

The Parables of Jesus: The Treasure and The Pearl

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Date: 09 May 2021

Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Good morning and welcome to our service for Sunday, May the 9th, 2021. My name is Kent Dixon and I'm the lead pastor here at Bramard Baptist Church in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Welcome this morning, however you're joining us. If you're joining us live on Facebook this morning, tuning in and watching the video on Facebook later in the week, listening to the service on our website later in the week, or however you're connecting with us, welcome to this place, welcome in this way. You are welcome in this place today.

We send out a weekly pastor's message from me, as well as a weekly e-newsletter with updates from our church, including news and prayer updates, prayer requests, praise requests, or praise updates and things like that.

So if you'd like to receive those and stay connected with us, please send an email to info at bramardbaptist.com. That's B-R-A-E-M-A-R-B-A-T-T-E-S-T-T-O-T-C-O-M.

And we'd be happy to add you to our distribution list for that. So if you already received that, I encourage you to read it each week, as that's your main source of updates from our church.

[1 : 14] Please pray for the prayer requests that are listed in that weekly update. Celebrate the answered prayers that we identify there as well, as you read about those things in our church.

That's a great way to stay connected. And next week, just a little announcement. After I open our service and we have our worship singing time together, we'll be welcoming a guest speaker next week.

He's an annual visitor to Bramard Baptist Church. His name is Steve Roadhouse. And Steve is the executive director of Gull Lake Center, which is our church's camp.

It's our denominational camp. And so Steve will be coming. It will be a joy to have Steve here virtually. He will be preaching via video. And he'll be bringing an update on the camp, as well as a sermon titled, Into the Unknown, that will focus on the book of John.

So I do encourage you to tune in for that. Steve is a great speaker. He's a good friend. And he will, I'm confident, he will bring a challenging and godly message for us next week.

[2 : 24] Well, happy Mother's Day to you today. For many people, Mother's Day is a time to celebrate their mom. And before the pandemic, we likely may have had traditions that we did on Mother's Day.

We may have gone out for a nice meal or ordered food maybe, or, and did things to gather together. And so there are likely safe and creative ways you've figured out how to do those things.

And so I encourage you to celebrate in the ways that you can. Don't, don't discard this day. Make it special in the way that you're able to. Moms are often presented with flowers or gifts, or even breakfast in bed if they're super lucky.

And so we recognize that this is now the second day like, like this that we've celebrated in this way. The second Mother's Day. And the reality of what celebrating special days like this look like right now is different.

No question. It's very different for us and not what we're used to. I also want to recognize this morning that Mother's Day can be a complicated time.

[3 : 39] And I want to take a moment to acknowledge that. For some of us, Mother's Day can be a time of celebration, a time of excitement and joy and, and all sorts of great emotions.

But for others, Mother's Day can be hard. Others Day, it can be for some people. It can be a reminder of a broken relationship that may still be broken and may ultimately never be repaired or may, may never be restored in the way that we would, we would so dearly love for it to be.

It can be a reminder of a broken relationship that continues to be broken. For others, it may be a reminder of loss, the loss of a spouse, the loss of a parent or a sibling.

But this morning, I want to take a moment to put some of those things aside as much as possible. This morning, we reflect on the mothers who supported and encouraged and shaped and made sacrifices for each of us in so many ways.

And for the moms who are watching or listening this morning, thank you, sincerely thank you for all that you have done. You are loved and valued more than you know, likely by the people closest to you.

[5 : 07] Sometimes you may not even think to say the words, but you are loved and valued. And may God bless, richly bless, each of the mothers who are watching or listening.

Happy Mother's Day. Let's pray. Father God, we recognize that this Mother's Day is different. It's still different, Father.

And sadly, it's also familiar as it's our second of this pandemic. So many cannot visit their beloved mothers or grandmothers or the women who have been like mothers to them.

People feel so lonely because their hands are not held or their arms cannot hug. Other families have had really too much togetherness, Father.

The past weeks and months have been tumultuous with tantrums for big people and little people and fights and frayed tempers and perhaps too many words said too quickly.

[6 : 17] Father, you are the one who hears our lament about what is and what we deeply regret. Lord, we recognize that there are people who are missing mothers or children who have died.

Those who have recently lost loved ones who may not have been able to say their goodbyes in person. They've not been able to have funerals or memorial services in the way they would have liked.

