

# Stories with Purpose: Christ our treasure

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Preacher: James Ross

[ 0 : 00 ] And again, take a seat, please. And just before our kids head out to junior church, we'll pray for them, and we'll also pray for our offerings. So let's pray.

Lord, our God, once again, as we thank you for every spiritual blessing that is ours in the Lord Jesus, as we thank you for all your kind gifts towards us day by day, and we thank you that you invite us to respond in worship by giving our gifts and offerings.

So whether we've done that physically or electronically, we pray that you would use our money to build your church here and around Scotland and around the world so that more and more people might be praising your name, enjoying the good news that's found in the Lord Jesus.

And when we pray for the nations and the peoples of the world, we pray for our children, that we thank you for each one of them, and we pray as they go to their classes, that they would enjoy learning together and worshipping together, and may they grow together in faith and obedience as children of the living God.

Now we pray in our Savior's name. Amen. So the boys and girls will head out to junior church, and while they are heading out, perhaps we can turn together in our Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1.

[ 1 : 36 ] We will shortly hear this section. You have up on the screen, there's also some church Bibles if you need a copy. And Steve Willis is going to come and read God's word for us.

Thanks, Steve. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus, grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will, to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the one he loves.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace, that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

[ 3 : 00 ] And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment, to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined, according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will. In order that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory, and you who were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory.

This is God's word. Thank you, Steve. Now let's once again join our hearts together in prayer. Let's pray. Lord, thank you for the beauty and the truth of those words that we have just read from your word.

That for the people of God, we have that privilege by your grace of having been chosen, even before the world was made, that you set your love on us in Christ.

[ 4 : 37 ] Thank you that before we were created, you chose by your grace to adopt a people for yourself, to be children of God through faith in the Lord Jesus.

Thank you that we have eternal hope of an eternal home when our faith is in him. Lord, we thank you for that redemption that Jesus accomplished through his precious blood.

when we are unable to save ourselves, when we are unable to bridge the gap between us and yourself.

Jesus has paid the price for our sin. He has removed the sin barrier so that we can be welcomed all the way into your presence. Lord, thank you for that promised inheritance that our hope isn't just for now, but it's for all eternity.

We thank you that as your people, we have a living hope that the heart of our good news is a living and risen savior.

[ 5 : 49 ] And so we pray that you would give us a sense of our privilege as your people. And we pray that it might be a source of comfort and strength.

And we pray that you would give us joy in the Lord Jesus. Now we pray that you would give us courage to live for Jesus knowing these things are wonderfully true.

that give us courage to speak for Jesus, recognizing that people need to hear this good news in order to be saved.

And Lord, we pray that the Christian hope would be particularly precious to those in our church family who find themselves undergoing hard times right now.

We think of many who are caring for loved ones, those who have deep concern and sadness for a variety of reasons.

[ 6 : 53 ] Lord, we ask that the comfort of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit would be theirs today. Lord, we pray for those who are struggling with their physical or their mental health today.

Lord, again, we ask that the powerful, comforting presence of the Lord Jesus by his Spirit would be their reality.

That whether folks are here, whether folks are at home, whether they are in hospitals or care homes, you know where we are and you know our needs and you are able to minister help and healing.

And so we pray that you would be at work among us. Lord, we pray today for those who are facing exams in the next few weeks.

Lord, that you would give them endurance. You would give them the ability to learn and to retain what they have learned. The ability to stay calm under pressure.

[ 8 : 03 ] Lord, that for your people it might be a time of growing in dependence on you and learning to pray to you and finding you faithful.

Lord, we pray for those who have pressures of different kinds, whether that's connected to finance or to things going on at home or things in the workplace.

Again, we thank you that we can cast our cares on you knowing that you care for us, recognizing that you know us better than we know ourselves.

Lord, we thank you that you are a good, good Father. Lord, we thank you too that we don't just pray for ourselves but you invite us to pray for the world.

