

We are not to live as the world lives, so come and guide us, Holy Spirit, into truth, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. It was a moment that I had waited for all my life. All those days in the backyard, practicing every day, scrimmaging with all the neighborhood kids, dreaming of what it would be like one day to finally put on that jersey, to finally lace up those shoes, to run out to the roar of the crowd.

It was something that when I was growing up as a little boy, I dreamed about all the time, and finally the day came when tryouts were being held to see if I could make the middle school basketball team. And I remember all those tryouts and showing up and practicing and going through all the drills and doing everything. And finally, after about a week or so, the coach gathered us all around, and he was going to announce who would make the team. And to my joy, and I'm sure your shock, I made the basketball team. Now, I remember immediately began thinking, now that I was on the team, what it was going to be like to show up for that first practice on the team. Would we learn how to shoot free throws? Would we learn how to shoot layups? Would we learn the offense? Would we learn defense? Would we scrimmage full court? And all of these expectations began to run through my mind, and I was so excited until the first day came of the first practice on the team. And instead of doing what I thought we would do, we did things like stretch. Instead of learning the offense, we ran laps. Instead of scrimmaging, we did exercises. In fact, we didn't pick up a basketball for days. And I remember thinking, what in the world is going on here? I didn't sign up for track, which is for losers. I signed up for basketball. Like, why are we not learning basketball? I remember thinking, my coach has no idea what he's doing. And what happened in that moment was the difference between how I expected things to go and how they actually were. The reality that I expected and the reality that actually was, was not the same. Now, come on, Faith Family. I guarantee you that you've experienced something like that before. Maybe for you, you finally got the dream job, only to end up working for a bunch of idiots. Or maybe you finally started dating the woman of your dreams, only to discover that she was the woman from the movie *Misery*. Or the vehicle. It looked perfect in the lot. It looked great in the picture, but it ended up being a piece of being a piece of junk. You see, every one of us, in one way or another, has experienced that what we thought was real, what we thought was true, turned out to be not so. That is exactly what Jesus, particularly what Jesus is doing in the parables. It's often what he does in his teachings.

That is, Jesus, particularly in the parables, has a way of taking the normal way we think about life and all of its expectations, and then he shows you an entirely different way of living life.

[8 : 18] In other words, he takes what most people think is common sense and turns it into uncommon sense. A way of approaching life in a very different way. In fact, Jesus says this himself. Look at verse 13 again here in chapter 13. Jesus says, This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. In other words, what most people don't understand is the kingdom of God.

What most people don't understand is how to navigate life according to the things of God. Jesus tells them, you understand, you see, and that will look to them as very uncommon.

And Jesus does this all the time in the parables. So take, for instance, the one that we'll look today. Common sense, common sense in the world is often a, what you want is diversification.

I mean, you want, when it comes to experience in life, you want to experience as many different things as you can. Or maybe when it comes to investments, you want to be as diversified as you possibly can be.

You want a little bit of this, and a little bit of that, and a little bit of this. And it's often very common, common sense in life, to be very diversified.

[10 : 01] But Jesus is going to teach us here in Matthew 13 that that's not how the kingdom of God works. In the kingdom of God, you don't need to be diversified.

You need to be focused on one single thing. Let's look at it here in Matthew chapter 13 and verse 44.

Matthew 13, 44 says, The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Again, verse 45, The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who on finding the one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Let's just first break down the very basic teaching that's found in these two extremely short parables. The first is about a hidden treasure. You've got a guy that's walking along.

[11:09] He's probably a hired hand or something like that. And he stumbles across a treasure that's hidden in a field. Now, some questions might immediately arise.

You might ask, Well, who buries a treasure? I mean, if you've got something valuable, why would you bury that in the ground? Well, in the ancient Near East, you don't have a local bank. You don't have a security deposit box or anything like that to keep your stuff in. And so it was a very common practice. Because think of, for instance, there will be wars and conquering and people will come through.

