

Bring out your Treasure

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- [0 : 0 0] Since we've built the Hubble telescope, we've looked into the heavens. He's not there. Where is he?
- We've looked at the atomic level. He's not there. Most of our society in Australia have concluded God isn't there. He's just not obvious.
- I'm so confident of this. People don't think there's some grand meaning and purpose to life. You can create your own meaning. And who are you to tell me that my meaning is wrong?
- Now, we Christians, apart from appealing to nature going, yeah, the images that came back from the Hubble telescope just blew our minds.
- There's the glory there. How can you not see that? The atomic level, there's glory. There's more there than we even realise. Apart from appealing to that, we say God did show up.
- [1 : 0 6] Jesus, God's son, came in the flesh, in real time and space. We have his words written for us. He did things that only God could do.
- He came back from the dead. God has revealed himself clearly in his son, Jesus. But then, even Jesus' contemporaries, who themselves were waiting for the Messiah, God's kingdom, they were the ones who were crying out, crucify him.
- Crucify him. He didn't restore Israel's freedom and prosperity. He didn't make Jerusalem the political capital of the world.
- He didn't make Jerusalem the world. He didn't make Jerusalem the world. Crucified Messiah. Where's the glory in that? The glory doesn't seem obvious either back then or today.
- Even as Christians, we can struggle with doubt because of the lack of this obvious glory. Can the church and the gospel really be the most significant thing about life when so few people in our society cherish it?
- [2 : 1 6] Doesn't that just nag at you sometimes? Is this really the most significant thing? I keep struggling with my sin.
- If Jesus is ruling my life now, why don't I have that full glory yet? Why not devote myself and my life to things that are obviously glorious, like my career and relationships and pleasure and prosperity and so on?
- Even as Christians, we can struggle with this sense of lack of glory. And this is where our mini-series in the parables in chapter 13, Jesus has told us the secrets of the kingdom of heaven to help us with this.
- That before the kingdom comes in full and obvious and gloriously for all to see, it has come secretly. It is hidden.
- It has come through the word of the gospel about Jesus, what he has done, who he is. But like the parables of the soils we've heard, many will reject this word.
- [3 : 3 0] But there will be a fruitful harvest with birds of the air from all over the world coming to rest in this kingdom's shade.

For those with eyes to see, Jesus' death is like that small mustard seed that from that death produces this kingdom. Reconciled to God the Father, people from all over the world, anyone who believes, the kingdom has come.

It's just come hidden, secret, through the word of Jesus, starting from the inside, working in the hearts of people. That's where you'll find it.

So, this morning, we have two final parables. Jesus finishes this block of teaching with this first parable, which is going to answer this question, I think.

Why do people need to find the kingdom now when it's still hidden? If it's so hidden, why do people need to find it? I think the second parable is going to answer this question.

[4 : 37] How will people see and hear this hidden kingdom? Okay, so let's get into these parables. So first, why do people need to find this hidden kingdom now?

The answer, because the net is coming. One day, the kingdom will come very observably, as people claim that they want.

It will be plain for all to see, but in that day, it will be too late. It is a terrifying day. A simple fishing story carries the weight of the eternal destiny of yourself and everyone you know.

Jesus says, Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. The net isn't about the church going about the missionary Great Commission.

[5 : 44] We're given the explanation. So it will be at the end of the age. This is a picture at the end of history as we know it. So the parable of the wheat and the weeds with things being mixed now.

There's those who believe, those who don't. But Christ's priority was his wheat. So the focus was on things being mixed now, whereas this parable seems to focus just on the end of time.

And the point is clear and obvious, isn't it? Marie's already brought it out in the kids' talk. Kids can understand this. A great sorting will occur. Don't confuse the hiddenness now for the fact that it will be obvious one day and a sorting will occur.

So this image. Please don't picture this little handheld fishing net. That's not what it's talking about. This is a huge drag net that would be attached to either two boats and just sweep whatever comes between the two boats or it would be attached to the shore and attached to a boat that just sweeps the whole area.

So none of this punzi handheld thing. This is a huge net. And the fish in its path can do nothing to avoid it. Like I'm picturing little Nemo swimming with this net going to the bottom of the ocean floor to the rim of the surface.

[7 : 13] And you can't go under it. You can't go over it. You will not go through it. Everyone will be caught in it. You can't avoid it.

