

Treasure!

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[0 : 00] If you have your Bible with you, please open it up to Matthew chapter 13. Matthew chapter 13.

Wouldn't it be exciting if this week, for whatever reason, you were digging a hole in your backyard and you found a treasure chest buried in your own yard, long lost treasure that had been sitting there for decades.

You open it up and it's full of gold and jewelry, diamonds, the sum total over a million dollars worth. How would you be feeling? You'd probably be pretty excited. We love stories of long lost treasure being found.

One of my favorites comes from the story of The Count of Monte Cristo. It's based off of a book, but I never read the book. I saw the movie. And I love the moment where the treasure is discovered.

[1 : 18] The main character, he ends up going to jail for a crime that he didn't commit. And while he's in jail, there's an old man there who tells him about a treasure on the island of Monte Cristo.

And he tells him how to find it. And so when he escapes from prison, he goes to this island and he and his servant, they find this hidden cave or cavern. And in there, there's this kind of pool.

And he swims down into the water. And he finds a chest. And the thing is just packed with gold. And it's one of many that are strewn across the floor of this cavern.

And his servant is just giddy with excitement. Like, yes! I can't believe this. Everything is about to change for us. We've loaded up the boat with as much as we can fit.

And there's about eight more boatloads down there. Everything is about to change for us. I love stories of finding hidden treasure.

[2 : 21] Jesus used a story of a long lost treasure. He told many parables. And one of the things that he used as an analogy, as an illustration, is the story of a man finding a long lost treasure.

And we're going to look at that this morning. And as we do, may we hear the point that Jesus is making. Father in heaven, we don't want to come to your word flippantly or carelessly.

We know that you have a very important thing to say to each one of us this morning. And so we ask that you would give us ears to hear and eyes to see the truth about the kingdom of heaven that you want us to see.

We ask this in Christ's name. Amen. Verse 44 of Matthew chapter 13. This is Jesus teaching.

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.

[3 : 39] 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.

These are kind of another two short mini parables of Jesus. And again, they come to us without an interpretation like some of the previous ones we've looked at.

The first is about a man who finds treasure hidden in a field. The kingdom of heaven, says Jesus, 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. Can you feel the excitement of this man?

Maybe he's working in this field. We don't know exactly. As he stumbles across this. Wow. A treasure. But there's only one catch.

[4 : 48] It's not his field. The field doesn't belong to him, and therefore the treasure doesn't belong to him. So he figures, if I can get the field, the treasure will be mine.

But there's another catch. He's not a wealthy man. He doesn't have a whole bunch of cash just sitting in his bank account that he can use to purchase this field.

In order to get the treasure, he needs to buy the field. And in order to buy the field, he has to sell everything. All that he owns, says Jesus.

Jesus is quite emphatic here. He goes and sells everything, as much as he has. Is it worth it? Is there any hesitation on this man's part? Well, there's no indication that he hesitates here. In fact, Jesus says, From his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys this field.

[6 : 04] From his joy. The picture that we get in our minds is of him having an estate sale. And the people are coming to his sale and taking away his donkey, his horse, his tools.

There go the dishes. There go the clothes. Finally, there goes the house. And this man is not sad to see any of it go.

In his joy, he sells all that he has. How can he part with all of his possessions, everything that he has acquired in his life, with joy?

Because the treasure in the field is worth a hundred times more than everything he has combined.

There is, in the kingdom of heaven, a treasure to be found that's worth losing everything to gain.

The second parable that Jesus tells is very similar. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

[7 : 23] When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything, as much as he had, and bought it.

This parable is about a traveling man, a merchant. Jesus says that he's looking for fine pearls.

Literally, he's seeking fine pearls.

Why? Why? I think we need to kind of get into his head a little bit. What is he after? What is he looking for? Jesus says, fine pearls.

The word there in the original language is kalos. It means beautiful. That's why we named our daughter Callie. Beautiful pearls.

