

# The Parable Of The Treasure

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- [ 0 : 0 0 ]     What a great and enduring song that is. Well, this morning we've got an incredibly long reading, one verse.
- Matthew chapter 13, we're going to be reading the parable that I read earlier. And if you just keep Matthew chapter 13 open, if you want, throughout that we'll be able to see the context.
- Matthew chapter 13, verse 44. These are the words of Jesus to his disciples.
- 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.
- Lord, our Lord in heaven, we pray that you would give us understanding in your words.
- [ 1 : 3 2 ]     We pray that you would open our hearts and open our ears. Whoever has ears, let them hear. Please, by your Spirit, teach us.
- Please, by your Spirit, move us. Please, by your Spirit, give us understanding and help us to see the treasure of the kingdom and the glory of Christ, our Lord.
- In his name we pray. Amen. Well, as I said earlier, I wonder if any of you have ever wondered what it would be like to find treasure, whether it's in a field or in a loch or in the loft.
- Maybe like the Antiques Roadshow, you maybe think there's something up there that might be worth a lot of money. Maybe it's a car boot sale, something there that doesn't belong there.
- It's worth way more than expected. In 2014, these are not unusual things. In 2014, in Scotland, a man armed only with a metal detector in the Kirkcubry area found a horde of Viking artifacts, now referred to as the Galloway Horde, and he was rewarded two million pounds for this horde of treasure.
- [ 2 : 5 3 ]     Have you ever wondered what it would be like to find some sort of treasure, something valuable? Maybe you've been walking along and found money in the street before. Maybe you've found something in a coat pocket behind the seat of the couch, in a car boot sale.
- Maybe you just know someone like that. Maybe you know someone who just seems to be serendipitous. They just always seem to stumble upon happy discoveries that they weren't looking for.
- Maybe you know someone like that. Maybe they annoy the life out of you. With that in mind, let me ask, have you ever wondered what the kingdom of heaven is really like?
- Like, be real with us, Jesus. What is it really like? Of all the things that Jesus could have preached about, of all the good things that people perhaps think that he spoke about, when Jesus started his ministry, his message was about the kingdom of heaven.
- This is, the kingdom of heaven, the phrase is mentioned over a hundred times, and most of those are on the lips of Jesus. Most of those are in the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and most of them are on the lips of Jesus.

[ 4 : 09 ] He preached about the kingdom of heaven. It was his recurring theme. He continued to preach about it, who the kingdom belongs to, who will receive the kingdom, and in the parables, he often spoke about what the kingdom was like.

Now, why all this focus on the kingdom? Well, I remember when I was in Bible college hearing this American professor talking about the kingdom of God like an empire.

He was always talking about the empire and the emperor. And one of my classmates asked him, why do you always use that term empire when the Bible talks about the kingdom?

And he said, well, you British people who live in the United Kingdom don't actually know what it's like to live in a kingdom under a king. What you've got, this system now, is not what it's like in the ancient world.

Kingdoms and kings were very different. And so, to have a monarch and have a kingdom was very different in the ancient world than it is now. And so, he's like, you've got a soft, light version of that.

[ 5 : 11 ] He says, so you don't understand what it's like when it talks about that in the Bible. When it talks about it in the Bible, it's perhaps what you would think of as an empire. And so, why Jesus has this focus on the kingdom is for this reason.

Everything that we hope for, this is the way to read your Bible, everything that we hope for, the life that we long for, all the things that are promised in the Bible are all dependent and all hanging on who the king is and whose kingdom we are in.

In John chapter 18, Pilate asked Jesus if he was a king and Jesus replied saying, my kingdom is not of this world. It's not from this world.

He has a kingdom and Pilate rightly detests that he is a king. So, you are a king, but his kingdom is not one of the kingdoms of this world. And elsewhere in Luke chapter 19, when Jesus is nearing Jerusalem, the people suppose that the kingdom of God was about to appear immediately.

So, Jesus told a parable and in this parable, he told how he was first going to go away somewhere to receive his kingdom and then he would return.