Lord, you are the one who comforts us when we are aching or feel sadness and loneliness. And Lord, we ask for your comfort for anyone who is struggling and grieving this morning.

Father, thank you for new babies born in a pandemic, for mothers who carry them to term and birth them, and for doctors and midwives and nurses who assisted in spite of challenging healthcare circumstances.

Lord, thank you for all the mothers around the world who are cooking and cleaning and caregiving and homeschooling children who are missing their friends and activities.

[7 : 29] Father, mothers who have put their careers or their jobs or their own interests aside, sacrificing selflessly for their children. We thank you for them.

Lord, hear our prayers for mothers whose patience is stretched and breaking, who are worried about finances or who may be walking on eggshells in difficult relationships.

Lord, hear our prayer for children with jagged memories of being hurt or neglected by their mothers. And Lord, hear our prayer for mothers who minimize or cannot face the damage that they may have done themselves.

Lord, broken relationships hurt even more on Mother's Day. Giver of life, fill our congregation with love.

Open our ears to hear each other's stories so that we can become a community of hope. Lord, I pray that we would nurture each and every person with tenderness and compassion, each one a treasured member of your family.

[8 : 46] Lord, we ask all these things in the precious name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen. We're continuing in our sermon series, The Parables of Jesus, this morning.

And throughout this series, as I've said before, we're going to revisit some familiar stories. Lots of these may be familiar to you. And some may be even less familiar or even not familiar at all, relatively new.

And we're going to explore the stories that Jesus told as parables in the coming weeks. We're continuing to do that together this morning. And our prayer is that may God grant us the eyes to see and the ears to hear the truth that is found in these parables of Jesus.

Amen? Amen. Well, in the course of my research for this series, I've learned that some commentators suggest that the parables of Jesus can really be grouped into or divided into five subject or focus areas.

parables of Jesus. So here we go. Parables of the kingdom, which we've already been looking at. Parables of salvation is the second one. Parables of wisdom and folly.

[10 : 04] So we've talked in the past about wisdom literature in Ecclesiastes or the book of Proverbs. Parables of the Christian life. Parables of judgment.

So again, parables of the kingdom, salvation, wisdom and folly, the Christian life, and judgment. And so over the course of this series, we're going to look at, and I'll identify for you, at least one parable, sometimes more than one, from each of these kind of groupings.

So we'll get a sense of these themes throughout Jesus' parables. And as we talked about, Jesus preached or shared, told over 40 parables throughout the New Testament.

So we're going to not look at all 40, but we are going to look at highlights. And our sermon this morning is titled The Treasure and the Pearl. We're going to be looking again, like we did last week, at two shorter parables, or a pair of parables, if you like.

The most familiar full names of these two parables are not just the treasure, but the hidden treasure. You'll find that as a subheading within your Bible, perhaps.

[11 : 23] And the Pearl of Great Price. Not just the pearl, but the Pearl of Great Price. And the parable of the pearl is sometimes also referred to as the parable of the pearl merchant.

So that's another way that you may have heard to it referred, if you're familiar with this one. These parables are also parables that focus on the concept of the kingdom of God, just as the parables of the sower, the mustard seed, and the yeast, which we've explored in our series so far.

Those three have focused on the kingdom of God as well, and the two this morning do too. So as a quick refresher, the kingdom of God refers to God's rule over creation, not just as a fixed moment in time, but for all time.

The arrival of Jesus Christ, of his ministry, and the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God, was to announce that the kingdom had come.

Had come through him, through what he would accomplish through his death and resurrection. But we also need to recognize that God's ultimate plan for all creation will not be fully realized until Jesus returns and God's reign over his kingdom is fully realized.

[12 : 44] And that's something that I've been reminding us of over the past few weeks. If you have your Bible, turn with me in your Bible to Matthew chapter 13, beginning at verse 44.

And we'll read through both of these parables. Jesus says, Matthew 13, verse 44, he begins, The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field.

When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Do you remember last week we talked about similes?

Well, a simile, just as a reminder, is a figure of speech where one thing is compared to another. And they're identified, similes are identified, when you hear the word like or as.

Like a treasure in a field. Jesus is using a simile again to help his listeners to better understand the greater concept of the kingdom of God.

