

“Secrets of the Kingdom”

“Hidden Treasure”

Matthew 13:44

Big Idea – Entrance into the kingdom of heaven is free but costs everything.

Matthew 13:44 “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field. One day a man found the treasure, and then he hid it in the field again. He was so happy that he went and sold everything he owned to buy that field.

1. The scoop on the hidden treasure

Jesus builds this simple story around an experience familiar to His hearers. Few people had found a treasure; but the practice of hiding valuables in the ground was common. Since there were no banks or other public depositories, most people protected their valuables in a secret spot in the ground. When they needed money or decided to sell or trade a piece of jewelry, for instance, they would go to the place at night, uncover the jar or storage box, take out what was desired, and rebury the rest.

Because Palestine had been a battleground for hundreds of years, families would often even bury food, clothing, and other household objects to protect them from plundering enemy soldiers. The famous Jewish historian Josephus wrote, "The gold and the silver and the rest of that most precious furniture which the Jews had and which the owners treasured underground was done to withstand the fortunes of war."

Over the years, the ground of Palestine became a veritable treasure house. When the owner of buried treasure died or was forcefully driven from the land—sometimes deported to a foreign land such as Assyria or Babylon—the treasure would be forever lost unless someone accidentally discovered it, as occasionally happened.

That might have been what happened here in the treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again. The man may have stumbled over part of the treasure or seen some of it protruding above ground as he happened to pass through the field. Or he may have been a hired hand who inadvertently dug it up while plowing or cultivating. In any case, the field did not belong to him, because, all excited over it he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

Some Christians are embarrassed by this story, thinking Jesus used an unethical act to illustrate a spiritual truth. It seems to them that the man was obligated to tell the owner of the field about the treasure, since it was on his property and therefore rightfully belonged to him.

The point of the parable does not involve the ethics of what the man did, but rather his willingness to sacrifice everything he had in order to possess the treasure. But what he did was not unethical or dishonest. Why?

John MacArthur in his *New Testament Commentary* gives 3 reasons:

1. it is obvious that the treasure was not hidden by the present owner of the field and was unknown to him. Otherwise, he would have retrieved it before he sold the field. The man who bought the field obviously knew the owner was not aware of the treasure or he would not have offered to buy the field, knowing the treasure would not be included in the deal.

2. rabbinic law provided that "if a man finds scattered fruit or money, it belongs to the finder." If a person came across money or other valuables that were obviously lost and whose owner was dead or unknown, the finder had the right to keep what was found.

3. the basic honesty of the man is testified to by the fact that, had he been dishonest, he would simply have taken the treasure without any thought of buying the field. But he did not even use part of the treasure to buy the field; rather, he sells all that he has, and buys that field.

2. The lessons I can learn from this story

Hendriksen says "...we should grasp its one important lesson: the incalculable preciousness of salvation for those who discover it and obtain possession of it without even looking for it!"

Take the apostle Paul as an example...He discovered the "treasure" unexpectedly on the road to Damascus, going to persecute Christians - Acts 9:1-2

At the time he thought killing Christians was the right thing to do - Acts 26:9-11

When he met the Lord, and learned the will of God, he did not hesitate to carry out the will of God even at great cost to him

Acts 26:19 "And so, King Agrippa, I obeyed that vision from heaven.

20 I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do.

21 Some Jews arrested me in the Temple for preaching this, and they tried to kill me.

22 But God has protected me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen—

23 that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God's light to Jews and Gentiles alike."

Philippians 3:6 I was so enthusiastic I tried to hurt the church. No one could find fault with the way I obeyed the law of Moses.

7 Those things were important to me, but now I think they are worth nothing because of Christ.

8 Not only those things, but I think that all things are worth nothing compared with the greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Because of him, I have lost all those things, and now I know they are worthless trash. This allows me to have Christ

Writing of "the gospel of the glory of Christ", Paul calls it a "treasure" - 2 Cor 4:7

He writes of the "treasures of wisdom and knowledge" that are found in Christ - Col 2:1-3

3. Why the kingdom is of great value.

A refuge from the powers of darkness

Colossians 1:13 For he has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness and transferred us into the Kingdom of his dear Son,

Ephesians 2:2 You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God.