[ 6 : 26 ] That's in Luke 19 if you want to check that up later. What do you think of when you hear the term preaching the gospel? You all probably have some sort of experience in mind when you hear the term preaching the gospel.

that in Matthew 4, 23, when we read that Jesus went about preaching the gospel of the kingdom, is that something different?

Is that something different from our ideas of what preaching the gospel is? You see, the kingdom is the thing that occupied the minds of the Jews for centuries. It was the subject that Jesus went about preaching the good news of the kingdom and he didn't preach about it simply because it was important to the Jews.

He didn't preach about it simply because he hadn't yet gone to the cross. He preached about it because he was the king and all the promises of God will be fulfilled in him and in his kingdom.

That's what we need to realize. It's all about the king and his kingdom. That is what all the promises depend on. So if someone were to ask you, who is that king?

[ 7 : 36 ] What is his kingdom? Like? Someone were to ask you the question, tell me what is the kingdom of heaven like? Could you sum that up perhaps in two sentences?

This parable is only two sentences. It's a very short parable but boy is it loaded with meaning. What would you say if you were just trying to get across what the kingdom is like?

What is the kingdom really like? So Jesus says this. Kingdom of heaven is like treasure. Treasure.

Everyone has a concept of what treasure is. I mean, who doesn't want treasure? I'm not talking about money. Treasure. Treasure. Something that is treasured.

A prized possession of great value. While you may be disappointed with money, you will never be disappointed with treasure. It's not just wealth, it's worth. So we'll get to the meaning of what this treasure is in a bit.

[ 8 : 36 ] But firstly, it's sufficient to say that the right way to think about the kingdom is that it's like treasure. Whatever you think of the things of the world, whatever you think about your hopes and dreams and desires, whatever you value, you place on the things that you have or things that other people have.

Whatever value there is in other religions, whatever worth there is in other things, things, the kingdom of heaven really is like treasure. Whatever your idea of treasure is, it's like treasure.

Jesus is saying that if you want to have an accurate understanding, okay, right, let's be honest, guys. If you want to have a realistic expectation so that you're not disappointed, I've learned in my life that half of my disappointments are about my own expectations.

Have a realistic expectation. And so Jesus is like, okay, right, I'm going to speak honestly. Here is a realistic expectation to have of the kingdom of heaven.

If you want a realistic expectation, this is what it's like. It's like treasure. No, honestly, it is like treasure. Now, you may say, oh, well, that sounds lovely, but I just don't see it.

[ 9 : 51 ] Jesus says, well, yeah, because it's hidden in a field. He anticipates that. Again, we'll get to what this field might be, but it's sufficient to say that while the kingdom is like treasure, in some sense, at present, it's hidden.

So don't say that it's not treasure just because you don't see it. If you don't see it, it's just because it's hidden, not because it's not treasure. We live in a world full of people who don't see the kingdom that way.

How many people do you know that don't see the kingdom that way? Probably more people that don't see it that way than do. It's not just because it's not.

It's simply because it's hidden. And hidden where? Hidden in a field. And you might say, well, what is the point if it's hidden? That's not very fair.

How can anyone know that it's treasure if it's hidden? But you've got to ask, in what sense is it hidden? Is it hidden so that it would never be found? Or is it hidden so that it's just not out in the open?

[ 11 : 00 ] Is it hidden to everyone? Or is it just hidden to you? Is it hidden in the sense when Jesus says that the kingdom is like treasure and someone says, well, I just don't see it.

And Jesus says, well, the reason you don't see it is not because it's not treasure. It's because you haven't found it yet. You've not found it. Kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found.

Just because you haven't found it doesn't mean other people haven't. There's other people out there that don't see the treasure, but it doesn't mean that it's not there and it doesn't mean that other people haven't found it.

perhaps they haven't even been in the field. Perhaps they've not been in that area of the field. How could they see the treasure if they've never been there? Perhaps they've been at a different side.

We'll explore what the field is, but whatever the case, some people just don't see the treasure because to them it's still hidden. But it can be found. Jesus never said the kingdom was like treasure hidden in a field that no one found.

[ 12 : 08 ] He said that a man found it. Now you might say, well if this treasure is hidden and if it is treasure, it's clearly hidden because loads of people don't see it, then how do I know that anyone's ever found it?