Your neighbour can't avoid it. Fish of every kind will be caught. Now that might be suggesting every kind is in every culture, people all over the world.

Maybe it's just saying every kind is in those good, those bad. Everyone will be caught up. Once it's full, once everyone, those alive and those in their graves coming out, not even death will hide you from this net.

You'll be brought ashore for sorting. There's a very clear point. The kingdom will come obviously one day.

It will come obviously. And a great sorting will take place. It is unavoidable. And there's only two groups, two outcomes, the righteous and the wicked, those kept, those thrown in the fiery furnace.

[8 : 22] So the question I've been wrestling with is, what does this parable add? That the parable of the wheat and the weeds, it talked about the weeds being burnt up in the fiery furnace.

It's exactly the same phrase. And the wheat gathered into the barn, shining like the sun. Now maybe this picture, this water picture, complements the agricultural picture.

Maybe. Maybe it's a reminder. I think there's more to it. I think there's two details that add a new emphasis. Not necessarily anything new, but a new emphasis.

Notice that the focus here is on what happens to the evil. Parable, we only get shown the negative outcome. In verses 49 and 50, it's the fiery furnace where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

So it doesn't talk about heaven. Now the parable shouldn't be pushed too far. This is an important point with interpreting parables. It usually only has one main point.

[9 : 32] Otherwise, the good fish are kept for eating. That's not what it's saying. And it's a bit odd, picturing fish sitting around the great heavenly banquet.

So let's not push this parable too far. The focus is on what happens to the evil. The other detail that helps us understand this, I think, is how it starts.

Notice in verse 47. Again. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like. In verse 45, last week, we very easily accepted the again.

Combining those two parables about the treasure hidden in the field, and again, the kingdom of heaven is like a great pearl. But here we have another again. Which probably shows that we stuffed up how we broke up this passage.

But, these three parables seem to be linked. The net seems to be the negative side to the positive appeal of find the treasure, find the pearl, otherwise the net.

[10 : 42] There's those who, in this life, find Jesus and the treasure of living under his good rule.

Who, who, who, who sacrifice everything under his feet. And don't count it as loss, but gain. There's those. But if, those who fail to find that, fail to, see Jesus as worthy of your life, treat him as insignificant, well, there's only a terrible outcome.

An unavoidable outcome. I think these three parables paint a picture of what Jesus has already said in chapter 10, verse 39. Whoever finds his life here, will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for my sake, will find it. Now, I don't think this is trying to scare you into becoming a Christian.

I think it's a very good thing that God hates evil. And he's going to do something about it. How awful a God would be if he didn't care about evil.

[12 : 04] That is a terrifying thought. It is a good thing that God hates evil and that he's going to do something about it. The terrifying thing is if you're someone who does that evil, standing before such a God, which is all of us, isn't it?

Jesus is loving us by warning you of what will occur if you reject eternal life. God hates evil. Now, I heard someone the other day dismiss the resurrection saying, yeah, I don't really believe all those stories about people seeing a great light when they're on the operating table, those kind of things.

The person saying this isn't one of those people who saw a light. The person saying this is the one who rose from the dead. He has authority over death.

He has tasted hell on the cross. He knows the fiery furnace. The son of God sweated drops of blood anticipating what he was about to endure.

over. He went to the cross feeling the full force of God's anger so that you and I would escape this fiery furnace.

[13 : 26] He has displayed his love so incredibly, sacrificing his son to give you eternal life. If you reject that, you reject that love.

You will only face God's anger. The weeping pictures the suffering. The gnashing of teeth pictures despair in that place. And what's scary in these images is that they're images, they're metaphors.

Heaven for the righteous is described as a banquet as I referred to earlier. But that's just using imagery so that we can understand it. It's better than a banquet. It's still a picture.

So too with these descriptions. It's just a picture of the awfulness. Come to Jesus now.

You will find full forgiveness. He wants you to find him his treasure. He doesn't want you in the fiery furnace. He takes no delight in the death of the wicked.

[14 : 36] No delight whatsoever. Come to him. You will find forgiveness. You will find a treasure better than anything else you know in life.

Come before that net arrives. Find God's love before you face God's anger. treasure. It's hard to be sure whether Jesus is speaking these parables to the crowd still or just his disciples.

I'm not sure we can be certain on that. But the implication for us who have already found this treasure shouldn't it fill us with thankfulness?