He's not just a merchant looking to make a buck. He's a connoisseur of pearls. He recognizes and appreciates the beauty of real pearls.

[8 : 29] He can tell the difference between those phony plastic things that you get from Claire's and a real pearl. He understands all of the metrics. He understands all of the metrics.

He understands all of the metrics. Size. Size. Shape. Luster. Weight. house. Fire. Music.

oot ng jauntnic. beautiful of pearls are not easy to come by. And so he's looking for them.

He's seeking them, presumably to add to his collection. Jesus says he finds one of great value.

He sees it. It's beautiful. It's the most beautiful pearl he has ever laid eyes on. But there's only one catch.

[9 : 32] It belongs to someone else already. So he figures, if I could get that, I'll have to buy it from him.

But there's the second catch. Even though he's probably a wealthier guy, he's probably got a decent collection already, this pearl is worth so much.

He can't afford it unless he sells everything, all that he has, and we assume the rest of his pearl collection.

Is it worth it? Does he do it? Absolutely. He sells everything as much as he has, says Jesus.

And we assume the rest of his collection. And he exchanges it for the one pearl of great value.

[10 : 38] Why? Because it is more beautiful and worth more to him than everything that he has and the rest of his collection combined.

There is in the kingdom of God a treasure to be found that's worth and beauty far surpasses that of anything else.

So much so that it's worth giving up and losing everything that we have in order to gain it. What is the treasure?

That's probably the question that we're all wondering. What is the treasure of the kingdom of heaven? We're going to get to that in a moment. But before we do, let's take a step back and consider, why did Jesus tell these parables in the first place?

What's his purpose here? What kind of response is he trying to get out of the people who hear this?

[11 : 51] Jesus is revealing through this parable that there is a treasure.

When it comes to the kingdom of heaven, there is a treasure to be found. The treasure is real. It's not just the stuff of myth or legend or fantasy or ancient prophecy.

It's real. It may look invisible or seem invisible.

It may not be apparent what it is. As we talked last week, the kingdom of heaven has some invisible qualities to it with how it starts.

It becomes the greatest of kingdoms, yet it starts as a little mustard seed or a little teaspoon of yeast in a lump of dough. The treasure is hidden in a field.

[12 : 56] And it can't be had until it's found. This pearl of great value is unknown to the merchant until he finds it.

First, he must find it. And then he can try to obtain it. The treasure is real.

That's the first thing Jesus, I think, intends to reveal. There is a treasure to be found in the kingdom of heaven. Make no mistake about it. Can you imagine how the story of the Count of Monte Cristo would have gone if he was in the prison and the old man told him that there's this great treasure on the island of Monte Cristo, but instead Edmund didn't believe him?

Oh, that's a bunch of hooey. That's just hopeful, wishful thinking. That's all fairy tale and legend and myth. Can you imagine what it would have been like if he gets out of prison and he didn't even go to the island to check?

He never would have become the Count. He would have spent the rest of his days as a poor sailor and missed out on the best of what this world had to offer him. And so the first question we must ask is, what are we going to do with Jesus' words here?

[14 : 25] Do we take him seriously? Is there really a treasure to be found in the kingdom of heaven? The second thing that we see about why Jesus is telling these parables is the value of the treasure.

The treasure is supremely valuable. It's worth giving up everything in order to get it. Jesus tells us that there is a treasure.

The treasure is real. The treasure is supremely valuable. But he doesn't tell us what it is. How come?

I mean, he says the kingdom of heaven is like this situation. Is the kingdom the treasure? Is it something in the kingdom? What's the treasure? Why doesn't he include that detail?

What kind of response is Jesus wanting as he tells this parable? What does he expect the people who hear this to do in response to these parables?

[15 : 49] The treasure is real. There's a treasure to be found in the kingdom of heaven, and it's supremely valuable. It's worth losing everything to gain it.

What should you do? Look for it. Yes. Seek it.