I mean this guy that says he's found it, he might just be making it up. Well simple. You see because you can tell that this treasure has been found when you see a person who found it doing some very strange things.

The person who finds it will do things that just don't seem to make sense. They'll do things that don't seem in their best interest and they will do things that will seem to those who don't see it to be a total loss.

Is that not true of Christians throughout the centuries? They just look weird like doing crazy things that look out of their best interest. It's like Jim Elliot, isn't it?

You know, he gave his life and people just couldn't understand it. Many, many people like that. And so, the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and did some very strange things.

[ 13 : 24 ] He covered it up and then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has to buy the field. And his neighbours are like, what are you doing? You're selling everything by that field.

I've seen that field. Nothing special about that field. It doesn't make sense. Again, we'll explore what this treasure is and what the field might be, but it's sufficient to say that the field is not the thing that the man thinks is worth selling everything for.

People on the outside think that the man sells everything for the field because there's something about the field. It's not the field. He's just getting the field so that he can get the treasure. This man doesn't sell everything because he thinks the field is worth it.

And that's a very important detail in this parable. The man buys the field, not the treasure. Do you think anyone on earth could ever afford to buy the treasure? And think about that anyway.

If you were to buy the treasure, what's the value? You're just paying like for like. The man is getting the bargain of his life. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up and then in his joy he goes and sells everything.

[ 14 : 39 ] He's not having to think about it. In his joy he sells everything. Some people get caught up at this point of the price. Oh, you need to give everything. This is a story about having to sell everything.

This is a story about forcing us to give up everything. It's not about the price of the field. It's not about the man selling everything that we have. And how do we know that? Because the point of the parable is not total loss.

The point of the parable is in proportionate gain. He's gaining way more than he could ever give. It's the bargain of a millennium. You can't get a better deal than selling everything you have to buy a field and the treasure comes free with the field.

And the man who found it spent hardly a moment doing a cost versus benefit analysis. Think about that. We spend our lives at times making decisions and we need to make a cost benefit analysis.

And this man in a split decision second, I'm going to sell everything in half. I'm getting this field. I can get this field and if I get the field, I get the treasure. Yes! And he goes off and without a moment's hesitation sells everything and buys a field.

[ 15 : 48 ] And it just doesn't make sense unless you've seen the treasure. Notice at what stage he has joy. It's not when he finally owns the treasure. His joy is when he discovers the treasure and goes away to sell everything so that he can get the field and get the treasure.

The parable's not about challenging people to give up everything for God. The application is not that it's going to cost everything and you need to be okay with that. That's not the application. The point is to see the incredible value of the kingdom.

It's not a challenge for others to give something up. It's an explanation for those who have. For those who have. And you're wondering why? This is why.

When Jesus tells this parable, he's no longer speaking to the crowds. In Matthew 13, verse 36, it says, And then he left the crowds and went into the house and his disciples came to him asking for explanations.

And so this parable is told to his disciples, not the crowds. Jesus tells this parable and it's not primarily about the price paid but the treasure gained.

[ 16 : 58 ] If there's ever meant to be a challenge in this parable, it's not so much a challenge to your purse or your wallet, it's a challenge to your eyesight and your heart.

If you don't see the treasure, you're never going to buy the field. Never. So, that's the explanation for the people that don't buy the field because they don't see the treasure.

You wonder why people just don't get it. Why? It's because they don't see the treasure. Earlier in Matthew chapter 6, Jesus spoke about treasure. On earth, it's destroyed by rust and stolen by thieves, but in heaven, it can't be touched.

And so he says, and we know this saying, where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. And so the parable isn't a challenge to go sell everything. The application isn't that we should try and give everything up and only then will we see the kingdom.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, if I give away all that I have and deliver my body to be burned, but I have not love, I gain nothing.

[ 18 : 04 ] So it's not simply about learning to give up things. The point of the parable isn't to get us to see what we should give up. is to get us to see a glimpse of the tremendous worth of the kingdom and the incredible gain it would be.

And even if we gave up everything for it, we would still get far more in return. Do we think that God needs anything? In all our giving, do we think God needs anything from us?