That awful fiery furnace, I should have been that bad fish thrown away. But he was thrown away so that I'm gathered in. It should fill us with incredible thankfulness.

And there is zero, zero room for pride in the Christian life that I believed while others didn't. There's no room for that. He gave us the secrets of the kingdom.

[15 : 45] There is no room for pride. I don't have to fear, if you've found Jesus, you do not have to fear this final sorting.

You're one of the righteous, I'm one of the righteous, not because of us of course, but because his death washes us and his righteousness is counted to us. We don't have to fear this for our sake, but we should fear it for others' sake.

that treasure we talk about, that is not for us to keep. We need to feel the urgency, the seriousness of what's coming.

That treasure, we're meant to bring it out so that others see it, hear it, before the net comes. Share your treasure with whoever will take it.

And I don't think it's easy to believe this because there's going to be family members who don't believe and that is just agony. It's like the Apostle Paul. He wished he himself could be cut off just so his own people could be brought into Christ.

[16 : 52] To believe this net is coming is actually a painful path. But we need to see people with the seriousness of who they are and these outcomes.

I'm going to quote C.S. Lewis because I think he just paints a picture of how serious our interactions with each other are. Let me quote C.S.

Lewis. The load or weight or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it and the backs of the proud will be broken.

It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses to remember that the dullest, most uninteresting person you talk to may one day be a creature which if you saw it now you would be strongly tempted to worship or else a horror, a corruption such as you now meet if at all only in a nightmare.

All day long in some degree we are helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe proper to them that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics.

[18 : 17] There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilisation, these are mortal. Their life is the ours like the life of a gnat, but it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, exploit, immortal horrors or everlasting splendours.

So how are you helping people prepare for this net? Interest rates, costs of living are rising. What expenses are you going to cut back on?

Missionary support? How could you connect your Christian and non-Christian friends? Make them rub shoulders.

Obviously we can take those fleeting opportunities, like I think I wait too much to go, oh, I'm going to wait for the right moment to have that conversation. Sometimes we just need to jump in, that quick phrase.

We don't have to give two ways to live, track through the whole time, just a quick phrase. I think admitting our own sin is absolutely crucial.

[19 : 39] Otherwise people will think we're saying I'm confident, I'm proud in my own efforts. You've got to admit your sin for people to understand Jesus. And I wonder when we complain and when we defend our reputations and we're consumed with our personal interests, how can people see the treasure when we're doing that?

When we're clinging to the same fleeting things that everyone else does, how can people see the treasure when we do that? Or to put it positively, there's great opportunity, in hardship.

When health is failing, when you are wrong, you are treated unfairly, unjustly, there are actually opportunities to show the treasure I reckon. Because that's when the surface stuff is stripped away.

And if you still have joy, people might go, how on earth do you still have joy in that time? time. I heard a story of a Christian boss whose employee made a mistake that cost the company a lot of money.

And he had to go into his superiors and incredibly, he took the blame for it. Now, this employee was amazed. She had plenty of bosses who had taken the credit for her work, but this boss took the blame.

[21 : 15] He could have just thrown her under the bus, she probably would have been fired, but this boss took the blame for it. And that just shocked her. She went to him and she kept pressing him like, why did you do that?

That is so odd. And eventually he gave in and he told her, because of Jesus, because he took the blame for me. And that was the start of her finding Jesus.

Those hardships, I think it's just a little nice picture, those everyday hardships are actually opportunities to show our treasure. So the net is coming, it is unavoidable.

Jesus, the judge, is bringing it, but he wants people to find the treasure now. So let's do whatever we can to bring it out for people. So Jesus finishes this block of teaching with one final parable.

This time it's directed just for the disciples. So we've heard why people need to find this hidden treasure, because the net is coming. Our question here I think is how?

[22 : 27] How will people see and hear this hidden kingdom treasure? So this one's a bit more tricky. The other one was a pretty obvious explanation.

This one's a bit more tricky. Verse 52. Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.

Okay, so before we get into the detail, I'm going to say up front what I think this parable was about. I think in short, Jesus is calling all of his disciples to teach others, to share what we've learnt.

Now, obviously not in a capital T sense. The book of James says those called to be Bible teachers in a formal capacity that Christ has equipped.

We are judged more strictly, harshly, and rightly so. So I don't think everyone should count capital T, but I don't know how else to say this.