Go find it. Get up off the metaphorical couch and go after it. I'm not just telling you that there's a treasure to be found just as a nice story so that you can say, wow, wouldn't that be good if it were true?

No, the treasure is real. Go find it. Just like the merchant who was seeking fine pearls.

Get seeking. What did Jesus say earlier on the mountainside only six chapters ago? Ask, and it will be given to you. Seek, and you will find.

[16 : 56] Knock, and the door will be opened to you. For whoever asks, receives. He who seeks, finds. And to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

Jesus is saying, the treasure of the kingdom of heaven is real. It's worth giving up everything to gain it.

Go after it. Seek it. Find it. So how do we start? Well, Jesus says that this is about the kingdom of heaven.

We're talking about the kingdom of heaven. He says a lot about the kingdom of heaven, about the kingdom of God. And so looking at what he said, that's the place to start.

The apostles, they add a lot under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to what Jesus taught and said. And this right here is the map that leads to the treasure of the kingdom of heaven.

[18 : 12] We've been given the key. How will I know when I've found it? You'll know.

You'll know that you've found the treasure when you stop wondering whether you've found it.

Because you know that you've found it. You'll know when you look at the treasure.

And you look at your life and everything that you have. And if you had to give up one for the other, this is a no-brainer. I'd happily give up my life and everything I have to have this.

That's when you know that you've found it. So what is the treasure of the kingdom of heaven? What is the kingdom of heaven?

Maybe we should start there. We've been talking about that for the last number of weeks through Jesus' parables. It's not a geopolitical kingdom. Not yet, anyway.

[19 : 30] It's a kingdom that has been in the works, in the making, from generation to generation. Jesus pointed all the way back to guys like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

As those who will be present in the kingdom. It's a land and a people. A promised land.

Blessed are the meek. For they shall inherit the earth. I will give it to them.

It's a promised land to a people of promise. To a promised people. To the sons and daughters of the kingdom. It's a kingdom. It's a thing that's here now and is present.

The people of the kingdom are mixed and interspersed throughout the people of the world. As we've seen in the previous parables. But it's a kingdom that's not fully here yet.

[20 : 31] A kingdom that is coming one day in such gratefulness. Where it will be the greatest of kingdoms that this world has ever known. A kingdom that endures forever.

It breaks the cycle of the rise and fall of kingdoms. Because it's the one that never will fall. It's a kingdom where justice will reign.

Where there will be no more sin. No more rebellion against God. Nothing to taint. Nothing to corrupt. Righteousness and love and joy and peace will be every day.

Always. Forever. Every hunger. Every thirst. Every desire and longing and delight will be met.

How is all this possible? Because it's a kingdom with a great king. The son of God.

[21 : 35] The son of man. Jesus the king. Jesus the Christ. And he will reign over this kingdom.

With righteousness and justice. And his citizens will serve him and love him. Forever.

In his kingdom. Are you getting a bit of a picture? Of what this kingdom is like? The kingdom of heaven is. The treasure about the kingdom of heaven is hard to describe.

Because it's not just one thing. It's not just one gold trinket. It's not just one chest of gold. Not even multiple.

It's a multifaceted thing. There are so many things that are treasures within the kingdom. It's like a treasure trove.

[22 : 35] That's full of treasure. I like to think of the movie National Treasure. I don't know how many of you have seen that. But there's that scene in the movie where they finally find the long lost treasure.

And it's in this structure that has been built underground. And as far as the eye can see into this cavern. And as wide as your eye can see. The whole room is just filled with gold and valuables and famous paintings and works of art and all kinds of treasures.

And they just stand there when they first see it. Like, how do you describe that? How do you describe what that treasure is?

Words fail you in that moment. You can't. I was thinking about this this week. How do I put into words what's so good about the treasure of the kingdom of heaven?

Well, so much of this whole book describes different aspects of the treasure. Different treasures within the treasure.

[23 : 49] It would take a lifetime to go through all of that. And to lay it out. So that you see the full picture of the beauty and value of the kingdom of heaven.