Lord, we pray for the community around us. We thank you for the connections that we have personally as we go about our business week by week. We also thank you for particular opportunities to connect with the community.

[ 9 : 09 ] Thank you for the toddler group that meets Friday by Friday. Thank you for every family that comes to enjoy a friendship and a warm welcome and a place to play and to meet with others.

We thank you for the connect group that meets Monday by Monday. again a chance for friendship, for practicing and learning English, a place to belong.

And Lord, we pray for both of those groups they'd also be a place to meet the people of God and ultimately to meet the Saviour. Lord, we also pray for the university community that is alongside us and in many senses all around us.

Lord, we pray for staff and students. we thank you for every Christian represented there. Thank you for every attempt to share the gospel in our universities.

Lord, give wisdom, give boldness and we pray to see many turning to faith in the Lord Jesus. Lord, we also remember the mosque community again as our close neighbour.

[ 10 : 19 ] Lord, we pray that you'd give us wisdom to know how to love our neighbour well, to know how to pray for those who are seeking you but who do not understand you and who do not understand that Jesus is the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

Lord, we pray that you would open hearts and minds to that truth. Lord, we pray that for our community in general, we recognise so few people have any spiritual interest and so few people

have thought for their present or for their future in relation to you.

But Lord, we pray that you would awaken us as a city and indeed as a nation. Lord, we also pray for our world. We remember the nation of Myanmar which seems to have dropped out of the headlines in some ways but where the civil war continues where people are being brutalised and where there is so much poverty and fear and fighting.

Lord, we pray for your church there. We thank you for Pastor Titus and for others who continue to try and minister your love and your care in such difficult circumstances.

Lord, uphold and encourage. Lord, we pray the same too for Ukraine which is very much on our hearts and minds every day. Lord, we continue to pray for a lasting peace.

[ 11 : 49 ] We continue to pray for justice. Lord, we pray for folks like Sashko looking to minister to refugees in Poland. We pray for the many churches in Ukraine and around Ukraine looking to show love in these most difficult times.

Lord, uphold, sustain, and renew them in their faith, their hope, and their love. Lord, we pray all of these things so thankful that you are King of Kings and Lord of Lords and that we can entrust ourselves and those that we care about into your hands.

And so we pray in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. Now, before we turn to the book of Matthew and our next little trio of parables, we're going to sing by way of a prayer to prepare.

We're going to sing from Psalm 119, from section 13, that's verses 97 to 104. So let's stand and sing these verses from Psalm 119.

Oh Lord, how much I love your holy law.

[ 13 : 09 ] I meditate upon it all the day. It makes me wiser than my enemies for your commandments ever with me stay.

I have more insight than my teachers have for on your laws I meditate each day.

I have more discernment than the elders have because your righteous precepts I obey.

I have kept my feet from every evil path that I may be obedient to your word and I have not departed from your laws for you yourself have taught me this love to you know how pleasing to my taste are all your words more sweet they are than honey on my tongue your commands I gain enlightenment so

I reject and hate each path that's wrong Now we're continuing our series on the parables in Matthew, Jesus' stories with purpose.

[ 15 : 34 ] Now we come to this trio that we find at the end of chapter 13 from verse 44 to 50 and let's hear God's word as we hear these stories that Jesus told 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. 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. Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but through the bad the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And this is God's word for us. Now perhaps as we begin a question that comes from these parables is this. How valuable is the kingdom of heaven?

That's something we're used to. As something we're used to as people. We're assessing value all the time, aren't we? How much does something cost? And do we consider it worth the price? We shop around for better deals. We hunt for bargains. We change our contracts and our insurance brokers.

We're all placing personal judgments in terms of how much a thing is worth and what price we're willing to pay for it.

Now we have a saying in English that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. And the same holds true when we think about value. Value is in the eye of the beholder.

[ 17 : 51 ] If you have a saying in the eye of the beholder. If you have a person. If you have ever found yourself saying of someone else, I can't believe they just spent all that money on that thing. Remember that somebody has probably said that of us too. Because we all decide differently what we choose to value.

