

# The Hidden Treasure

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Date: 07 August 2016

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[ 0 : 00 ] I'd like us to turn this morning to the Gospel of Matthew at chapter 13 and reading at verse 44. The Gospel of Matthew, chapter 13 at verse 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. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field and the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine or goodly pearls.

Now we've been, over the weeks that I've been here, looking at the various parables here in this particular chapter.

[ 1 : 27 ] As I said before, there are many parables the Lord told, some in the region of 30 or so parables. And yet in the Gospel of Matthew we have to go all the way to chapter 13 before even one is mentioned.

And then all of a sudden in this chapter seven parables all come to the fore and they're really all parables about the kingdom.

The kingdom of heaven is like. The first parable about the soil of the sower and the seed is really about the establishing of that kingdom.

The son of man comes, he's the sower. He comes and sows seed in this world. Some falls upon a pathway.

That road which has been trodden down and the seed doesn't penetrate and the birds of the air which are really the same as verse 19 tells us.

[ 2 : 32 ] The servants of the devil, they come and snatch that word away before we hear it and so it has no seed. There's other categories there.

The stony ground hearers, those who have the word choked in their lives because of the deceitfulness of riches and those who bear fruit some 30, 60 and 100 fold.

And that's really the establishment of the kingdom. And the rest of the parables are parables which really speak about the devil's schemes and the way he tries to defeat that kingdom which the Lord has established.

And here again we have these two parables about the kingdom of heaven is like. Now, what do these parables tell us?

That really the Lord is in total control of all that is occurring in this world. He is the one who brings light and life to people's hearts and desires and he is the one who is the governor really of all things and that take place in the world in which we live.

[ 3 : 51 ] Now, as we read these two parables because they're really telling us about the same things it brings up the question about the desires of these two people.

They speak about God's intervening in the lives of these people and bringing them to know a desire to be in his kingdom and to be part of the great company which no man can number.

And so they speak really about God's care and God's election and God's predestination. Now, whenever we speak about predestination or election people very often say well, if I'm going to be saved, I'm going to be saved.

There's nothing really I can do about it. And very often we get a caricature of what is the reality of saving grace.

We can think of someone, say, like the Apostle Paul who was totally opposed to the Gospel. He wanted nothing to do with the Gospel.

[ 5 : 09 ] He is trying, in fact, to destroy the Gospel in his very infancy. And God suddenly intervenes in his life on the way to Damascus and Damascus Road and he converts him.

And the Lord says, why are you kicking against the pricks or the goats? And he says, who are you, Lord? He says, I am the one whom you are persecuting, the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the Apostle Paul, or Saul of Tarsus as he was, is brought kicking against the goats into the kingdom of heaven. He wanted nothing to do with the kingdom of heaven. And yet he is brought kicking into the kingdom. And we see there the Lord's sovereignty in the experience of the Apostle Paul. Now the moment that the Lord reveals himself to the Apostle, in that moment, Saul of Tarsus is made willing in a day of God's power.

We're told that for three days he goes to Damascus, the street that's called Straight, and he's in blindness, whether it's a physical blindness or whether it's a spiritual blindness.

[ 6 : 21 ] It seems to imply it's physical because it's the light of the noonday sun which blinded him and he couldn't see for three days. And then after that, one goes to him and preaches to him the gospel and he's converted.

But before the gospel is preached, he is praying. He's praying for mercy. He's praying to the Lord who intervened in his life. So he's been made willing. And he wouldn't have it any other way. From being an enemy of Christ, he's made willing to be Christ's servant. And Christ says, that's what you're going to be. You're going to be my servant. I'm going to send you to many places, many palaces.

And you suffer for my namesake. But because you are a chosen vessel just for that. And so Paul is brought against his will. Another one, say, from Scripture, the woman who is the cellar of purple in Philippi, she's going there to the place, the prayer meeting, where prayers want to be made. And Paul goes there one day and all of a sudden she has revealed to her the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. And the Lord opens her heart and she's converted.