God doesn't need our money. God doesn't need our service. Paul says in Acts 17, the God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, doesn't live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

You see, God doesn't gain or lose anything. That may be a challenging thought, mysterious. God does not gain or lose anything. anything. What kind of God would he be if he did?

It is us who either gain or lose something. Yet most people live with the wrong idea of what would be a gain and what would be a loss. So, when someone like the Apostle Paul says strange things like this, whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

[ 19 : 27 ] Indeed, I counted everything as loss for the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as dung in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him.

And then he says something strange like, for me, to me to live is Christ and to die, that's gain. That just sounds crazy to most people, doesn't it?

We often look at things in this life as a gain and we look at death as a loss. That's not how Paul sees it. Paul sees it the other way around because the surpassing worth of knowing Christ, the King, the Christ is the King.

He transcends all things that are worth something to us in this world. He transcends all these things. He outshines and outlasts all the things that rust in this world and can be stolen.

Knowing him is far more gain than owning all the treasures of this earth. And if death means going to be with him in his kingdom, of course that would be gain, not loss.

[ 20 : 36 ] And it's the same as this man in this parable. Selling everything he has to buy the field looks like a loss to everyone watching on. Friends, family, colleagues, neighbours, what are you playing at?

But that's only because they do not see the treasure. They only see the field. The treasure is hidden to them. You see, people seldom in life stop to ask, what might I not be seeing here?

People just jump to conclusions, don't they? But it's worth stopping and asking, this guy's doing something awfully weird. You wouldn't normally sell everything you've got to buy a muddy field.

What am I missing here? What's going on that I'm not seeing? We live in a world full of adverts trying to sell us a thousand things we don't need.

Part of the strategy of advertising is to over-exaggerate the value of a product in order to get you to buy it. If we were really told the true value of products, we might not buy them.

[ 21 : 40 ] And it's over-exaggerated not just to make a profit, but to make us buy it in the first place because we might not buy it if we knew the truth. And we live in a world of over-promising adverts, don't we?

They over-promise. They over-promise what a product can do for you. And they all mostly disappoint. And so we live in a perpetual state of feeling the loss of something that someone promised to be again.

Someone said this was going to be again in my life and we're perpetually feeling the loss of these over-promised products. Jesus in John 18 says, for this purpose I was born and for this purpose I came into the world to bear witness to the truth.

If anyone's going to tell us the truth, it's Jesus. Jesus isn't trying to sell us something. In this parable, I don't think he's trying to gain recruits. He's not trying to recruit people or get people to sell everything to follow him.

He's talking to people who already have done that. He's talking to the disciples. And so it's not a recruitment drive when Jesus says the kingdom's like treasure. He's not saying that to any punter and just saying, come on, please buy it.

[ 22 : 57 ] It's like treasure, I promise. He's saying it to people that have already given up things to follow him. He's talking to his disciples.

He's giving them a reminder and a glimpse of what they're gaining because to them more than us and we forget this, the timing of his kingdom would have been unexpected to them, to his disciples who bought into that.

They bought the field and they're following him and things just begin to look strange as if they're not working out. People begin to be very hostile with Jesus and the disciples begin to think, this isn't looking how we thought it would look.

Is this your kingdom, Jesus? What's going on? On the ground, it would have caused them to doubt at times, to doubt the treasure that they thought they discovered.

Isn't that the case? In this parable, the man has joy when he first discovers it. In his joy, he goes away and sells everything to buy the field. And Jesus is talking to his disciples.

[ 24 : 01 ] They've already done that. They've already known the joy of discovering the treasure. But perhaps, somewhere in the process of buying the field, doubts creep in. Perhaps you wonder, wait a minute, did I actually see treasure or am I just imagining this?

Like, perhaps you wonder, did I actually see this? I mean, this is just crazy. All these comments from other people about how crazy this is, all this pressure because hardly anyone sees it.

Am I just claiming to see something that's not there? Everyone's saying, well, you're at it, treasure. It's just a muddy, worthless field. And even when Jesus was risen from the dead in Luke chapter 24, even when he was risen from the dead and the disciples heard about it in Luke chapter 24, it says it seemed to them an idle tale.