Well when we come to this set of parables, Jesus is inviting us to admire and to desire Jesus the King and the kingdom that he has come to establish.

To recognize in Jesus and his kingdom something that has a worth beyond all compare so that we would pay any price to get it.

And he does that in two different ways. In the sense of promise. And when we think about the parable of the hidden treasure and the pearl. But also the warning of the parable of the net and the separation that we see.

So today we're going to think about three things. We're going to think about the meaning of the kingdom of heaven. What does Jesus mean when he talks about the kingdom of heaven? We're going to think about the value of the kingdom of heaven. And thirdly we're going to think about the separation of the kingdom of heaven.

[19:07] With the hope and prayer that we would recognize that because Jesus is God's glorious king. We would seek and delight in him above all else.

But to begin very briefly with the meaning of the kingdom of heaven. We need to do this because in Matthew's gospel kingdom is a key theme. 55 times Matthew speaks about the kingdom.

Which is more than all the other gospel writers combined. More than the whole New Testament combined. So it's a key theme for Matthew. Some of the places where we see it. Chapter 4 verse 17.

As Jesus begins his public ministry he announces the kingdom of heaven is near. And the kingdom is near of course because Jesus as God's king has come.

In the Sermon on the Mount we thought about this last week. When Jesus teaches his followers to pray. He teaches us to pray. Your kingdom come. That we are to desire ourselves to live under the rule of God.

[20:10] And to seek for others to live under the rule of God. Until the return of Jesus when his kingdom is final and complete. And then we come to chapter 13.

And we just read the tail end of chapter 13. But the whole of chapter 13 is teaching from Jesus in the form of parables. With the focus being the kingdom. The kingdom of heaven. So it's a key theme.

But what does Matthew mean by it? Perhaps two ways that we can think about this. We can think in terms of contrast. And we can think about good news. So contrast.

Jesus is saying there is the kingdom of God. And that is different to the kingdom of man. The kingdom of humanity. There is a spiritual kingdom. And there is an earthly kingdom.

It represents different ways of living. There is God's way. In the kingdom of heaven. And then there is our way. In the kingdom of man.

[21:08] And we see this as a storyline all through the Bible. If we just think about the beginning of the Bible. The book of Genesis. Just for a couple of minutes. Garden of Eden. God created the world. Created this garden.

This was God's place. And he said Adam and Eve. They are God's people. And they were to live under God's rule. So they would enjoy life with God. And they would enjoy blessing. But what happens?

Adam and Eve. They turn their back on God and his word. Choosing to be God like themselves. We fast forward a few chapters. We come to the time of Noah.

And what we find at the time of Noah. Is a whole world. Hostile to God. Doing its own thing. Living without any thought of God. And only Noah and his family.

Represent the kingdom of heaven in the world. Fast forward a few chapters again. You come to the Tower of Babel. And what you have there is. The peoples of the world. Gathering together. To build this great tower.

[22:02] This great monument. To themselves. To their own achievements. Building a kingdom. For themselves. Rather than be obedient. To God's command. And it has always been thus.

There are God's values. And there are the values. Of the kingdom of man. And you know. It's one of the reasons. Why when Jesus came. He was such a surprising king.

The people had an idea. Of what a king would be like. What they imagined. The king would be like. Jesus didn't come like that. Jesus came. And he spent time.

With people regarded as sinful. Everyone else wanted to stay far away. From them. Jesus made time. For little children. He made time.

For the weak. And the oppressed. And the rejected. This is the king. Who didn't ride a war horse. But rode. To Jerusalem. On a donkey. This isn't.

[ 23 : 00 ] A king. Who. Who wore a crown. And came. With great pomp. And ceremony. This is. A king. Who carried a cross. And died in shame. To save his people.

And so the kingdom of heaven. Represents a contrast. Between. God's ways. God's values. And that of the kingdom of man. But Matthew's gospel. Also makes clear.