[ 7 : 33 ] Now in both these cases, it's the Lord who does the work. It's the Lord who makes willing. In the case of Lydia, she's there because the Lord has opened her desire to be there.

In the same way, the Lord has brought your desire to be here the means of grace and to hear what God, the Lord is saying. Others perhaps are brought under the sound of the gospel, coming to church perhaps unwillingly, and suddenly the Lord changes their mind and their desires, opens their eyes and their hearts to see the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

And so the truth and the treasure of this Christ Jesus is really what is being spoken about. And so it's total misunderstanding for anyone to say, if I'm going to be saved, I'm going to be saved and what's for me won't go by me.

That's a total misconception of all that the Lord teaches. For he says, ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened to you.

And there's the responsibility implied in those texts on each of us to do something in regard to our own salvation. Yes, I know we are made willing in the day of God's power, but then there's incumbent upon us a responsibility that is laid at our door.

[ 8 : 58 ] We have to continue seeking. We have to continue knocking. We have to continue asking. Asking for the spirit, asking for grace, asking for light, asking for truth.

And so really, these two parables emphasize all that the Lord here is saying. But there's one thing that once we are made willing in a day of God's power, we wouldn't have it any other way. We wouldn't want to go back to the way that we were. Something has changed. Our world, our understanding has been turned upside down. And what we once hated, we now love, what we have had no interest for, is now an all-consuming thought and interest.

And that's not something that we did in ourselves. It's something that the Lord, by his Holy Spirit does. He brings us to know him, want to know him more and more, want to increase our knowledge of him, want to be more in the presence of his people, want to be in the means of grace.

This is all the Lord's working. And truly, it's wondrous in our eyes. When we are born again, when we're converted, we come running to the Lord Jesus because we wouldn't have it any other way.

[ 10 : 17 ] And that's the Lord's doing. And truly, that's wonderful in our eyes. Now, we look at these parables with these introductory comments because it's a work of grace in our hearts that is the essential basis of what the parables here are wanting to teach us.

the work of grace is essential in both these people that the Lord here is talking about. Whether it's the parable of the treasure in the field or the parable of the merchant seeking goodly pearls or fine

pearls as we are told here.

the man who is in the field is just walking in the field. He's not really looking for anything but he finds this treasure.

Treasure hidden in the field. How he found it we're not told but he finds it. The moment he sees it he recognizes the treasure for what it is he hides it where he discovered it and he goes back and he sells all that he has to buy this field.

Same is true for the man who's seeking goodly pearls. He finds a pearl of great price. He sells all that he has all his other interests all his other treasures he sells it all so that he might purchase this one pearl.

[ 12 : 05 ] And both these examples speak of the desire the Lord implants in the hearts and lives of those who he wants to call for himself.

He not only makes us willing in a day of his power he also makes us willing to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord.

And so what these parables are meant for is to lead us to know what to do with our lives once grace is introduced into them.

First of all here we have both men endure the value of what they had found or discovered. It's not surprising that the man who discovered the hidden treasure in the field saw its value sold all that he had and then bought that field.

He would have been a fool and we would say he would have been a fool even on a natural level if he'd seen the treasure knew its value hit it back in the ground and then just walked on thinking it was too much trouble to go and buy that field for himself.

[ 13 : 39 ] And yet that's what many of us do with the gospel. We know the value of the gospel the treasure that is offered to us in Christ Jesus and yet we hear what's being said we hear what's being said to us in scriptures and in the Psalms and in the lives of others and then we forget what the gospel is telling us about ourselves and telling us about the Lord Jesus Christ and we simply walk away.