And they didn't believe it. It just seemed like an idle tale. That's too good to be true. And then later, when they do see it, when he appears right in front of them, it says, for joy, they disbelieved.

What a strange little phrase, isn't it? For joy, they disbelieved. He's standing in front of them and for joy, they disbelieved. That just means it's too good to be true. This is, no way, too good to be true.

[ 25 : 29 ] Doesn't that sound like just about every treasure story that you've ever heard? It's just an idle tale. Somebody's talking about treasure up in Loch, so and so. Don't bother.

It's just an idle tale. Probably not true. Don't go chasing stories of treasure. And then even when it's staring you in the face, it might seem too good to be true.

There's got to be a catch. If you're a disciple of Jesus, you know what this is like. You know what I'm talking about. You've probably felt it often. You have known both the joy of discovering the treasure and you've known the difficulty of others not seeing it.

Is that not true? You've experienced the questions. Some of those questions even in your own heart. Is there really treasure in this field? Really?

Have you ever thought even just one time in your life that all of this might have just been an idle tale? All this stuff in the Bible? Have you never once thought?

[ 26 : 36 ] And if you haven't, then bless you. I have. All this stuff. It's too good to be true, is it not? Heaven?

No sorrow, no tears, no pain, no suffering, no death. Does that not just seem like an idle tale? Have you ever thought just once in your life, even if you've had a glimpse of this treasure by yourself, have you ever thought just once, forgiveness just seems too good to be true?

Well, along with the parable of the pearl of great price, Jesus is also telling us how people discover this treasure. With the pearl, some people search for it all their lives.

some people have been searching here, there, and everywhere for it. And then, with the treasure in the field, some people just seem to stumble upon it by accident.

And I'm sorry if this really annoys you, but that was my story. I wasn't searching for it. I just stumbled upon it like a treasure in a field. I wasn't looking for it. And I found it.

[ 27 : 48 ] Just happened to find myself in a field, stumbled across something that I've found to be treasure. So what is the treasure? Treasure, Jesus says, is the kingdom.

But again, when we were talking about the gospel, what is the gospel? Is it one and the same thing? The gospel of the kingdom, the gospel of Jesus, he's the king in many different forms.

The truth, the good news about the kingdom, the goodness of the kingdom, the reign of the king in your life, in your world, and the king himself. So let me ask you this.

When you think of a field, if you've ever been walking in the countryside, you'll have a more realistic, I mean, I like the song by Sting, Fields of Gold. But if you've ever walked in a field, fields are not pretty.

Fields are really ordinary, earthy, often muddy, sometimes smelly, sometimes hard, and no ordinary person really looks at that field and says, do you know what?

[ 28 : 55 ] I want to sell everything just to buy that field. And so, where have people over the centuries found this treasure? And what very ordinary things have people found this treasure?

You see, you find the truth and the good news of the gospel, the good news of the kingdom on the lips of very ordinary people, weak people, people like me and you.

People have found heavenly treasure in earthen vessels. We are jars of clay. No one would expect to find this kind of treasure in us. If others find anything in us of this treasure, it has more to do with what God has put in us and hidden in us than anything to do with us ourselves.

Who would look at us and think that within us is this treasure? I mean, I don't know if you experience that often, but I experience it often. Who would think that we have anything within us that's remotely powerful and life-giving and transcending of death?

Similarly, in the church or in Christianity, it has been found not because of our services are spectacular, not because our rituals are great, not because of these buildings or anything like that, not because of our spiritual disciplines.

[ 30 : 26 ] Outwardly, these things don't look special. In fact, more often than not, they look contemptible to the world. But hidden within them is the kingdom.

Hidden within is the rule and reign of heaven's king. How hidden, how despised at times when people can only see the field that is you and I, when people can only see the field that is the church or the religion, they cannot see anything special and they don't understand why people would give their lives up.

And we want to reassure them, we're not giving our lives up for this. I mean, we like this, but this is not what we're giving our lives up for. It's not for a person.