[13 : 50] God. Also referred to, you've heard this as well, as the kingdom of heaven. Those are interchangeable expressions. The kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven.

And Jesus uses these parables, these similes, to compare his greater concept, the kingdom of God, to something else that people can more immediately relate to.

Does that make sense? So if it doesn't, I haven't said this before, but if it doesn't make sense, you can say that in the comments below the video. So if you're watching live on Facebook, this is a great opportunity for you.

If you have a question, if you want to point something out or whatever it may be, if something pops to mind or you just want to interact with one another as the sermon is going on, I will not be offended.

So please do engage. So post a comment. If I say something that you're not really sure of, I will respond. So here's a great opportunity for you to be interactive with one another and with me.

[14 : 58] So everyone says good morning to one another and I generally respond with a good morning back when I notice someone. By the way, if you're not following or liking us on Facebook, I can't see you when you watch.

So don't be offended if I don't respond and you're watching. It's just that I don't know you're there. You're watching incognito. So I do encourage you as I say when I am sharing something or when I say something, if it doesn't make sense, go ahead and ask a question or go ahead and ask for something to be clarified.

So remember, teachers often say this to students, remember that if you have a question, you may not be the only one. So don't be afraid to ask a question.

So let's continue. We just identified another simile. Well, let's continue reading from Matthew verse 45 as Jesus says, again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. Another kingdom simile, right?

[16:08] We recognize that. So what are some of the common thoughts, the common ideas, maybe even similar language Jesus uses in these two parables?

If we were in person, this would be an audience participation moment and you know that I like those. So I pause and wait for people to respond, to give some ideas or some suggestions. So if you're watching live right now, post your thoughts in the comments below the video. So what are some of the common pieces of language, the common ideas that you're seeing Jesus use in these two parables?

Well, there's a sense that the prize or the goal is waiting to be discovered. Can you see that? There's something waiting to be discovered here.

The man finds something hidden in a field and the merchant, we read, is looking for something. Jesus is creating the sense there that something is very special and it's just waiting there to be found.

[17:18] It's there for the taking. It is available to whoever looks for it, whoever seeks it. It's ultimately accessible to everyone.

And we also sense, get a sense of something being revealed, right, or discovered by someone. The man, we read in scripture, the man finds, it says, treasure in the field.

The merchant finds the pearl. So in both these cases, the goal is reached. The prize is discovered. There's a discovery or a revelation that happens here. And in general, we recognize that Jesus is talking about what here? Well, he's identifying value.

He's identifying in a very relatable way, treasure or pearls and value. He's connecting those pieces. Can you see that timeless appeal and relevance he's tapped into here?

[18:22] I don't know about you, but the idea of having a treasure map and going on a kind of adventure where you're looking for something is really exciting. I find that exciting and I've always thought treasure maps were really neat, especially since I was a kid.

And if you dropped a treasure map in my lap right now, I would be gone. I would find a shovel, I would put on an eye patch perhaps. No, I wouldn't. But I would look, I would actually engage in that process because that is exciting to me.

So I confess that I'm not really much of a pearl person. So you might think it would be odd if your pastor suddenly started wearing a pearl necklace. And I'm with you on that.

It would be odd. But the idea of a pearl resonates with us, doesn't it? It resonates with us as something special, as something valuable, as something that has true, tangible value, doesn't it? When we hear the word pearl, we immediately equate it with value. And there's another common element to both these two parables that you may recognize.

[19:29] Okay, so what did both the man in the field and the merchant immediately do after they made their discoveries? discoveries. Let's look back.

We read that the man in the field, in his joy, he went and sold all he had, scripture says. He was outstanding in his field.

And then the merchant, also, we read, went away and sold everything he had. That's what scripture tells us. Do you see what Jesus is suggesting here?

No, I don't believe he's suggesting that we sell everything we have, that we live a penniless and destitute life with no pleasures or any sort of possessions of any kind.

I don't believe that's the message. But there's no question here that Jesus intended to emphasize the priorities and perspectives of the kingdom of God.

[20:31] This perspective of eternity. this eternal perspective versus a perspective that's solely anchored in the here and now, in the temporary.

In Matthew 6, Jesus teaches about earthly value and treasure versus kingdom value, eternal value. And he concludes that teaching in Matthew 6, verse 21, with the words, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

It's powerful and convicting stuff, right? Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. so. We get the sense here that Jesus is saying our outward priorities reflect our inward priorities, don't they?