I suppose many of us are like the rich young ruler when he goes to Christ he's asking what must I do to inherit eternal life he's asking the right question he wants eternal life and so the Lord says to him go keep the commandments and he says all these have I kept since my youth and the Lord just to show him how foolish he is in making such a statement says yet one thing you lack you idolize your goods your riches go sell all that you have give to the poor and come and follow me and it's too much he's offered a life without end he's offered eternal life and yet he chooses his riches he wants his riches more than what the Lord has offered him and so he goes away sadly now the merchant has spent his whole life looking for this treasure

I suppose like Lydia she was in the place where prayer was wont to be made she was there to hear the gospel and it's there that the Lord opened her heart now this man had been looking for this pearl of great price all his life and then he found it and when he finds it he gets together all his goods all that he has in this world sells it all so that he can purchase this one particular pearl for himself both as I could say with Paul I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus and forgetting what is behind forgetting all that my life has been about in the past years I now press toward the mark of knowing Christ Jesus of knowing him for myself for having that life which is focused on him and which is lived for him alone men and women like that have already had their minds opened to the wonder and the beauty of

Christ and seen him as he really is not anymore before they were converted as a root out of dry ground Isaiah 53 as a root out of dry ground with no form or comeliness but now he is altogether lovely the one whose name is wonderful the one whose name is counsellor the one whose name is the mighty God the Lord all these are true of them because their minds their understanding has been totally revolutionized they're no longer what they were they are now new creations in Christ Jesus and as such they want him more even than light or life itself and so both men knew the value of what they had found and once they had found it they were determined to have it in the same way as we going through life have perhaps an ambition we will do everything in our power to achieve that ambition somehow we think it's the greatest thing that life could offer us and so we do everything to achieve that ambition and in a spiritual sense this is exactly what is being said here we can't imagine that these men having seen the value of their discoveries would simply turn their back and say oh that's too much worry too much hard work to get what I want to get in our own lives if we want something badly enough if we want to get a degree if we want to purchase a house if we

want to get something we do everything in our power to achieve just that and yet in the spiritual sense having been shown the greatest treasure that life can offer so often we turn our back and we say it's too hard it's too much bother we just want to carry on living the lives we're living as though we had all the time in the world to put things right between us and God and so we find here this whole description of what life ought to be about about seeking for the promises of God which are in Christ Jesus and pressing toward the mark of the prize of the high calling that is in him now these parables don't have any bearing upon those who sold the field or the pearl of great price for them the value was only in monetary terms for the others there was something deeper in their desire to own these particular objects the principle described here is that if we are determined to have what by God's grace we've been brought to see is of infinite value of value beyond compare then God is thrilled for us to have it God does not want any to perish but he desires all of us to have salvation in

[ 20 : 25 ] Christ Jesus and so we can have it we can have it now we can have it today but we must have it in God's way we can't say yes I'll have salvation but I'll have it in the way that I want to have it and not in the way the scripture determines because we can only have the salvation that's offered to us in Christ Jesus in the way that God himself has declared in his own word and that's what the scriptures are about to reveal to us the promises of God in Christ Jesus they are yea and amen they are all fulfilled in Christ Jesus and their end is in Christ Jesus he is made unto us righteousness sanctification and redemption all these things he sanctifies us to himself he redeems us to himself he makes us a peculiar people by his own power so that we might be his not only in this world but throughout all the endless ages of glory now really there's only one way in which we can have these riches that are in

Christ Jesus and that's by receiving him alone by turning away from everything that we count so important and so valuable in our own lives we lay aside those aspects of pride and self-righteousness and self-importance which are so much part of the unconverted life if we look back at our past lives we know how important it was for us to be admired or applauded or to be on some career ladder or to get to the top of our profession it was all part of being men and women of this world and yet in the Lord bringing his own grace and mercy into our life we suddenly come to see that all things are lost are as rubbish in comparison to knowing Christ and having Christ as our Lord and our Saviour and so we can have eternal life now if we have it in God's way turning away from our own righteousness turning away from our own ambitions and aspirations turning away from these things and receiving and resting upon Christ alone for salvation very often the unconverted will say I don't I lead a good life I'm very generous of what is mine I give to the poor there's nothing much wrong with my life and that if God is not prepared to accept me on these terms well I don't want to know God well if you don't want to know God God will not want to know you we must come in God's way because it's God's eternal life that has been offered to us not some definition that mankind has dreamed up not some way of life that mankind thinks is most beneficial for society it's