That the kingdom of heaven. Represents good news. One verse. Matthew 4. Verse 23. We're told. Jesus was. Proclaiming the good news.

Of the kingdom of heaven. And healing every disease. So he was proclaiming. That the kingdom is good news. Why is it good news? Well it's good news. Because God's promised king. Has come. God from the old testament. Had been promising. Someone in David's family line. A king. Who would rule forever. In righteousness. And justice. And so the coming of Jesus.

[ 23 : 55 ] Represents the rule of God. Among his people. Jesus has come to establish. God's kingdom. Not in a political sense.

By the way of power. But to establish. God's kingdom. God's rule. In people's hearts. And lives. And you know that's good news. Because all of us.

Because of sin. Turn our back on God. But God hasn't left us. To our own devices. Rather he's come. As his son Jesus. And the kingdom of heaven.

Also represents good news. Because every time. Jesus is acting. And every time. Jesus is performing miracles.

And especially when he is healing people. He's giving a signpost to his future kingdom. Every healing. Every resurrection.

[ 24 : 50 ] Is a pointer. To the day when Jesus will return. And will make all things new. So there is good news. In the kingdom. Because. It makes us think of the future.

Total rescue. Total renewal. All that sin. All that baggage. All that burden. That we know now. Will be gone forever. And so there's good news.

As Jesus. The son of God. Comes. Because he's acting to save. And redeem. And restore. Sinners. So that we can call God our father. And so we can live. In his kingdom.

So that's the meaning. Of the kingdom of heaven. Or at least some of it. As we then think about. These parables. And it's important background. Because. We need to think about. The value. Of the kingdom of heaven. Because that's where. Those first two parables. Take us. Two very simple parables. Treasure hidden in a field. And the pearl of great price. Helping us to see.

[ 25 : 50 ] The kingdom of heaven. Is like the greatest treasure. We could imagine. It's like a precious stone. That's. That's such. Beauty and value. That it would make any cost. Worth it.

So just think about. The. In a sense. The storyline. For a moment. First parable. We find in verse 44. The kingdom of heaven. Is like treasure. Hidden in a field. Now. Up on your screen there.

You'll see. A silver hoard. From a place called Dor. In the Middle East. Almost. In 1998.

Archaeologists. Dug up. Almost. 500 grams.

Of silver. Hidden. In a clay pot. And that pot. As they did analysis. Dates from the 10th century BC. That's a very old pot.

Very old silver. And so they. They presume. That it must have been buried. In a time of war. A time of insecurity. A time when it made sense. To guard.

[ 26 : 45 ] To hide your wealth. And presumably the owner. Was then unable. To recover it. But that's. In a sense. The picture that we have. In the first parable. There's a field. And someone's.

Hidden treasure in it. But then someone else comes. And there's this incredible. Accidental discovery. A vast treasure is found. Second parable. Slightly different discovery.

Because you have a merchant. And he's. Looking for fine pearls. He's on a quest. He's giving his life. To borrow. From Tolkien.

Searching for the precious. That pearl of ultimate praise. But then the parables. Are. Match up. Because the thing of supreme value. Is found. Each person.

Recognizes. The value of what's been discovered. They are persuaded. That it's worth. A great cost. To possess. And there is joy. In the possessing of it.

[ 27 : 44 ] Another couple of things. That we might want to. Know in passing. This idea of hidden treasure. Maybe helpfully. Connects us with.

The idea of a hidden kingdom. The idea that. The kingdom of heaven. Often didn't match up. With expectations. And indeed. Jesus. Earlier on. Earlier on. In. Matthew 13. He spoke about. The teaching of the parables. Serving both to reveal. And. To conceal. And so perhaps. The hidden treasure. Helps us to think of that.

Perhaps. The different ways. That these are found. Might make us think of. Here's two different ways. That people find Jesus. So the New Testament. Scholar. Don Carson. Suggests that. That the treasure finder.