Of the kingdom of God. At the very least, the treasure is having the kingdom. Belonging to the kingdom.

That's what this parable is about. I mean, yes, the kingdom has intrinsic value. Yes, the gold has intrinsic value in the ground. The pearl has intrinsic value.

But this is not a parable about just its intrinsic value. This is a parable about seeing the treasure and then obtaining it. If the kingdom is the treasure, this is about having the kingdom.

It's about obtaining it. It's about gaining citizenship in the kingdom. At the very least, that's what the treasure is. But that doesn't even do justice to the value of the treasure.

[24 : 59] Because it doesn't describe how good it is to be a citizen of this kingdom. As I said before, this whole book is filled throughout with promises and prophecies and pointers to the goodness of belonging to this kingdom.

Of having this kingdom. And of course, there's not time to look at all that there is. And so I just want to go to one place.

The Apostle Paul, in one of his letters, in his letter to the Philippians, He shares a little bit with them about what he is willing to give up in order to gain what he sees as most valuable to him.

In Philippians chapter 1, verse 21, Paul says this. He says, Isn't that the same attitude? I would happily give up everything, my life, everything I have to be with Christ. Paul goes on in his letter in chapter 3, verse 7.

[26 : 49] He says, But whatever were gains to me before, I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing. Christ, Jesus, my Lord.

There it is. I would give up everything. It's all rubbish compared to this. Knowing Christ. But he doesn't stop there.

He says, He says, Not that I have already obtained all this.

I haven't. But I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus has taken hold of me. I forget what's behind.

[28 : 02] I press on towards what's ahead. I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. There's other people that are enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, says Paul. Their minds are set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven.

And it's from there that we eagerly await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

According to Paul, what's the treasure of the kingdom? It's not just one thing. He starts with Christ. Knowing Christ. Gaining Christ. And then he moves on to the things that Christ does for us. A right standing with God that I never could have got on my own.

[29 : 18] A resurrection from the dead. It's a multifaceted treasure. Citizenship in the kingdom. The chance to live in this kingdom of heaven. When Christ brings it with him.

The treasure starts with Jesus. And with knowing him. But it also includes everything that he is and does.

For the citizens of the kingdom. For his people. And this is just the tip of the iceberg. Don't take my word for it.

Get in here. Search for it. Find it. For yourself. This is just a sampling that we see from Paul. We live in a world where people go after all kinds of earthly treasures.

The question I want to leave you with this morning is. Have you found the one treasure? The treasure of the kingdom.

[30 : 32] That's worth giving all of that up. In order to have. Do you know. Do you know personally.

Do you know personally. The surpassing beauty. And worth. Of knowing Christ. Such that you would give up everything.

To have that. To belong. To him. And his kingdom. Have you found.

The treasure. If you haven't. If you don't feel. That you have. Seek.

And you will find. Said Jesus. Jesus. And even if you have. Or if you've seen pieces of it. And you're there.

[31 : 29] You're saying. Yes. I will. Trade everything. Consider what Paul says. Not that I have already obtained all this. I haven't got.

It. Yet. I found it. What do I do? I press on. To take hold. Of all of it. I keep my eyes.

Focused on it. The kingdom of heaven. And I run for it. Forgetting what's behind. There is.

In the kingdom of heaven. A treasure. To be found. That's worth. Giving up. Everything. To gain.

Let's pray.

Father in heaven. We thank you. That you. Have so kindly. And so graciously.

[32 : 32] Pulled back the curtain. And told us. Of the true. Treasure. Give us. Grace. And help.

And strength. To seek. And to find. We ask that. You would. Grow our faith. Lord. There's times.

Where we admit. That we. We don't feel that. We don't see it. The things of this world. Seem. More beautiful. Increase our faith.

Lord. Lord. And use us. Lord. To. Increase. The faith. Of others. And to point them. Towards. Your son.

And his kingdom. We ask this. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.