God's way God's way of determining who will be his that we receive and rest upon Christ alone for salvation that we see Christ not simply as a means of access to heaven but that he is all things to us he is our light he is our life he is our ambition he is our heart's desire he is everything to us because God has made him to be that to us in our daily life and so if we come in that way Christ can be ours now today and forever just as these men seeing the value of what they had discovered sold all that they had having sold all that they had they had to get the treasure they discovered and so we prepared to save all for

Christ counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus pride self self righteousness sinful pleasures practices you see the last thing that we will leave behind on the way to glory is self because we're all so full of what we are in ourselves what we've done what we've achieved the pride of what we've done in this particular life we can't love Christ and love all these other things as well he alone must be on the throne as the hymn writer says the dearest idol I have known what e'er that idol be I beg you tear it from your throne so I worship only thee it's

[ 26 : 03 ] Christ alone Christ only and if it's only Christ then we can have him not only today but throughout all the endless ages of glory so we can't love Christ and not keep his commandments every sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come and so every law is meant to be kept now we know that no mere man since the fall is able perfectly to keep the commandments of God but it daily breaks them in thought word and deed and every sin deserves

God's wrath and curse both in this life and not for just to come but there is a way by which God has given us an avenue of blessing what must we do to escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin faith in the Lord

Jesus Christ repentance unto life and a diligent use of all the outward means whereby Christ is revealed to us in the benefits of redemption now all those of you who learned your catechism know these things think on them talk about these things meditate on them chew it over in your own experience if it's important to you and get to the root of what is being said in these catechisms that you learnt as a child those catechisms perhaps which you studied and which your Sunday school teachers asked you to repeat during your early years they become full of meaning they become full of understanding as you grow up and as the spirit guides you through these truths well faith in Jesus Christ receiving and resting upon him alone only not on what you've done what you might one day hope to do the things that you called your good works your righteousness forget all that and rest upon Christ alone and his finished work that's all that's necessary nothing else is required of us but faith in Christ in his finished work on the walk of the cross when he cried

Lord why hast thou forsaken me he's forsaken because he's at that time bearing your sin and my sin to the cross paying for those sins so that we might be declared righteous taking our sins upon himself so that we might be as those who are without sin for we know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ who though was rich yet for our sakes becomes poor so that we through his poverty might become rich there's the transaction and there's the exchange he becomes poor for our sakes that we through him might become rich rich beyond measure rich beyond price because Christ is ours if receiving and resting upon Christ is too hard if what he asks of us is too great it means that we're not like these two men who saw the treasure saw it all they had and had to hide had to have for themselves those treasure see that's the way the gospel is and grace is when it comes into our life you don't think of other people it's something that's very personal we can't be saved for someone else we can't save somebody else it must be a personal transaction between the individual and Christ not done in families not done in churches not done in congregations it's on the personal level on the personal level there must be this transaction

I count all things but loss and Christ says well done good and faithful servant it's that transaction what think he of Christ he is my Lord and my God that's a transaction that is well pleasing to God if that's too hard as I said they were not like those men who found the treasure and the pearl who sold everything they had who gave up everything that they might have that treasure there are plenty of others who will go to heaven if we choose not to go the back waiting table and the back waiting room will not be empty remember the parables of the feast which the king gave and those who thought it too much trouble to go one had bought a field one had bought oxen one had just got married he said and so they gave their excuses and yet the feast was still furnished with guests go to the highways and byways and compel them to come in bring them in so that the feast will be furnished with guests and so it will be on that last and great day when Christ will furnish his and great feasts with guests from every tribe and every kingdom and every tongue and the world so do not draw back do not reject the Lord