The things that reflect value in our lives, the things that we choose, we deem to be most important to us, the things that receive the most time and attention from us, reflect the things we value most. [21 : 55] If we've received Jesus as the Lord of our lives, we are called to submit and reflect kingdom values and kingdom priorities.

I encourage you to reflect on this. What do you value most? I'm not trying to make you feel guilty, but think about that. What are the things that you value most?

What are the things that if someone who knows you well reflects on your life, reflects on the things that you put first in your life, what are the things that they would identify as being of the most importance to you?

There's no judgment here, as I said, but if someone observed your life for an extended period of time, what would they say you deem to value most? There's no question for me, I like hockey. I love the Edmonton Oilers. I have for years. And I invest time, there's no question, I invest time in watching hockey games.

[23 : 06] I don't prioritize it, I can, somewhat reluctantly, miss a game if I had to. But there's no question if someone watched me during playoff season, or go Oilers, if they watched me during this time of year, they might say, wow, that's important to him, that's something that he invests time in.

Now, granted, there's a window of time here that wouldn't necessarily, I'm not rabid about hockey all year round, mostly, but do you see what I'm getting at there, is that if someone observed your life, where would they see that you invest the most of your time, the most of your attention?

Are you a person who seems anchored or anxious? Are you someone who seems contented or conflicted?

Are you someone that puts the needs of others first or last? My friends, Jesus is calling us in the parables, in recognizing, especially the kingdom parables, to recognize the values of the kingdom of God.

He's calling us to be content with what we have, be content with prioritizing the kingdom, seeking to love others and love God, love God first, and by association, love others with the same love.

[24 : 45] Jesus is challenging us to not become overly connected to the things of this world, the things that ultimately will not last.

In Matthew 16, verse 26, Jesus says, what good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul?

Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? Jesus asks a lot of rhetorical questions in scripture. What's the answer to those questions?

Nothing. What good will it be for a man who gains the whole world, gains everything, possessions, wealth, and recognition, notoriety, prestige, and yet forfeits their soul?

It's a losing game. What can a man exchange? So if you gather all these things, how does that equate to the value of your soul?

[25 : 54] Nothing. your soul is infinitely, eternally, more valuable than anything you could have in this life. We recognize that when someone doesn't know Christ, when those of us who follow him now didn't know him, perhaps, we make choices in this life, right?

We make choices without an eternal context, because that's all we knew, that's all we had. But in knowing Jesus, in knowing the eternal opportunity and relationship that we have, the eternal impact, the eternal treasure that we can be storing up by helping others and investing in the kingdom of God and what God is doing in the world, nothing in this life can purchase eternal life. That's done for us. Friends, when we let, seek to let, or ideally just let it happen, let an eternal perspective shape us, shape you, you just might find that your values or decisions will begin to change as well.

do you worry or do you pray? Do you make your own decisions or do you ask God for help in making decisions?

The kingdom of God, God's ultimate plan for our lives and for eternity, is the greatest possible treasure we could ever find, we could ever have, and it's waiting there for us.

[27 : 44] If you've accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, that treasure is yours. But does your life reflect the fact that you have that treasure, that you've discovered it?

treasure. My friends, may we be people whose lives reflect the truth of that treasure. May we cherish it and live our lives with that as our focus.

May we also be people who reflect and share that treasure with everyone we meet. Amen.

Amen. We're going to close our service this morning by singing the doxology together and we've done this before. These words will be our closing prayer and our benediction.

And so go in peace when this song ends and have a great week. And do be sure to join us next week as I open our service.

[28 : 54] We'll sing together and we will welcome Steve Roadhouse from Gull Lake Center to hear about the upcoming camp season and what that's going to look like.

Some of the exciting developments that have been going on at Gull Lake that you may not have heard about. As well as hearing Steve's sermon based in the book of John entitled Into the Unknown.

And so God bless you. Have a great week and happy Mother's Day. praise God from him all blessings flow praise him all creatures here below praise him above he heavenly holds praise father son that's holy gold ■■■■ praise praise God from him all blessings flow praise Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above the heavenly home.

Praise Father, Son, that's all we know. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

[31 : 08] Praise Him, all creatures here below. Praise Him above the heavenly home.

Praise Father, Son, that's all we know.