[23 : 33] Small T. All disciples are small T teachers. And I think this tells us a third purpose of these parables. So Matt took us through the first purpose, that parables actually divide people.

Some will find them appealing and go deeper into understanding Jesus. Others will be like, well, that's silly and stupid, and actually it will close their minds to Jesus.

So that's one purpose of parables. Then Simon took us through the second purpose of parables, and that was for Jesus to be fulfilling the Psalms. That in one sense, Jesus' teaching is just all the stuff in the Old Testament, but the way he brings it together, especially in these parables, it shows something new.

So there's a second purpose of the parables. It's showing something new about the kingdom, even though the Old Testament pointed to it. Here we've got a third purpose of the parables, and it's for us. His disciples are meant to become teachers.

teachers. This is to train us to teach others. Okay, let's get into the detail for a second. Yep, let's go.

[24 : 48] I don't know why I paused. Verse 51, this starts with Jesus asking his disciples, who is certainly the twelve apostles, but I think it's likely that it includes men and women, because just before we have this chapter on the parables, that's when Jesus looks around and goes, here, here are my family, my mother, my sister.

So I suspect this is probably more than just the twelve apostles standing here. Have you understood all these parables? Have you understood all these things? Yes. I find that answer funny.

I picture a classroom, the teacher teaching calculus for the first time, and the classroom is just like, yes, we get it. Yep. We're good.

They do understand in part. They're not rebuked for being arrogant. They do understand, but gee, they've got so much more to learn.

They need Jesus to die and rise again. They need the spirit of truth to help them understand. Isn't that true of all of us? We can say, yes, but gee, I've got a lot more to learn.

[26 : 03] How many times do we open the Bible and think we're reading a familiar passage and it just hits us again with something fresh? So yes, but we always go deeper. I think I'm stealing this from somewhere, but I can't quote them.

God's word isn't something we ever master. God's word is something that's meant to increasingly master us. I like that so I thought I'd share it.

We are always going deeper in this treasure. So Jesus connects their understanding of his parables to this picture of this homeowner who brings out these treasures.

So it's about all his disciples. Now I think where we get thrown and confused is this idea of a scribe, a teacher of the law. Now I didn't know this until preparing for today, but apparently there were scribes who were devoted to hard sayings in scripture, which would include things like parables, devoted to things concerning the end of history, end times.

And they were called apocryphal scribes. And that seems to fit this chapter. All these parables are about the promised end time kingdom.

[27 : 25] It's just that it's come secretly before it becomes full and obvious. So how's this like being the owner of a house who brings out his treasure new and old?

Notice the change in the use of treasure here from those earlier parables. It brings out of his treasure. So it's not saying external.

It's now his treasure. I think that's like how Jesus used the word in chapter 12 verse 35. For the good person out of his good treasure brings forth good. And the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil.

So in terms of our words. So it's actually what's in your heart. It's the individual person that's pictured here. And I think being the master of a house, I'm not sure of this one, I'll try it out on you, is Jesus is giving authority to share this treasure.

You are the master of the house. You can bring it out. You can give it. So to the degree that we grasp what Jesus is saying about his kingdom here, to that degree you have treasure that you can bring out as a scribe, as a teacher, for the sake of others.

[28 : 47] We don't bring it out to show off. We bring it out to give it so that others become rich. And what is this new and old treasure we're meant to bring out?

I think the most natural reading of this is to see it as the revelation from God. A Jewish expert in the Old Testament could only bring out his treasure concerning the old revelation.

But if you see Jesus and his kingdom as the answer to all those Old Testament promises, you can bring out the new and the old and how it all comes together in Jesus.

So I'm going to try and highlight this point as sharply as I can. a child who has a very rudimentary understanding that the whole Bible is about Jesus, who sings Colin Buchanan songs going, Jesus is the king, ruler over everything.

That wasn't in my script but I just got caught up in Colin. That child is more of a scholar than any religious author or teacher alive today or the Pharisees of old who don't see Jesus.

[30 : 10] They're a scholar. Jesus is the king. That is wisdom. That's profound. Calling the Old Testament revelation old, that's not downplaying it.

It will be to our poverty if we neglect the old treasure. It helps us understand Jesus. Jesus is the gospel. So do you hear the call of this parable on you?

If you're a disciple of Jesus, he's calling you to join him in building his kingdom. Bring out your understanding of his kingdom for others to benefit.

