

THE HIDDEN TREASURE & PRICELESS PEARL

9/4/2022 • MATTHEW 13:44-46

MAIN POINT

The true value of the kingdom is hidden to the world, but worth any sacrifice to the disciple.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Do you like going to garage sales? If not, does anyone in your family?

What's the most interesting thing you or someone you know has found at something like a garage sale or a flea market?

What's the appeal of going to places like these?

Whether baseball cards in the attic, old coins in the basement, or works of art at the bottom of the box, everyone has thought about how great it would be to stumble across some kind of treasure, overlooked by all but you. It's the dream of finding that object of great value hidden among the common stuff. In Matthew 13, Jesus gave us two parables that both deal with the true value of the kingdom of God. Though the true value of the kingdom might be hidden to the world, it's worthy of any sacrifice to the disciple.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

Let's define Kingdom of Heaven. Kingdom of Heaven = Kingdom of God. The Jewish people, out of reverence for the divine name, were often hesitant (as indeed they are today) to pronounce the divine name, lest they take his name in vain. So, they often substituted the word "heaven" or "the Blessed" for the word "God". So, there is no significant difference between the term "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God."

Remind your class why Jesus spoke in parables. They are not given to press into the details but to get the main point. Read Matthew 13:11-17.

Jesus was speaking to all different kinds of people when He taught. Some were true believers; others were skeptics; and others were there to try and catch Him in some sort of sin or blasphemy. This is one of the reasons He taught in parables. These stories, by their very nature, divided the audience. They showed, as Jesus taught in the parable of the Sower, that those who heard His words had different kinds of hearts. Some would be truly receptive and understand, while others were hard and would not.

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 13:44-46.

Compare and contrast the two parables.

How did they both find the treasure? Same or different

What was their response to the finding it? Why did they respond this way?

Commentary on the parable of the treasure: The text identifies the messianic kingdom as "like" a treasure in a field. The field must then be the world, the location in which the kingdom presently exists. The point of the parable then may be that when a person discovers this messianic kingdom (through the hearing of the gospel), it is worth his everything to obtain it.

Commentary on the Parable of the Pearl: One interpretation emphasizes that In Jesus' day, there were Jews who were looking for the messianic kingdom and Messiah (11:3), and there were those who were not (e.g., the religious leaders who did not accompany the wise men to Bethlehem). For both types of people, the ultimate price (of faith in Christ and discipleship) was not too much to pay for participation in the messianic kingdom. Jesus was not teaching that entrance into the kingdom depended on self-sacrifice; entrance depended on faith in Him. The amount and kind of one's inheritance in the messianic kingdom, however, depended on commitment to Messiah

LET'S UNDERSTAND WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD: Read Romans 14:17. What does Paul say the Kingdom of God is and isn't?

(Commentary) Paul almost seems to have Christ's words in mind when he says that the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. This is, of course, the opposite of what life was like under the old covenant. Though righteousness, peace and joy were to be had, there was quite a bit of emphasis given to eating and drinking. The Holy Spirit was active in the Old Testament, but not as an indwelling reality in the life of the believer. Under the new covenant, it was the opposite. Righteousness, peace and joy derive not from what one eats or drinks but from who one is filled with—the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18).

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ PHIL 3:7-8.

How do these verses help us see the hidden nature of God's kingdom?

ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATT 5:3, MARK 10:15, MATT 10:7-8.

Discuss how should we respond to the Kingdom of God? What stands out to them in the reading?

If the kingdom is hidden to those who don't believe, what is the appropriate way Christians should react to the knowledge they have of the kingdom? What is the inappropriate way?

These parables involve great sacrifice on the part of those finding the objects of value. Why would this have been meaningful to the first disciples?

Is the idea of sacrificing for the sake of the kingdom meaningful to you? Why or why not?

Why does finding and embracing God's kingdom always involve a measure of sacrifice?

According to Jesus, the kingdom of God has all-surpassing value, but that value doesn't come without cost. We must lay down our lives if we want to truly follow Him. But the good news about losing your life for the sake of Jesus and His kingdom is that your experience doesn't stop there. When we lose our lives, we truly find them. Whatever we might sacrifice for the sake of the kingdom we will find, in the end, to be paltry in comparison to what we gain.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

In the first parable, the man wasn't looking for treasure; he was going about on his way and happened upon it. The same thing is true of us, if we are believers. We were lost in our sin and transgressions, but God opened our eyes and showed us the true nature of life and the kingdom. Because it was God's work in us, we have no reason to boast in our own knowledge. Instead, we should be humbly grateful that our eyes are open.

In both parables, the object didn't become more or less valuable when it was discovered. Both the treasure and the pearl were intrinsically valuable on their own. The only thing that changed was the perspective of the people in Jesus' stories. We live in a time when our perspective is easily dulled by the things around us. In order to see the true value of the kingdom, we must begin by praying for God to open our eyes to its value and then making ourselves ready to sacrifice whatever we need to in order to pursue it.

Jesus said to seek first His kingdom (Matthew 6:33). What are some of the things, that might not necessarily be bad things, which you might be seeking instead of His kingdom?

Is there any practice you can introduce or eliminate from your life this week that would help you see the true value of God's kingdom?

How can you hold the kingdom in its rightful place of value in your family? In your social circle?

PRAYER

Pray that God would open your eyes to see the true value of His kingdom. Ask Him to give you the courage and faith to embrace the cost that comes with His kingdom.