

Verse by Verse Through Ephesians #37

Parables of the Kingdom

Matt 13:44-46

Introduction:

1. The practice of hiding valuables in the ground was common in Bible days
 - a. Because there were no banks, people protected their own valuables
 - b. If a person needed money or needed a piece of jewelry he went to the secret place at night, uncover the treasure and take what was required.
 - c. Remember that Achan hid his treasure in the ground under his tent
2. Because Palestine had been a battlefield for hundreds of years, families would often bury objects to hide them from plundering armies
3. When the owner of buried treasure was deported to another land or killed, the treasure would be forever lost unless someone discovered it later
4. Something like this might have happened in this parable
 - a. Maybe his hired hand inadvertently dug up the treasure when plowing
 - b. The field does not belong to him so he sells all in order to buy the field
5. Some believers are embarrassed by this parable thinking that our Savior used an unethical act to illustrate a spiritual truth
 - a. They would say that the man was obligated to tell the owner of the field about the treasure that he found
 - b. The point here is not the ethics of what the man did but his willingness to sacrifice everything he had in order to possess the treasure
6. In the first place, it is obvious that the treasure was not hidden by the present owner of the field and was unknown to him.
 - a. Otherwise, he would have retrieved it before he sold the field.
 - b. 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.
7. In the second place, 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.
8. In the third place, 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.

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

BYZ **Matthew 13:44** Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν θησαυρῷ κεκρυμμένῳ ἐν τῷ ἀγρῷ, ὃν εὐρῶν ἄνθρωπος ἔκρυψεν· καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς χαρᾶς αὐτοῦ ὑπάγει, καὶ πάντα ὅσα ἔχει πωλεῖ, καὶ ἀγοράζει τὸν ἀγρὸν ἐκεῖνον.

I. Parable of the Hidden Treasure – vs 44

A. The Fortune in the Treasure

- The emphasis throughout this parable is on the value of the kingdom of heaven and of heavenly matters.
1. **A valuable fortune – “treasure”**
 - a) The word translated "treasure" means "something precious"
 - b) The kingdom of heaven is something of great value.
 - c) This says spiritual matters are much more important than secular
 2. **A veiled fortune – “treasure hid in a field”**
 - a) The value of the treasure is not apparent to the world.
 - b) It is "hid" from the world.
 - c) They value secular things but not spiritual things.
 - d) They do not perceive spiritual values or spiritual understanding.
 - e) "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" ([1 Corinthians 2:9](#)).
 - f) What a great tragedy to not be able to perceive the value of the most important things in life—spiritual matters.
 - g) Clarke says that the treasure is not a pot or chest of money, but rather a gold or silver mine, which he who found out could not get at, or work, without turning up the field, and so he bought it.

B. The Finding of the Treasure

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

- The treasure in the parable was one which was found, not earned.
- 1. **The providence in the finding – “hath found”**
 - a) *The finding of this treasure was not because the man was hunting for a treasure, but because he simply came upon the treasure in a providential way.*
 - b) *This illustrates how a person comes to salvation.*
 - c) *He is not looking for salvation; he is a lost sheep going astray ([Isaiah 53:6](#)).*
 - d) *But God in His providence brings the Gospel to the lost person so he can be saved.*
 - e) *The finding emphasizes the grace of God in salvation.*
- 2. **The perceiving in the finding**
 - a) *Unlike so many, this man perceived the value of the treasure and acted accordingly.*
 - b) *So many hear the Gospel and do not see any value in it.*
 - c) *Many slight the gospel, because they look only upon the surface of the field.*
 - (1) *But all who search the Scriptures, so as in them to find Christ and eternal life, [John 5:39](#), will discover such treasure in this field as makes it unspeakably valuable; they make it their own upon any terms.*
 - (2) *Though nothing can be given as a price for this salvation, yet much must be given up for the sake of it.*
- 3. **The protection after the finding – “buyeth that field”**
 - a) *The original owner died and all knowledge of the buried treasure had perished – nothing unethical here*
 - b) *Some believe that what the man did here was not ethical—he should have told the owner of the field about the treasure.*
 - c) *But the purpose of the parable is not ethics but to show the value of the kingdom and spiritual matters.*
 - d) *The protecting of the treasure simply emphasizes the fact that the man saw how valuable the treasure was.*
 - e) *We need to have great value for spiritual matters.*

C. The Funding for the Treasure

44 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

- The man valued the treasure highly and so he decided to buy the field and to gain the treasure.
- Our text tells us about his funding for the purchase.
- 1. **The pleasure in the funding – “for joy”**
 - a) *To get enough money to buy the field, the man had to sell all that he had.*
 - b) *The striking feature in the funding is the joy in the funding.*
 - c) *The man did not begrudge getting rid of his assets, for he saw the value of the treasure, and he so desired it that it was a joy to sell everything to get enough money to buy the field.*
- 2. **The price in the funding – “all that he hath”**
 - a) *This puts the right value on spiritual matters.*
 - b) *This does not teach that you can buy salvation; rather it teaches that spiritual matters are extremely valuable and we should be willing to sacrifice everything to gain spiritually.*
 - c) *"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" ([Mark 8:36](#)) is the message.*
 - d) *Sacrificing all for eternity is no sacrifice at all, and we should have "joy" because of the great blessings we will gain spiritually.*