It's not for a church. It's not for a religion. It's not for the field. It's because within the field is hidden treasure. People can only see the field, but they can't see the kingdom.

They can't see the life. They can't see the king himself. People have found this kind of treasure in the scriptures, in the word of God.

[ 31 : 46 ] King David said in Psalm 119, I rejoice at your word like one who finds great spoil. Psalm 19, he says, it's more desired than gold, even much fine gold.

Who would have thought that words that seem so ordinary in a book among many other books in the world would be words of life? Who would have thought that in a book like this would be words of God?

It's not just a book. We're not selling everything that we have for just a nice book with leather binding and red writing sometimes. Special production of a scroll.

It's the word of God that is the treasure. Truth and life are hidden in plain words in human language. Ancient writing are hidden words of God.

and you can tell that because you see it but other people reading the exact same words don't see it because the treasure is hidden from them.

[ 32 : 54 ] And Paul says to Timothy, you've been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. And Jesus, Jesus speaking to the Bible experts of his day said this, he said, you search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness about me.

The treasure of the kingdom is really the king. In Christ in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge says Colossians 2.3 In him was life says John 1.4 Who would have thought that in a Jewish man mostly a carpenter who would have thought that within him was the source of all that is living?

The source of all life and all that exists was in this man who was standing in front of you. Mary's son. Carpenter. Grew up Nazareth.



I remember what he was like. Who would have thought? Paul says in Colossians 1 he, this man, this man, Jesus.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. By him all things were created in heaven and in earth visible and invisible whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities.

[ 34 : 19 ] All things were created through him, that man and for him and he is before all things and in him all things hold together. I mean who among those who grew up with Jesus would have thought that about him?

Probably hardly anyone. Some of the people in his hometown in Nazareth could not imagine that and so it was hidden in his humanity.

Paul says in Colossians 2 for in Christ the fullness, all the fullness of deity dwells bodily. Talk about treasure hidden in a field.

Who would have looked at Jesus sleeping, eating, walking, talking, crying, laughing?

Who would have looked at Jesus as a baby, as a boy? Who would have looked at Jesus as a man on a cross and thought that's God?

[ 35 : 20 ] That's God with us, Emmanuel? Who would have thought that? Yet it's true. He is God in the flesh. He is the treasure of the kingdom.

All these things we have a glimpse of the kingdom and so those who buy the field they buy it in faith because they know something about the field that others don't see.

That in these ordinary things are hidden treasure and that treasure is Christ himself, the king and his kingdom. if you had to sell everything for the field you would do it gladly because it would be the greatest gain you could possibly hope for.

That's the reality of the kingdom and so if you haven't seen that if you have seen it then remember it. Things will come along that will challenge you that will cause doubts that will question you.

So many people will surround you that just don't see it. You need to remember the treasure that you have seen in Christ. Remember why you've given everything away for it. There is a treasure we could never buy never buy but it's freely offered with the field and if you had to sell everything for it it would be worth it.

[ 36 : 41 ] That's why you are doing some of these crazy and costly things in your life. That's why you keep doing these crazy things because you've seen a treasure that surpasses anything this world can offer.

A treasure that can endure anything this world can throw at you. Remember that. Remember the joy. One day the world will see it but you know it and if you haven't seen that yet it's not because it's not true.

It's merely hidden to you and you haven't found it. You'll see other people doing things that don't make sense and it's because they have found this treasure and that's why they're buying into this man named Jesus.

Ask yourself why are so many people buying into this person called Jesus and ask yourself is there something that I'm missing here? What a kingdom.

What a future. What a king. Let me pray. Lord we thank you for these words that you have given us.

[ 37 : 57 ] Lord we thank you for those of us that have found this treasure in you. We thank you for the hope that it gives us. We thank you for the endurance that it gives us.

We thank you for the gain that it gives us and the assurance that we will be with you and your kingdom and that will be the greatest thing ever better than anything this world can offer.

Please help us to remember this. Please help us to hold on to the truth of this and please help those that don't yet see it to see it whether they've never been looking for it or whether they have.

Please help people to see this treasure even if it's hidden in ordinary things. We pray for your sake for your glory and for our joy. Amen.

Amen.