

The Greatest Treasure

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Preacher: Paul Dudley

[0 : 00] This is the morning service at Holy Trinity on the 21st of September 2003. The preacher is Paul Dudley.

His sermon is entitled The Greatest Treasure and is based on Matthew chapter 13 verses 44 to 53. Here is a field and in this field was a treasure box full of treasure.

Gold and all sorts of things. It would have been fantastic. So can you see the treasure on the field there Grunch? Oh yeah, I don't know Paul. You can't can you Grunch? No. Do you know why? Because it's hidden.

Jesus told the story about how it was hidden. But a man came along one day and he just happened to be digging, very coincidentally, digging at that right spot where the treasure was buried. And there, in the middle of the field, was a box of treasure.

[1 : 14] Now sometimes people who are rich, when they go on holidays, they didn't have banks to put their money in. So they dig a hole and they put their treasure in the hole and cover it up. Do you know why? My sister thought that was a good idea.

That she thought that she would actually throw all her money into the dam though. That wasn't a good idea. But this man, whoever he was, had left his treasure there and this man found it.

Now Jesus told the story that he said, this man was so excited about finding this treasure, that he very quickly got a shovel, holding it nice and tight there, Warwick, and covered the treasure back up.

He went back to his house. There's his house there and his horse and all these things. And he sold them all.

He sold his house. He sold his horse. He sold everything he owned. Do you know, he may have even sold himself into slavery, just so that he had enough money, so that he could go and buy the field.

[2 : 18] Well he got his money and he paid the money to the person who owned the field and it meant that he earned, was able to have this treasure here. You see, Jesus was trying to say that the greatest treasure is the kingdom of God.

And the kingdom of God is just like this treasure in a field. And it's so good, it's worth more than anything else. Jesus told another story. Whose mummies have got lovely pearls?

Has anyone's mummy got a lovely pearl? I remember buying a pearl for my wife, Michelle, when I was at university. They were only little ones from her earrings.

But pearls are very pretty little things. Jesus told this story of a man who used to go looking for pearls. He'd go looking high and he'd look low, trying to find all the best pearls.

Excuse me, have you got any pearls to buy? I'd like to buy some pearls. No. Oh, okay, right. Have you got any pearls to sell? No. No, okay. Right, well he went looking around, trying to find some pearls.

[3 : 26] Have you guys got any pearls to sell? No. I've got a sand pit. Oh, you've got a sand pit. Well, that's helpful. Well, Timothy, have you got any pearls?

Oh, Dad's just behind you. You can come and stand up with Dad if you want. Well, this man used to go and search for pearls. Here he is. Until one day he found the best pearl ever.

I'm going to find someone else. Mummy's coming. Oh, good. Okay. Until one day he found the biggest, best pearl that you could ever, ever find.

Well, this man was so excited about the pearl that he decided he would try and buy it also. Now, back then, pearls were very expensive.

They were more expensive than gold back then. So this man, he went and sold his house, his cow, his chariot, everything that he had he sold so that he could buy the one pearl.

[4 : 35] He wanted that one pearl so much that he went and bought it. And there he is. He's got the one pearl. Again, Jesus said, the kingdom of God is like the man who went and bought it.

The kingdom of God is so good, it's like you have to go and sell, like you'd want to sell everything to have it. It is so good. It's pretty good, isn't it, Grudge?

Paul, I think I finally get it. What? You get what the greatest treasure is? Yep. What is it? Well, that's gold and pearls and diamonds and silver and all sorts of precious stuff.

You know, that's great treasure. Look, in the stories, that was the great treasure, but that's not what Jesus was saying. Oh, thank goodness we've got you here.

Oh, no wonder it won't fit in a box. No wonder it won't fit in the box. God's kingdom won't fit in that box, will it? No. No, that's right. It is the greatest treasure. Don't do that. That's the greatest treasure, is God's kingdom.

[5 : 36] Well, Jesus told one more story about God's kingdom. This one's a bit of a different story. See, the first two stories, Jesus was trying to say how great the kingdom was, that it was worth so much, that it was worth selling everything for.

But Jesus told another story. Here we have a fisherman. Who's been out fishing? I know. I know. You've been out fishing, haven't you, with Olivia? That's right.

Is there any dads who like, or mums who like fishing out there? Any fish? There's a few there, yes. Good on you, Sue. Oh, good. Hold up your mum's hand. That's the way. Yeah. Fishing's a good thing.

Well, back then, they had these big nets. And on these big nets, they had little floats at the top and very heavy weights at the bottom. And what they'd do is, they used to throw the nets out over the water.

Sometimes they used to get it between two boats. And the two boats would pull the net along and all the little fishies would get caught into the net. Or there might be one person standing on the beach and another person on the boat.

[6 : 37] And he'd go rowing along and they'd drag the net along until they caught all the fish. Then once the net was full, they'd drag the net up onto the beach.

And then the person would sit there. And he'd start cleaning out the nets. The good fish would go into the basket. But the bad fish, well, you'd have to throw that away.

Good fish into the basket. The bad fish, throw it away. Well, Jesus then went on to say and tell his disciples what this story is about.

That there are some people who don't know the story about God's kingdom being the greatest treasure. And that they miss out on it. And it's very, very sad.

Some people will miss out on being a part of God's... Hang on. I don't know the picture. There's a picture for that one there. Grunge.

[7 : 34] It is sad, isn't it? It's really sad, Paul. Yes. But, Paul, I've missed out on the kingdom. You've missed out on it. 2,000 years ago. He must have had a great big palace.

Lots of servants and everything. Thank you, Warren. Good food to eat and pillows to lie on. Grunge. I've missed out. Grunge. Grunge. Do you know, I think you've got the same problem that the disciples had.

You see, Jesus asked the question, did they understand? And the disciples said, yeah, we understand. You're going to have this great kingdom with big palace and big walls around it. And we're going to have pillows to slip on. And you're going to get rid of all the armies.

And it's going to be a great kingdom. It's going to be so good. But Jesus said, well, actually, the kingdom's going to come about in a different way, in a surprising way.

A way that is going to be fantastic. Just come and stand here with me. That's okay. You can stand there. The kingdom came through Jesus dying on the cross.

[8 : 37] You see, the great kingdom that God brought about was through Jesus. And Jesus died on a cross. He did it for a reason. You see, God's not very happy when we do the things that he doesn't like.

And so someone has to take the punishment for it. And Jesus does. And it means now that because Jesus takes our punishment, we can have peace with God. It means that we can be God's friend now.

You see, Jesus was the first one to get into the kingdom. And we can belong to the kingdom now, although we don't see it all that well. But when Jesus comes again, Grunch, we'll see God's

kingdom for all its glory, for how great that kingdom is.

That's going to be fantastic. So, Paul, the greatest treasure in the whole wide world is peace with God. That's right. The greatest treasure in the whole wide world is...

Is there a song about this, Olivia? Do you think we should sing that then? You know it too, Emma. Well, do you know what? I'm going to get my musos to come up now.

[9 : 47] It looks like I might have to grab another baby as well. And we're going to sing... You've got a CD. You too. Well, we're going to sing...

And mums and dads, you're going to help join us. We're going to sing the greatest treasure. So, boys and girls, you're going to have to... I think we might stay seated for this one. Or you want to stand up. We might stand up for this one.

Boys and girls, you might like to go back to your seats now. And we're going to sing the greatest treasure in the whole wide world. And we're going to sing the best treasure in the whole wide world.