II. Parable of the Pearl of Great Price – vs 45-46

A. The Seeking of the Pearl

45 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

- The parable begins with a merchant man seeking good pearls.
 - The merchant would travel the world looking for items to purchase and resell at a profit
 - The kingdom of heaven (and here you can also say the Gospel) is compared to the merchant man seeking pearls.
1. **The substance in the seeking – “goodly pearls”**
 - a) Pearls were the most valued gems in the ancient world
 - b) Pearls are unique jewels because they are the only valuable jewel formed by a living organism.
 - (1) Pearls are formed as a result of an injury done to a living organism.
 - (2) A grain of sand gets into the shell of an oyster and this causes an injury
 - (3) To counter the injury, the oyster covers the grain of sand with many layers of a substance until the pearl is formed.
 - c) Furthermore, a pearl is unique among jewels because it cannot be cut into smaller pearls. - If you cut the pearl, you ruin it.
 2. **The superiority in the seeking – “goodly pearls”**
 - a) This merchant man was looking for the best.
 - b) He was not interested in trafficking in cheap and shoddy material.
 - c) God is not cheap and shoddy.
 - d) His kingdom calls for the best. We need some of that attitude in our churches today.
 - e) So much church work is shoddy and second rate, and churches get an abundance of leftovers and things no one wants.
 - f) But God's business is important and demands the best.
 3. **The success in the seeking – “found one”**
 - a) The merchant man was successful in his efforts.
 - b) He found an excellent pearl.
 - c) He was looking for a rare beauty and he found it.
 - d) This is a good picture of the work of God and Christ.
 - e) They are successful.
 - f) Whatever they set out to do, they will do it and succeed.
 - g) Opposition may rear up its ugly head against the great Merchant Man, but it will not succeed.
 - h) God's plan and purpose always succeeds.

BYZ **Matthew 13:45** Πάλιν ὁμοία ἐστὶν ἡ βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν ἀνθρώπῳ ἐμπόρῳ ζητοῦντι καλοὺς μαργαρίτας·

BYZ **Matthew 13:46** ὃς εὐρῶν ἓνα πολῦτιμον μαργαρίτην, ἀπελθὼν πέπρακεν πάντα ὅσα εἶχεν, καὶ ἠγόρασεν αὐτόν.
He went and sold (apelthōn pepraken). Rather eagerly and vividly told thus, "He has gone off and sold." The present perfect indicative, the dramatic perfect of vivid picture. Then he bought it. Present perfect, imperfect, aorist tenses together for lively action. Emporōi is a merchant, one who goes in and out, travels like a drummer.

B. The Sacrifice for the Pearl

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

- To buy the pearl, the merchant man had to make a great sacrifice for the pearl was one "of great price."
1. **The size of the sacrifice – “sold all that he had”**
 - a) In the previous parable the man "sellethe all that he hath" to buy the field in which the treasure was hid, which illustrated how we should value spiritual things especially salvation.
 - b) This pearl was worth more than all his other pearls together
 - c) This parable is not a picture of the sinner seeking Christ but the Savior seeking the sinner.
 2. **The support for the sacrifice**
 - a) Some may ask how the pearl can picture sinners who in their conduct are certainly not a picture of a pearl.
 - b) The answer is that every sinner has a soul that is worth much.
 - c) "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul" tells us that the soul is extremely valuable.
 - d) How a person lives does not change the value of the soul.
 - e) Christ came into the world seeking the most valuable product in the world, namely, the soul of man.
 - f) That supports the great price Christ paid for the soul.

III. Lessons from These Parables

A. The Kingdom Must be Personally Appropriated

1. It is not obtained by inheritance or birth
2. In both parables a single individual sacrifices all that he has in order to obtain that which is immeasurably valuable to him

B. The Kingdom is Priceless

1. The value of salvation is seen in that it is worth selling all one's possessions in order to receive it
2. The blessing of being a child of God through faith in Christ is utterly priceless, more valuable than all the possessions the richest man could acquire.
3. There is absolutely nothing to compare to it in worth and beauty, because it is "an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away" ([1 Pet. 1:4](#)).
4. It is forgiveness, love, peace, happiness, virtue, purity, righteousness, eternal life, glory, and more.