And they could run through your home. And so you want to put it somewhere where nobody else knows that it is. And so it was very common. In fact, if you remember the parable that Jesus tells about the people that receive talents.

And you remember one of the three buried what they were given. This was a very common practice in the ancient Near East that you would find a place and you would bury what was valuable to you so that no one could find it.

[12:16] Now, the second question you might ask of this first parable is, Well, why doesn't this guy who discovers the treasure tell the landowner about it? Well, interestingly enough, in rabbinic law, there was a law that if you found something that wasn't yours, if a man found like scattered fruit or money, it could actually be kept and belong to the finder.

It was the ancient Near Eastern version of finders keepers. And not only that, he makes a legal possession of this land. And so there's nothing wrong that's taking place here.

No stealing that's taking place here. You have a guy who finds a treasure and wants to make a legal transaction to own the field. So a man discovers a treasure that's so valuable, he sells everything just to get that one field.

Now, in the second parable, what we know is the pearl of great price. It's similar to the first one, but it's a little different. Unlike the man in the field, here you have a guy who's seeking pearls.

He's looking for pearls. That's what he's out to do. And of course, in the ancient Near East, pearls were extremely valuable. They were, in modern day, would be kind of more like diamonds.

[13:39] Everybody loves diamonds. But pearls in the ancient Near East were extremely valuable. You think of, for instance, the Apostle John in the book of Revelation, who talks about the pearly gates that we often think about in terms of heaven.

In other words, when he sees the vision, the best way he can describe this magnificent vision is to describe it with something as valuable as pearls.

So here's a guy. He's seeking after these valuable pearls. And when he finds one that surpasses all of the other ones, he sells everything, his tools, his equipment, everything, just to have that one.

Now, what do these two parables teach us? Three things. First of all, they teach us something about coming to Jesus. That is, the ways that people often come to Jesus, come into a relationship with Jesus, or enter into the kingdom of God.

Now, faith family, right here for just a minute, you need to hear this clearly, because I don't want you to misunderstand what I'm saying. I'm not suggesting that there are different ways to God. Jesus is clear.

[15:00] He's the only way to get to the Father. On the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father but by me. I'm not suggesting that there are multiple ways to God. What I'm suggesting is there's only one way, and that's Jesus, but there are many different ways that people come into a relationship with Jesus.

Jesus, and therefore enter into the kingdom. Let me just give you two stories, two examples that will help illustrate this. For instance, there was a young man by the name of Matthew Smith.

He was a nine-year-old boy who was on vacation with his family, and as his family was driving back home, they were driving through Arkansas, and they decided to stop at Crater of Diamonds State Park.

It's where you can go around and look at rocks and be able to put the rocks in your bucket and at the end be able to keep what you have. As Matthew was going through the park, he noticed this kind of brown rock.

It was kind of the size of like an M&M.; It was really small, but he picked it up. He thought it was kind of cool, and he turned and he showed his mom, and his mom looked at it, and she dismissed it, said, you know, that's nothing, just throw it away.

[16 : 15] But he was mesmerized by it. He was captivated by it, and so he refused to throw it away. He just put it in his bucket, and they continued on. When they finished the trip in the park, Matthew had that little brown rock examined.

Turns out, it wasn't some meaningless little brown stone. It was actually a 2.75 carat diamond worth \$3,000.

I wonder why that never happens to me. So that's Matthew's story, but let me tell you also about Mel Fisher. Mel was a 63-year-old man from California.

His occupation was a chicken farmer, but he had a hobby that he loved to do of scuba diving. He loved to just kind of go down and look for treasure, and he'd done this kind of off and on throughout his life, but finally he just decided, I'm going to sell everything.

I'm going to move from California to the Florida Keys, and I'm going to spend my life looking for sunken ships. In fact, Mel would tell himself every day before he would leave his house, today is the day.

[17 : 34] Today is the day. And one day, that day, was the day. It was July of 1985, 16 years after Mel had started this commitment of his life to search for treasure.