Stumbles upon it. By accident. Perhaps represents someone who. Comes to faith in the Lord Jesus. And they really weren't looking for him. Perhaps they just happened to walk into church one day. [ 28 : 41 ] Perhaps they were invited. To a meeting. Or a. Church service. By a friend. Not expecting anything. And then they heard the good news of Jesus. And instantly. That person was saved.

That's what. That's the way some people come to faith. Perhaps. That's some of our story here today. Perhaps. The merchant. Who's searching. Represents. The person. Where. Coming to trust in Jesus. Takes a long time. Considering. The Bible. Considering. The truth claims of Jesus. Before. Recognizing.

He is. Who he says he is. But that's not the main point. Of the parable. The parable focuses on the same point. The kingdom of heaven. Is a priceless treasure. Knowing Christ. Being in his kingdom. Is worth. Any. Cost. And both of these parables. Speak about cost. And that's really important. Because Jesus is always honest. And he did speak about the cost. [ 29 : 36 ] Of discipleship. He does encourage us. To. To say that just as. Jesus carried his cross. So we are invited. To take up our crosses daily. To be ready to die.

For self. To leave behind. And. Sinful patterns. Of behavior. Perhaps. To suffer losses. Perhaps. We will lose. Friendships. Perhaps.

We will find ourselves. Being. Marginalized. Or. Missing out on promotions. Because. Of our faith in Jesus. So we're invited. To consider the cost.

And the parable. Also reminds us. That there is action. That must be taken. If we are to possess. This joy. If we are to possess. This treasure. And we aren't just to sort of. Stand and look casually at it. We are to receive it. And so the parable. It takes us. There. And let me just say. If you're not a Christian.

[ 30 : 30 ] Here today. And you're thinking about this. Maybe this is new. Talk to a Christian friend. I think when you. Listen to Christians. Tell their story. Many of them. Will speak about cost.

But we'll also be able to say. Yes. There is cost. But absolutely. It's worth it. It's worth it. To know Jesus. One person. Who. Very publicly.

Testified to that. Was a. A chap. By the name of. Nabeel Qureshi. And maybe some of you. Have read his book. Called Seeking Allah. Finding Jesus. So he was. Raised in a. A Muslim family. Following the Muslim faith. But then. He became friends. With a Christian. And this man. Nabeel Qureshi. Over six years. Find himself. Wrestling. With questions. Of truth. Wrestling. With. Who is Jesus. Really. Probing deeply. Asking lots of questions. Until. He was persuaded.

[ 31 : 25 ] That Jesus is the son of God. And the savior. And his life was changed. And in his book. And in his story. He talked about. The cost. That that brought. Within his family. Within his community. Shunned.

And rejected. For becoming. A Christ follower. He died. A few years ago. But his wonderful testimony. Was that. He died. As he lived. With no regrets.

Joyful. For having found. The Lord Jesus. That's a wonderful book. Very dramatic. Story. In many senses. Let me give a far more.

Mundane. In a sense. But a far more personal. Reflection. On this. Just for a few moments. Tuesday evening.

Let me just share my Tuesday evening. For a few minutes. So. I guess. We will all have weeks like this. Where. We find ourselves. Feeling. Exhausted. And overwhelmed. With circumstances. [ 32 : 22 ] And to-do lists. And what not. Well that was my story. On Tuesday evening. And I was. Cycling over. Towards. A church meeting. A meeting of our presbytery. So. So various ministers. And elders.

Gathering. And as I was cycling. And I'd been reading this. In the morning. The title of a hymn. Came to my mind. Christ my treasure. It's a really. A good modern hymn. If you haven't heard it.

And so I was beginning.

To think about that title. Christ my treasure. And I was sat down. For a presbytery meeting. And the person in charge. Of the meeting. Read. Ephesians chapter one. Which Steve read for us. Yeah. I'm feeling exhausted. And overwhelmed. And God in his kindness. Every spiritual blessing. That's ours in Christ. In Ephesians one. Past. Present. Future. God's grace. On full display.