C. The Kingdom is Not Superficially Visible

1. The treasure of salvation is not obvious to men, and it is therefore not something they naturally seek.
2. They do not understand why it is so prized by Christians and why some people give up so much—their self-dependency, sinful pleasures, and sometimes even their social, political, and economic freedom and welfare—to gain what seems to be so little.
3. They cannot understand why believers willingly live by standards of ethics and morality that go against man's deepest drives and lusts.
4. The way of the kingdom is narrow and unattractive to the natural man, and that is why so few find it or desire to walk in it once it is found ([Matt. 7:14](#)).
5. The full value of a pearl may not be evident to the average person, who may admire its beauty yet be unaware of its pricelessness.
6. Many people have passing admiration for Jesus and the gospel but are totally unaware of the supreme and priceless gift that could be theirs in belonging to Him.
7. They see the pearl in plain view, but to their worldly eyes it has little worth.

D. The Kingdom is the Source of True Joy

1. It was from joy that the man sold all he had in order to buy the field that held the priceless treasure.
2. Joy is a basic desire in every human being and is the desire that all the others either directly or indirectly serve.
 - a) *We like to eat because food brings joy and satisfaction to our palate and a good feeling and health to our bodies.*
 - b) *The desire for money is primarily based in the joy we hope to find in the things money can buy.*
 - c) *Fame, power, knowledge, and all other things we long after are desired for the joy it is hoped they will bring.*
 - d) *Even the miser, who seems to love money for its own sake, hordes his possessions for the joy the hoarding brings.*
 - e) *Some people thrive on misery, because they find joy in feeling sorry for themselves.*
3. Yet all of those joys are temporary and disappointing.
 - a) *The only true and eternal joy is the joy found in Christ and His kingdom, because man was made by God for Himself.*
 - b) *Human satisfaction can be found only in God's divine provision.*
4. After Jesus exhorted the twelve to abide in Him and to have His words abide in them, to prove their true discipleship by bearing much fruit, and to keep His commandments and so abide in His love, He said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full"

E. The Kingdom May Be Entered from Different Circumstances

1. In the first parable the man comes upon the treasure completely by accident. As far as we are told, he was not looking for anything and certainly not a priceless treasure.
 - a) *In the course of going about his normal business of earning a living, the first man was working in the field or perhaps passing through it on a journey.*
 - b) *Finding a treasure was the last thing on his mind.*
 - c) *In a similar way, many people come across the gospel while pursuing the activities of their daily life, with no expectation or concern for salvation or anything else spiritual.*
 - d) *While busily occupied with earning a living, caring for a family, getting an education, or building a career, they hear a sermon, read a book, listen to a tape, or have a conversation that presents the gracious claims and promises of Christ.*
 - e) *By the Spirit's gracious power they recognize the priceless value of the message, and they believe, are saved, and inherit the kingdom.*
 - f) *That is what happened to Paul.*
 - (1) His experience was unique in that it was a dramatic, awesome, and audible encounter with the risen Christ and in that he was called to be an apostle.
 - (2) But it was not unique in the fact that trusting Christ as Lord and Savior was not his intention.
 - (3) He was, in fact, in the midst of zealously persecuting those who trusted in Christ.
 - g) *The woman at the well near Sychar had come there simply to draw water and go on about her chores, but she encountered the Source of living water, went home redeemed, and led many others to redemption ([John 4:5-42](#)).*
2. The second parable depicts a man whose life business was searching for the thing he eventually found.
 - a) *He represents the seeker after God who for years looks everywhere for meaning and purpose in life, trying one religion or philosophy and then another.*
 - b) *He finds nothing that satisfies but believes that the true way is out there if he can only find it, and he never stops looking.*
 - c) *That was the experience of the Ethiopian eunuch whom the Holy Spirit led Philip to intercept on the road to Gaza.*
 - (1) The man was a Gentile proselyte who had come to Jerusalem to worship, and as he returned home he was reading from Isaiah but understanding nothing of what he read.
 - (2) After all his seeking and study, he was still confused and unsatisfied.
 - (3) But when Philip explained that Isaiah was writing about Christ, the Savior, the Ethiopian immediately believed. His long quest was ended, and he "went on his way rejoicing" ([Acts 8:26-39](#)).
 - d) *Another Gentile, Cornelius, was also a God-fearing proselyte, who "gave many alms to the Jewish people, and prayed to God continually."*
 - (1) God honored his sincere seeking by sending Peter to explain the gospel and lead him and his household to salvation ([Acts 10](#)).
 - (2) In similar ways, the Gentile Lydia ([Acts 16:14-15](#)) and both Jewish and Greek worshippers in the synagogue at Berea ([17:10-12](#)) sought and found the Lord.

F. The Kingdom is Made Personal by a Transaction

1. In both parables the priceless object was bought at the expense of every possession the finder owned.
2. For that reason some Christians feel uncomfortable about these parables, because they seem to teach that salvation can be bought.
3. But from beginning to end, Scripture makes abundantly clear that salvation is totally the free gift of God.
4. Yet interpreted in the right way, salvation is bought in the sense that the person who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior surrenders everything he has to Him.