Jesus Christ do not wait for a more convenient season do not think those who preach the gospel mad because we're reading too many books because there are plenty of others who will enter into the kingdom everything now knowing that salvation can't be bought you can't have it by money you can't buy indulgences like perhaps the Roman Catholics think you can you can't engage in works of great merit like Nathan thought he could do remember Nathan whose woman servant, girl servant told him to go to Israel, that there was a prophet there who could cure him and the prophet said go and wash in Jordan seven times he said why can't I go to the rivers of Damascus and wash there, what's the difference the soldier said if he told you to climb great mountains and do great deeds you'd have done it, why don't you simply go and do as the prophet has said and although we today as ministers are not prophets in the sense that we can say what's going to happen in the future yet we are prophets in the sense that we declare forth the word of God, we explain that word of God so that you might understand and you might believe and come to a saving knowledge of Christ that's what prophecy of is about, there's two aspects of telling forth and foretelling foretelling is speaking of something like perhaps the brand CEO was believed to have done foretelling something that was happening in the future but telling forth is explaining what the scripture says that you might hear that you might understand that you might believe and come to a saving knowledge of Christ as the hymn writer says we're all the realm of nature of mine that word and offering far too small love so

amazing so divine demands my love my life and my all and the last thing here is the men had so much desire for these things they actually bought it they saw the treasure they recognised their value they sold all that they had they bought it and now it's theirs both men the finder of the treasure and the discoverer of the pearl didn't just see the value of what they'd found they gave everything in their life everything they counted valuable until that time and bought these articles what this tells us is that being saved doesn't merely consist of seeing the value of the Lord's work and in some vague way wanted for ourselves we must receive and rest upon Christ alone for our salvation also as I said a short time ago it's something we must work towards we must ask we must seek we must knock and keep on doing so until we have the assurance that Christ is ours that nothing nothing in the world is going to stand between us and Christ we must have him we must have him for our souls or we will die trying to have him be told none none who come to God in that way will ever be turned away none who come empty will return empty but they shall be filled and that's our promise that's our encouragement to come seeking Christ

[ 35 : 47 ] my mind my heart my will has to be changed and once it's changed once it's been changed by God's grace our emotions also are brought into subjection of Christ preachers used to say the truth of the gospel has to be understood with our minds that's why we have to pay attention to what's being said in the first parable the seed falling on a pavement doesn't penetrate the surface and the birds of the air come and take it away if we sit under the gospel not attending on it not trying to understand what's being said the Lord in one of the later parables says Jesus said have you understood these things and they said yes what he's saying there is have you paid attention to what I've been saying have you grappled with your mind your understanding to try and grasp what's being said and they said yes and I'm asking the same thing have you understood these things have you paid enough attention to try and understand the precepts that I'm trying to get across to you my mind my heart my will has to be changed and the truth of the gospel has to be understood in our minds and then filtered into our hearts that understanding is part of being saved understanding the gospel and our hearts receiving it and resting upon

Christ alone and subsequently there as it takes root in our hearts there it brings forth some 30 some 60 and some a hundredfold those who trust in Christ not only receive Christ but benefit from receiving him by exercising it in the same way as an athlete or a bodybuilder or whatever develops their skills by exercising so in a spiritual sense we're told Paul tells us bodily exercise profits only a little but godliness with contentment is great gain and that's where our desire should be in this world godliness with contentment godliness with what God has done for us and in us be content with such things as we have and to press on toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus well amen and may the lord bless these thoughts to us let's conclude now our worship singing to god's praise in psalm 43 the 43rd psalm at verse 3 oh send thy light forth and thy truth let them be guides to me that's on page 264 to the end of the psalm to god's praise starting to sing oh send thy light forth and thy truth let them be honest to thee and bring me to thy glory in where I dwell then will I to God's altar go to God my chiefest joy yea God my God thy name to praise my heart

I hope I will and cry why God thou then cast down my soul for to this praise thee and why with vexing God my heart my heart disquieted in me still grunt in God for him to praise his good cause I yet shall have thee be of my countenance is there my God that doth be saved and now may grace mercy and peace name of the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit one God rest on you and abide in you now and always amen