And you know that meeting. Which you know. If you've ever been to a church meeting. They're not typically. Sort of full of excitement. But. It was a wonderful moment for me.

[ 33 : 18 ] So we were up. At the top of the Royal Mile. And. It's getting busy in the city. And so you could hear outside. All the excitement. And we saw all the crowds coming in. So there was lots of noise. And excitement going on outside.

People enjoying the city. Enjoying the holiday. But you know. That was nothing compared to the joy. Of us gathering together. As little groups of four and five. Believers in Christ.

And bowing our heads. And praying together. And worshipping God our Father. And praying for one another. Do you know that moment. Was one of just realising.

The incredible privilege. That we have. As Christians. The tragedy. That so many people around us. Have no clue. And no care.

About Christ. And how much he is worth. And so I find myself reflecting. Over the next day or two. You know. When we talk about Christ. Our treasure. What do we mean? What do I mean by that?

[ 34 : 15 ] So let me just. Let me just share. For me. When I think about Christ. As my treasure. The first thing that comes to me. Is just his amazing grace. There is grace for us.

There is God's undeserved kindness. For us. In weakness. In failure. In anxiety. In burdens. All of that met by his all sufficient grace. How precious it is. To remember. The king of heaven is for me. His power. His grace is for me.

That Tuesday evening. I was also profoundly grateful. For friendship. Friendship in the first instance. With Jesus. As the loving saviour.

Think about that. He is the king of all glory. The eternal son of God. And he promises. To be present with his people. To never leave us alone.

[ 35 : 14 ] And he is guaranteed. He will always be praying for us. Now that's a treasure. And not only do we enjoy friendship with Jesus.

And so many people notice this. When you move to a new city as a Christian. You find community in a church. And people wonder. How do you know so many people? And that's that wonderful reality. That when we're friends with the Lord Jesus.

We are built into the body of Christ. So we have family. A wide family. A diverse family. It's wonderful. And when I was thinking about Christ as my treasure.

I was also thinking about the peace that Jesus brings. By nature I would be both anxious. And have a tendency towards. Feeling really guilty.

And burdened a lot of the time. But there's that wonderful reality. That Jesus has paid the price to redeem me. And to reconcile me to God. And when I sin. And I do sin. Then I can quickly confess.

[ 36 : 13 ] Freely confess. Yes. Knowing I'm accepted. And there's a wonderful peace that comes. When we know that our lives are right with our God. And that's the treasure Jesus talks about.

There's also this wonderful treasure that we have in Jesus. When we think about purpose. Probably all of us at some point will ask ourselves the question. Why am I here?

What is life all about? And Jesus. Knowing Jesus answers that question. Because when we belong to Jesus the King. Our everyday life now has eternal significance.

All that I do. Matters. I can wash dishes to the glory of God. That's a wonderful truth. And it made me think too about destiny.

Think about what hope do we have. When Christ is my treasure. I know I have eternal security. I know that nothing.

[ 37 : 20 ] Can separate me from the love of God. That's in Christ Jesus. So my future is secured. When Christ is my treasure. We live in a trading society.

We live in a time where we're upgrading things all the time. Where we cancel our contracts anytime. And you know we don't just do that with our phones and our electronics.

Sadly. People are doing that with their relationships. People are doing that with their churches. Trading in. Trading up.

And what does that all represent? Deep down at heart. That represents a spiritual thirst. I am looking for the one thing.

That is going to truly satisfy me. I am searching for the one thing. That when I have it. I will be someone. And I will have something. And what the Bible would have us to know.

[ 38 : 24 ] And what Jesus would have us understand. Is that spiritual thirst. That longing will only ever be met. By meeting Jesus. And treasuring him. There is no job.

There is no relationship. There is no gadget. That matches up. To knowing and being loved. By the eternal son of God. To use the words of the old hymn.

And maybe some of us know it. Turn your eyes upon Jesus. And look full on his wonderful face. And the things of earth. Will grow strangely dim. In the light of his glory and grace.

