

## Matthew 13:44-46

In Western Texas, I read, there is a famous oil field known as “Yates Pool.” During the depression, this land was a barren sheep ranch owned by a man named Yates. He was not able to make enough money to pay on his mortgage, so he was in danger of losing his ranch. With little money for food or clothes, his family, like many others, struggled to live from one day to the next. Then a crew from an oil company came into the area and asked permission to drill a wildcat well on the property. They struck a huge oil reserve – so big, that 30 years later, a test of his field showed that it still could produce 100,000 barrels of oil a day! And to think that it was ALWAYS THERE, but WAS OF NO BENEFIT until it was “FOUND.”

This is a modern-day example of the parables that Jesus told; teaching us important lessons concerning the Kingdom of Heaven.

Be careful, DO NOT make these parables into allegories, as if we must pay for the treasure! These are parables about “The Kingdom of Heaven” – God’s Word is VERY CLEAR, and the Greatest News is that Jesus paid the Full Price: “we are saved by grace through faith... not our own doing, it is the gift of God, not by works (or paying for it ourselves) so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9) Rather, in this parable, Jesus is revealing the GREAT WORTH / the EXCLUSIVENESS of “the treasure” – Jesus wants us to see that the present and eternal benefits are WORTH FAR MORE than everything the world has to offer!

In Jesus’ parables, notice that the “treasures” were in places where anyone could have “found” them – the “treasure hidden in a field” was apparently found “by accident;” and “the pearl of great value” was found by a merchant searching.

God’s Word tells us in Romans 10, “Faith comes by hearing the message, and the message is heard through the Word of Christ.” (v.17) And Jesus, speaking to those who refused “the treasure / the pearl of great value” says (John 5:39-40): “You search the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about Me, yet you refuse to come to Me to have life!”

The “pearl of great value” is God’s Word available in the Bible for all people – “the field” that holds the “treasure” are the Bible, and the Sacraments – Baptism and Communion. These are available and given for ALL people, but too often “*passed over*” / undiscovered, “*remaining hidden*” because of unbelief or failing to see their “great value.”

Again, God’s Word tells us, “The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 4:4)

In Jesus’ parable, “a man” – “any person” – found the treasure. He probably stumbled upon it while working the field. Sometimes this is how God brings people to saving faith. We have the example in Acts, of the Ethiopian official, returning home after going to Jerusalem. He was reading from the book of Isaiah, but not understanding it, when the Holy Spirit sent Philip to his chariot. Philip pointed to Jesus in the Scriptures and this foreigner, “found” Jesus, the “priceless treasure!” In great joy, he asked and received, Baptism and “went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:39).

Another example from Acts: Although Paul & Silas had been “severely flogged” and locked up in the back-breaking stocks; they spent the night “praying and singing hymns to God”; witnessing to their great joy of “*their faith relationship with Jesus, the Treasure.*” When the earthquake came, all the

chains came loose, the prison doors were opened and the jailer was about to kill himself. Paul stopped the jailor, saying that they were all still there. The jailor recognized that Paul & Silas had something very special (a “priceless treasure”) so he asked, “‘What must I do to be saved?’ And they replied, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household.’ ... The jailer... was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God – he and his whole family.” (Acts 16:25-34)

God still works in this way today – especially with church members who may simply be “going through the motions” of worship and church membership; having been raised and confirmed in the church, but lacking the real joy and meaning to life that is a result of *having the treasure*. Then, one day, in Bible Study or in worship, the “discovery” is made and there is great rejoicing in their “new life” in Christ! This is why it is such a serious thing when believers stay away from worship, Bible Study and the Lord’s Supper – for “the treasure / the pearl of great value” cannot be “found” by those who stay away from the places where God has placed them!

Do you have this “treasure,” or is it still “hidden?” Does your life reflect the great joy of being a part of The Kingdom of Heaven? Notice that in BOTH of Jesus’ parables, Jesus says, “in his joy, he went and sold all he had” in order to have “the treasure.”

If we find no joy in being a part of the kingdom of heaven, maybe, that is because we have not “sold all.” Too many Christians mistreat God’s Word and Sacraments as *one more item on the religious buffet table / one additional piece of religious information*. “Religion” is something to “do” on Sunday/Wednesday morning, (sometimes reluctantly) like washing the car, ironing, or mowing the lawn – an *activity that is done* rather than a totally new and joy-filled life-style to live. Jesus / His Word and Sacraments DON’T FIT in with our *old*

*values and ideas*. God’s Word tells us, “if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus tells us plainly that it is an either/or situation – He says, “No one can serve two masters... you cannot serve God and mammon (the things of this world).” (Luke 16:13)

Jesus FULLY PAID THE GREATEST PRICE – He lived, died and rose again in perfect obedience to His Father’s will, so that OUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN and so that we might have life – not just the temporary, unfulfilled life in this world, but “abundant life” (John 10:10) / “eternal life” beginning right now!

Yes, MUCH better than finding hidden treasures of this world – Jesus, the Priceless Treasure gives:

\*Unshakeable joy in knowing He has made us a part of His kingdom;

\*Daily eagerness to worship, sing His praises (when the restrictions are lifted!), study His Word, receive His Sacraments;

\*and the precious privilege of serving Jesus in His Kingdom: wherever God places us; using our time, our abilities and our financial resources.

In the name of Jesus, the priceless treasure; may you be blessed each and every day this week and continue to be blessed until we gather again to receive more of Jesus, the Priceless Treasure.

AMEN