly and who was willing to give up everything else to obtain the treasure.

Question: Is knowing Christ your supreme treasure in life, and is living in His kingdom (i.e., doing His will no matter what) the guiding passion of your life?

Question: Notice that Jesus describes the kingdom life as involving sacrifice, but did you also notice in verse 44 what the man experiences in return? (It’s not so much about what we give up but what we also stand to gain!)

3. Jesus says that there are many fine pearls, but there is only one pearl of great value. If we think of a pearl as a beautiful object, then we can say that there are many beautiful things in life, but only Jesus is truly beautiful. He alone can provide the kind of beautiful life of joy and peace we desire.

Question: What is your current experience? Is Jesus your most precious pearl? Or are there other dazzling pearls capturing your attention instead?

4. The Parable of the Net illustrates the final judgment of all mankind.

Question: Who does the ultimate judging, us or God? Why is this important to remember?

Question: When all the sifting has been done, what are the two basic categories of people in the world? How are each described by Jesus?

Question: Where do you stand with God today? And do you have confidence that you will be able to stand before God on that final day? What is the basis for your confidence?

5. Jesus doesn’t just tell us of the costs of discipleship; He also assures us of the rewards.

If we “lose our life” for His sake, we will find it! (verse 39) For example, if we give a cup of cold water to someone, we will experience God’s blessing in return (verse 42).

Question: Even if you have only been a Christian for a little while, can you think of some personal examples of how giving of yourself has resulted in you experiencing real life and blessing and happiness?

Scriptures for further study:

Matthew 13:24-30

Matthew 13: 36-43

Matthew 25:31-46

John 3:16

Following Jesus: Finding Fulfillment and Faith in the One Who is Greater



*Raphael, School of Athens, 1509-1511, fresco
(Stanza della Segnatura, Palazzi Pontifici, Vatican)*

About the artwork.

What is the connection between an eighteen-by-twenty-five-foot wall decoration of ancient men in robes and the Gospel of Matthew?

Raphael, the rock star of the Renaissance, organized his painting of fifty-three of the most outstanding scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, poets, and artists of all time thematically into five groups. Each group contains a leader(s) and those following him/them. Matthew tells the good news of Jesus in a way that highlights the theme and invitation from Jesus to “follow me.” In addition, Matthew organizes his Gospel around five sermons: Kingdom Law, Kingdom Mission, Kingdom Nature, Kingdom Authority, and Kingdom Judgement.

Front and center in Raphael’s painting are the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Raphael placed Plato and Aristotle in the center to show that they represent the pinnacle of human philosophy. They were the “prophets” of their day. Plato pointing up and Aristotle pointing down. Matthew shows us that Jesus is the true and greater prophet who unites knowledge of heaven, truths known and experienced only through him, with earthly ephemeral realities that can be experienced and described empirically but understood through him.

Raphael chose a forum from ancient Rome as the setting. The architecture in the painting represents well the Roman arch, which was a symbol of victory. Matthew is known and loved by millions, though his life’s ambition was to follow Jesus. He told the good news that in Jesus Christ, we have victory and kingship because he is the greater son of David, the Messiah.

Introduction to the Gospel of Matthew.

Before he met Jesus, a Jewish man named Levi, who lived in Capernaum, worked in a booth collecting taxes for the Roman Empire. Because of his profession, Levi was the most hated man in town until Jesus walked by and said to him, "Follow me." About thirty years after Jesus was crucified and resurrected, Levi, whom Jesus renamed Matthew, was inspired by the Holy Spirit to write down his version of Jesus's life, the Gospel of Matthew.

Matthew presents Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah, King, Prophet, Son of David, and Son of God. Jesus ushers in and establishes the Kingdom of Heaven, which is the rule and reign of God here on earth. Jesus calls his citizens to embrace Him as king through faith, teaches them about this "new world order" as a prophet, and then calls them to follow Him as the redeemer by going out into the world to tell the nations. Because Jesus is King, he has all authority; as Prophet, what he says is true, and as Savior, only he can offer redemption.

Read or listen to Matthew's gospel. Look for King Jesus exerting his authority over the natural world through healing and the supernatural by casting out demons. Pay attention to what the crowds say about him. Listen to Prophet Jesus as he teaches, rebukes, and tells about who he is. See him as Savior life and the way to the coming Kingdom.

Each of the four gospels uniquely depicts the story of Jesus. The story is so vast that it takes four Holy Spirit-inspired men to attempt to capture it. Matthew organized his story around five of Jesus' discourses, teachings, and sermons. The sermon series walks through the discourses.

1st Matthew 5-7 Kingdom Law

2nd Matthew 10 Kingdom Mission

3rd Matthew 13 Kingdom Nature

4th Matthew 18 Kingdom Authority

5th Matthew 23-25 Kingdom Judgement

According to Pastor Bill, the big idea of Matthew's gospel is, "Come to Jesus and learn about the kingdom of God, then go into the world to advance His kingdom by following Him in faith." May you, like Matthew and countless others, come to Jesus, follow Him in faith, experience heart transformation, and advance His Kingdom in your home, work, neighborhood, and the world!