It is an invitation to compare and contrast. What is treasure really? How valuable is Christ in the kingdom to me? To see Jesus as God's king.

To believe he is the suffering servant king. To know that he is the risen, glorified, really in heaven king. And to receive him by faith.

[ 39 : 26 ] Trusting and turning to him. Is to have joy. To have joy beyond compare. So when this parable is calling us to action.

And it is calling us to action. Because it is saying to us. Consider the cost. Consider the value. But it is a call to our deepest joy.

It is not a hardship. To follow Jesus. It is a joy. It is an eternal joy. It is the value of the kingdom. Let's move from there to the last of the three parables.

To think about the separation of the kingdom of heaven. This parable of the net. Now this is a parable I can relate to. So my first, inverted commas, job. So I was 11.

I spent about maybe two weeks picking whelks. So like small sea creatures. So I grew up in Skye. Grew up on the shore of a sea loch. And so we spent a couple of weeks picking little whelks off the rocks.

[ 40 : 33 ] In order to fill a bag. Probably this high. To then sell to a local fisherman. Well I was delighted. As I saw my bag. There was one day my bag just rocketed. And it was wonderful.

To get to the stage of the bag being full. And for the fisherman to come. And I was feeling so glad. I was counting up the cash. Until it was weighing time.

And what I didn't think to check. As a naive 11 year old. Was to check whether all of the shells that I collected. Actually had living things inside of them.

And it turns out probably about 50% of my haul. Was worthless. And so my treasure diminished. As my empty shells were thrown away.

There was a gathering. And then there was a separating. That's our parable. Verse 47. There's the gathering.

[ 41 : 35 ] When it was full. The fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish and baskets. But threw the bad away. There's the separating. This parable is based on drag net fishing.

So you'd hook up a net. Between two boats. Drive the boats along. Maybe parallel to the shore. When there was enough weight. When there was enough fish. You would then take them in.

Take the net up onto the shore. And then separate. And of course. Jesus is telling this parable. He would watch this. Lots of times. Along the lakeside. And bear in mind.

That Jesus was Jewish. And living in a Jewish community. And for them. A bad fish. It was determined by the Old Testament law. So they would have been separating as fishermen.

Any fish that didn't have scales or fins. So there's good and there's bad. But the focus of the parable. And it's important that we see this. It's not the gathering. The focus is on the separating.

[ 42 : 32 ] That takes place. And we know this. Because of the surprising detail. So we said last week. One way to know what's the point of a parable. Is to look for the surprising detail.

Where the surprising detail here. Is that the fish that are thrown away. Where do they end up? Verse 49.

The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous. And throw them into the blazing furnace. Where there will be weeping.

And gnashing of teeth. So again. Here's another section of teaching from Jesus. That ends with a warning about judgment. About eternal judgment. About eternal separation from God.

And all that is good. About a place of ultimate grief. And sorrow. Some separation details that we learn. When does it happen?

[ 43 : 31 ] Beginning of verse 49. This is how it will be at the end of the age. So in this parable. Jesus is telling people. That he will one day come back. At the end of the age.

Bible pictures the return of Jesus the king. When he comes to gather his own. When he comes to judge the living and the dead. The time when the Lord's prayer. Your kingdom come. Will be completed.

This is the time when judgment and salvation. Will be complete. This is the time when the world will be made new. When sin will be destroyed forever. When Jesus and his people will live together forever.

But only. For those who have faith. Only for those who have counted the cost. And who have received the treasure.

How does the separation take place? Verse 49 tells us. It's a separation of the wicked from the righteous. And so what we really need to think about as we close is.

[ 44 : 33 ] Who is that? Who are these categories? Who are the wicked? Who are the righteous? And not just think about that generally. Think about ourselves. Which category am I in? And not just that.

Think about what category do I want to be in? To hear the words of Jesus. To reflect on things. Which category do I want to be in? And what we understand from God's word.

And from Matthew 13. Is that it all depends. On our response to Jesus. And to his word. Think about how we respond.