He's calling you to teach with your words, with your life. If you don't feel like you've got much to offer, on the one hand, maybe you do need to sit more at his feet, soaking up the Old and New Testament.

But on the other hand, chances are, if you've been listening to this sermon series, you've got more than you think you do. All these parables we've heard in chapter 13 give us rich kingdom perspective about the reality of things.

[31 : 28] They tell us. If you've been listening to the guys who've been preaching, you have profound insight into what God has done, what he is doing, what he will do.

The hidden kingdom is seen and heard through his church, his disciples, sharing the treasure that we've learned. And I think a sermon can only do so much.

It can only do so much. We need those one-to-one interactions after the sermon, integrating what we've learned into our lives, over Bible study, going for a walk, when people are sharing their burdens.

I can't be everywhere. A sermon can only do so much. We need all of us doing this, engaged in this work. work. And this work, I don't think, this teaching is not just for unbelievers.

I think it's for all of us to go deeper and deeper in our understanding. These parables may not give you precise words to say, but they give you an understanding of history of what God is doing.

[32 : 37] It gives you guidance for how to help people. So let me just suggest a few ways. Let me paint a few scenarios.

When a brother or sister is discouraged about how few people believe, can it really be true if so few believe? They need you to bring out your treasure.

Bring out the four soils. You know what? There's a reason for the rejection of Jesus. There are huge barriers to faith. You have Satan, the lies of Satan.

You have the social consequences of being a Christian. You have the sinful desires of your wealth and other things. Yeah, there's a reason there's so much rejection. But don't be discouraged.

Don't lose heart. There's going to be an abundant harvest. Jesus' death conquers those barriers. And remember the mustard seed. The church looks pathetic.

[33 : 41] It looks insignificant. But it is growing. He is adding to his church. It may not be on our doorstep, but across the world he is adding to his church.

Don't lose heart. The word of God will permeate the whole world until the whole dough is leavened. Don't be discouraged. It will be the only significant thing in the end.

There will be a multitude. All the birds flocking to this tree. There will be a multitude from every nation worshipping on the last day. Don't be discouraged.

When a brother or sister shares their temptation, their sinful failure, they need you to bring out your treasure.

Trust the word of God to be like leaven in the dough. It may seem so small an influence in your life, but God's word will permeate every inch of you over time.

[34 : 46] Keep up the struggle with sin. Remember the weeds and the wheat. This world is mixed. There are causes of evil. There's causes of sin in this world.

And we might be going, God, why don't you just take them out? All he tells us is, I'm protecting my wheat. It's for my wheat's sake that I don't. We don't understand fully why.

But get the point there. It's mixed. Your struggle with sin is normal. It is normal. But look up ahead. The harvest is coming.

And then you will shine like the sun with the character of Jesus in your father's kingdom. Or when a brother or sister is getting obsessed with some created thing in their life, they need you to bring out your treasure.

Remember what you found in Jesus. Full membership in his kingdom. Full forgiveness. Salvation from the fiery furnace. Reconciliation to the father. Only knowing his grace and help by his spirit.

[35 : 53] The hope of glory. All found in Jesus. What are you doing? Obsessing with this thing in your life. Why do you have such a firm grip on it?

You have such a better treasure. Others around you need to see this treasure in you. Let it go.

Sell it all. It won't be loss. It will be gain for you and others. Now you may not use those exact words but do you see how the parables just they give us what we need.

They give us perspective. So let's keep learning at the feet of Jesus. Soaking up his old and new treasures. Your Lord calls you to join him in building his kingdom.

A kingdom this world despises because it's hidden. But it's God's kingdom and it will reach its glorious goal.

[36 : 59] It will pervade the whole world. Every person. Love. The love of Christ compels us to bring out our treasure. That we've found in him.

Because that great and terrible net is coming. And because we need each other. To speak these truths in every situation again and again and again to stand firm and be fruitful and be ready to shine like the sun when Jesus comes back.

The love of Christ compels us to bring out our treasure. Will you pray with me? Let's pray. Father thank you for your mercy in giving us eyes to see Jesus.

That we might have full life in you. That we have started that eternal life now. And that we've got so much more to come.

I thank you for your grace to us that you have revealed the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. When we deserve to be cast out. You have had such grace. Lord please help us to share this treasure with others.

[38 : 28] For your glory. For others good. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.