

**Text:** Matthew 13:44-46

**Title:** Hidden Treasure and Pearl of Great Price

**Truth:** Entry into the kingdom of God is priceless.

**Date/Location:** Sunday 12/11/2016 at FBC; revised 12/28/2021

## Introduction

The parables of the mustard and leaven speak of the global growth of the kingdom of heaven from a very small start. It will fill the earth and take over everything.

As in those days, Jesus is still today sowing seed; his followers are planting and watering. He is still inviting you to be a participant in His future kingdom. Take note—we are not talking about an abstract or immaterial heaven here. We are talking about a literal, physical, bodily, governmental, societal, religious kingdom on earth.

But what is required to "get in" to this kingdom? Note the character of the kingdom in the explanation of the wheat and tares (Matthew 13:41-43). All who practice lawlessness will be removed. All things offensive to God will be eliminated. That is, all people who sin without regard for God will be removed to Hades. The righteous will be in the kingdom.

But if none is righteous (Rom. 3:10), how can there be any residents in the kingdom of heaven? The answer is that God makes people righteous by exchanging their unrighteousness to Christ and His righteousness to them.

We obtain that righteousness-exchange through faith (Philippians 3:9). This is the good news of Christianity. It is those who receive the love of God that will shine in the kingdom like bright lights (13:43).

The question is whether you will recognize the value of the kingdom or not. Will you see the surpassing value of what Jesus is talking about, and then DO something about it? That's what the two short parables of the treasure and pearl teach us.

# I. Parable of Hidden Treasure, v. 44

The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field...

## A. The Parable

1. The treasure is hidden in a piece of land, like oil or gold or other valuables that are buried underground.
2. The treasure is found.
3. The person who finds it realizes its great value.
4. He re-hides the treasures so as to keep it for himself.
5. He has great joy about that treasure because it will improve his life. It is something he wants.
6. He is induced to make a big financial move to acquire the field. He still does not disclose the existence of the treasure, otherwise the seller would not want to sell it. So, he sells everything he has to buy the field and get the treasure in it.

B. How the kingdom is **not** like this parable. When the Bible says that the kingdom is "like" this, it is not saying that it is exactly the same as the hidden treasure. For one thing, we do not purposefully re-hide the message about God's kingdom. We don't need to keep it for ourselves because there is enough of it to go around for anyone who wants it. We do not literally need to sell all our possessions to get it because it cannot be purchased with money. (But do take note of the rich young ruler in Matthew 19:16-30 who was entangled in riches and who had to sell them to get rid of his idolatry.)

C. How the kingdom **is** like this parable.

1. **It is hidden.** The prior parables testify to this idea--about how the kingdom starts small, and about how kingdom citizens are sometimes hard to distinguish from others. It is not that God is trying to be hard to get along with, although the truth of Matthew 13:11-17 must be considered. It is true too that Satan doesn't want the good news published. He blinds the minds of those who do not believe (2 Cor. 3:14, 4:4). The Bible is the most censored book of all time. The kingdom is not presently

seen "out in the open" so it is easy to ignore it. The whole notion of Jesus returning is ridiculed (2 Peter 3:3-4), and this adds to the pressure that keeps people away.

2. The kingdom is like the treasure in that **it is extremely valuable**. It is worth everything you possess to get it. And this is the main point of this parable and the next one. When you recognize the excellent value and worth of the kingdom of heaven and what Christ offers, and you become a believer, what you are really doing is becoming a follower of the king, a disciple, a citizen of the kingdom. You share in its vast wealth and benefits.
3. If the gospel of the kingdom is worthy of only a small portion of your time and consideration, you haven't yet really grasped what it is. If you have just added it onto your life instead of making it and its King the core principle of your life, then you are not getting it. If the gospel of the kingdom doesn't cause you great joy and doesn't cause you to change your path in life, then you don't really understand it.

## II. Parable of the Pearl of Great Price, v. 45-46

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking pearls...

### A. The Parable

1. The initial part of the parable concerns a man who is seeking pearls. In the parable of the hidden treasure, it is not mentioned whether the man was seeking treasure or not. He perhaps just happened upon it. Here, the man is hunting for valuable pearls. He was a jeweler or collector and wanted the best he could find.
2. Naturally, the kind of pearls he wants are **rare**, and they are **hidden**.
3. He finds one and realizes that it is of extreme value. By way of illustration, the Pearl of Lao Tzu is valued at \$35 million or more. This pearl is not the gem-quality round stone you might think of when you hear the word *pearl*, but it was the largest known pearl for many years, produced by a giant clam in the Philippines, weighing just over 14 pounds and irregular in

shape.<sup>1</sup> In past centuries, pearls were sought—they were not produced commercially. Perhaps one oyster in every 2000 pounds of harvested oysters produces a perfect pearl.

4. The searcher sells everything that he has and buys that pearl. It is not clear if it was more valuable than what he sold, or if its selling price was a bargain. But it was more valuable *to him* because he freely made the exchange for it. No one forced him to do so. He really wanted it.

B. How the kingdom is **not** like this parable. The kingdom is a bit different because there is none who seek God (Rom. 3:11). And this means that there is no one who, without God drawing him (John 6:44), will be genuinely searching for God. However, if someone is genuinely looking, then it must be that God has been working on them.

C. How the kingdom **is** like this parable. Once again, we cannot miss the point that the kingdom is **hidden and extremely valuable**. When it is realized by a person just how valuable the kingdom is, he or she will give up whatever it takes to obtain it. In short, the believer *wants* to be part of the kingdom of Christ.

1. There is no hemming and hawing around about how the person doesn't want to give up this or that habit, or (whiney voice) "Can't I keep living like I want and still have the gospel?" There is no debate about whether repentance is part of the picture. That is so well understood and accepted by a person who sees the value of the kingdom—because God has opened his eyes—that there is no question about it. "Do I have to repent?" is a question that is out of touch with kingdom reality. "I *want* to repent" is the response of one truly moved by the good news.
2. The new believer will gladly give up sin and idolatry. He will count the cost and pay it (Luke 14:28). She will take up the cross and follow Christ. He will have great joy and delight to find the pearl of greatest price.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl\\_of\\_Lao\\_Tzu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pearl_of_Lao_Tzu)

3. It is hard for the rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven (Matt. 19:23-24) because they find it difficult to recognize the value of the kingdom compared to their goods.
- D. Note that the pearl of great price is a parable. A book produced by the Mormon Joseph Smith has the same title, but it is not to be confused with this parable. It contains various "translations" of make-believe documents and doctrines of Joseph Smith collected by the LDS organization. It has no true religious value whatsoever and is not worth selling anything to buy it.

## **Conclusion**

The gospel as it is often preached today tells of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It tells of the meaning of those events—why they occurred and what they accomplished toward God and toward man. And this is extremely significant because wholeheartedly trusting in the Messiah is the only way of salvation from sin. It is the only way to become a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

But this is just the beginning of the gospel of the kingdom! It is just the entryway or foyer into the kingdom of God that will be ruled by Christ in a future age, and then turned into the eternal heaven after that. The whole package is priceless, and thus worth everything to obtain.

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