To the mercy of Jesus. So the righteous. Are those who will say. With all honesty. I am a great sinner.

And God is a great saviour. Jesus is a great saviour for me. The righteous are those. Who acknowledge their need. Who acknowledge their sin. And who turn to trust in Jesus as saviour.

[ 45 : 31 ] Whereas the wicked are those. Who do not. Perhaps they don't see their need. Of a saviour. Or perhaps they don't acknowledge their sin. Or perhaps they think they can save themselves. Think about it.

In the sense of the beauty. Of Jesus. The righteous. Are those. Who see. In Jesus perfect life. His sacrificial death.

And his resurrection life. His risen. Glorious life. We see in that. Great beauty and great treasure. That he is.

That he is utterly unique. He is beyond compare. But the wicked do not. Are not persuaded. That Jesus. Is of great value.

Think about the context of. The cost. The cost. In the first place. To Jesus. Is it. Is it. Is it. We think about cost. In the kingdom. The righteous. Are those who recognize.

[ 46 : 34 ] Jesus gave. Everything for me. Jesus gave. His life. His life. For me. Jesus. Took sin. For me. Jesus. Faced. The judgment. Of God.

That I deserve. For me. And because. That's true. I will trust him. And I will carry my cross. And I will count the cost. To follow him.

The wicked. Are those who do not. And those who will not. To think about this. Image. Of the furnace. Maybe think of a story.

That we find in the Old Testament. The book of Daniel. Chapter 3. We have. A wicked king. Who sets up a great statue. And he commands. All the people of the earth. To worship the statue. And so you see in Daniel.

Chapter 3. The world bowing down. And because of the power of this king. Bowing down to the statue. Except for these three. Friends. Who remain loyal.

[ 47 : 32 ] To God. And this wicked king. Then throws them. Into a fiery furnace. And as he sits down. To watch them burn. For his own entertainment.

All of a sudden. He's surprised. And he turns. To the guards. And he says. Didn't we throw three men in there? Well now I'm seeing four. And one of them.

Looks like a son of God. Now what's happening there. Is that Jesus. The son of God. Is with those friends.

In that furnace. And he delivers them through. The furnace. Now I want us to think about the cross. For a moment. Because what's happening.

On the cross. Is Jesus. Lovingly. Throwing himself. Into the fiery furnace. Of God's judgment. Of his father's judgment.

[ 48 : 27 ] And why. For his people. So that we might not face the judgment of God. Jesus was condemned. As a sinner.

As sin himself. So that we could go free. Jesus. Face hell. So we might enjoy heaven. Jesus. The eternal son of God. Left the glory of heaven. To come as the king. Bringing in. The kingdom of heaven. And to do that. He must become. The suffering servant king.

Dying for us on the cross. To give us this priceless. Eternal treasure. And so as we close. The question is. Will you.

Will I. Joyfully. Receive him. And if we will. We know that we will be. Gathered to him. For all eternity.

[ 49 : 27 ] Let's pray briefly. Lord. Our God. We thank you so much. For Jesus. Coming. To bring in.

The kingdom of heaven. We acknowledge. Before you. How often. We turn. Our back. On you. How often. We sin. Against you.

How we do not deserve. Your love. And kindness. And yet. We discover. In your word. Your amazing grace. Your costly love.

In sending. Your perfect. Son. To live for us. To die for us. To rise for us. Please.

Give us. The eyes of faith. To see. Jesus. As. Great treasure. As the pearl. Of great price. That we would.

[ 50 : 23 ] Count the cost. That we would. Turn. From sin. And turn. To trust. In Jesus. That we might. Live. With him. Now. And.

Forever. Forever. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen. And now. We will close. Our time. Together. For now. Singing.

The hymn. Christ. Our hope. In life. And death. Just to remind you. Before we sing. That we. Will be having. Lunch. Shortly. And if you can stay. Please.

Do. You. So let's stand. And let's sing. Christ our hope. In life and death. Thank you.