3 In the past all of us lived like them, trying to please our sinful selves and doing all the things our bodies and minds wanted. We should have suffered God's anger because of the way we were. We were the same as all other people.

4 But God's mercy is great, and he loved us very much.

5 Though we were spiritually dead because of the things we did against God, he gave us new life with Christ. You have been saved by God's grace.

6 And he raised us up with Christ and gave us a seat with him in the heavens. He did this for those in Christ Jesus

7 so that for all future time he could show the very great riches of his grace by being kind to us in Christ Jesus.

An area of righteousness, peace, and joy

Romans 14:17 For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living life righteously with peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

God's righteousness – rightly related to Him

Philippians 3:9 Now I am right with God, not because I followed the law, but because I believed in Christ. God uses my faith to make me right with Him.

God's peace which surpasses all understanding

Philippians 4:6 Do not worry about anything, but pray and ask God for everything you need, always giving thanks.

7 And God's peace, which is so great we cannot understand it, will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

An abiding joy in the Lord

Philippians 4:4 Be full of joy in the Lord always. I will say again, be full of joy.

An unshakable kingdom

Hebrews 12:28 Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.

One which shall never be destroyed

Daniel 2:44 "During the reigns of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed or conquered. It will crush all these kingdoms into nothingness, and it will stand forever.

A destiny of eternal glory

1 Corinthians 15:23 But everyone will be raised to life in the right order. Christ was first to be raised. When Christ comes again, those who belong to him will be raised to life,

24 and then the end will come. At that time Christ will destroy all rulers, authorities, and powers, and he will hand over the kingdom to God the Father.

25 Christ must rule until he puts all enemies under his control.

26 The last enemy to be destroyed will be death.

Matthew 13:43 Then the righteous will shine like the sun in their Father's Kingdom. Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!

From that time forward, those in the kingdom will experience ultimate fellowship in the presence of God – Rev. 21:1-5, 9-12,22-27

4. Testimonies to the value of the kingdom

The early apostles – Acts 5:40, 41

Acts 5:40 They called the apostles in, beat them, and told them not to speak in the name of Jesus again. Then they let them go free.

41 The apostles left the meeting full of joy because they were given the honor of suffering disgrace for Jesus.

Stephen – Acts 7:60

Acts 7:59 While they were throwing stones, Stephen prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

60 He fell on his knees and cried in a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." After Stephen said this, he died.

The apostle Paul 4:6-8,16-18

2 Timothy 3:10 But you, Timothy, certainly know what I teach, and how I live, and what my purpose in life is. You know my faith, my patience, my love, and my endurance.

11 You know how much persecution and suffering I have endured. You know all about how I was persecuted in Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra—but the Lord rescued me from all of it.

12 Yes, and everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution.

2 Timothy 4:6 My life is being given as an offering to God, and the time has come for me to leave this life.

7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

2 Timothy 4:16 The first time I was brought before the judge, no one came with me. Everyone abandoned me. May it not be counted against them.

17 But the Lord stood with me and gave me strength so that I might preach the Good News in its entirety for all the Gentiles to hear. And he rescued me from certain death.

18 Yes, and the Lord will deliver me from every evil attack and will bring me safely into his heavenly Kingdom. All glory to God forever and ever! Amen.

Our Savior, the Lord Jesus, who gave willingly laid aside the glories of heaven to make it possible - cf. Ph 2:5-8

With one voice they would say, "It is worth it all!"

How about us? Are we willing to pay the full price to obtain the

"treasure" of the kingdom?

The price of repentance?

The price of complete submission to the will of Christ? - Mt 28: 18-20

The price of putting the kingdom first in our lives? - Mt 6:33

Our response to the gospel, and how we live our lives as Christians, demonstrate our true estimation of the "treasure" of the kingdom of heaven!

Big Idea – Entrance into the kingdom of heaven is free but costs everything.