And it was on that day that he found a Spanish ship dating back to 1622. And on the ship was a collection of gold estimated at \$450 million.

Now, think about those two stories. Think about those two stories. Matthew Smith, who's just walking along, and he discovers this thing that ends up being very valuable.

And then you have Mel Fisher, who's actually going out every day searching for treasure. Those two examples give us what these two parables teach us when put together.

The point being, there are some people like Matthew Smith, like the man in the first parable who's walking through the field, like the Gentiles who are not out looking for a Messiah, like Paul who's just out there trying to kill Christians, like the woman at the well who's just going to get some water, like maybe you who just went to youth group in order to impress the girl.

[19 : 08] You weren't looking for Jesus until all of a sudden God graciously interrupted your life with someone of great value.

You were just going along, living life, and all of a sudden Jesus is experienced in a real way. And it changes everything.

One of my heroes of church history, a man by the name of Charles Spurgeon, was converted this way. There was a snowstorm one day as he was walking, and the snow got so bad that he actually took shelter in a Methodist church, and on that day was converted to Christ.

He didn't wake up that morning saying, I'm going to go look for Jesus today. I'm going to go become a Christian today. He was living his normal life, and he found someone of ultimate value.

That's how some people become a Christian. That's how some people come into a relationship with Jesus. But it's not the only way. You see, Mel Fisher's example, or like the second parable, some people, like for instance the Jews who were looking for a Messiah, or the Ethiopian eunuch who was seeking understanding, or maybe like you, you grew up in church, or maybe you started with some questions about God, or the problem of evil, or is there such thing as the existence of God, and you started out seeking knowledge or something, but you ended up finding so much more than you ever could have imagined.

[20 : 51] Because in your seeking, you found God in a way that radically changed your life.

You see, faith family, are you with me? These two parables, when put together, show us different ways that people come to Jesus.

Some are just walking along and boom, and others are seeking something, maybe they don't even know what, and they experience Jesus in that way.

That's the first thing these parables teach us, the ways of coming to Jesus. But here's the second thing. Though their entrance into the kingdom may be different, what's the same in both of these stories is the cherishing of Jesus.

There's different ways of coming to Jesus, but in both cases, they cherish Jesus. Your journey to Jesus may have been different, but the response once you find Him is the same.

[21 : 56] Look at verse 44 again. You notice that it says there, which a man found and covered up, then in his joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Look at verse 46. Who on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. They experience it in a different way, but once they have experienced it, their response is the

same thing.

I have to have it. And nothing in my life compares to this thing, to this treasure, to this pearl. They cherish it. They value it. They want it more than anything in life. And they're willing to give up everything and surrender everything, even though that goes against, listen, common sense. It goes against common sense to be this way, yet they go all in. You'll notice this on the screen. Common sense says, spread things out.

[23 : 06] That's what common sense in the world is. Diversify. Spread things out. But uncommon sense says, surrender all.

Common sense says, spread things out. Uncommon sense says, surrender all for that one thing. Now, faith family, listen to me. What is the basis of your joy as a Christian? What is the basis of your joy as a Christian?

Is it that you've been forgiven? Well, that's awesome, obviously. Is it that you have the promise of heaven? That's incredible. Is it that Jesus gives you peace of mind?

Or that in some way he offers you a better life? Here is what one author has said, and I think has said well, quote, if you could have heaven with no sickness, all the friends you've ever had on earth, all the food you've ever liked, all the leisure activities you've ever enjoyed, all the natural beauties you've ever saw, no human conflict, no natural disasters, could you be satisfied with heaven if Christ were not there?

[24 : 31] People who would be happy in heaven if Christ were not there will not be there.

The gospel is not a way to get people to heaven. It's a way to get people to God. If we don't want God above all things, we have not been converted by the gospel.

In other words, what makes heaven heaven has nothing to do with the place. It has everything to do with the person of Jesus Christ and the fact that He is the all-surpassing value of life.

And that is not common to the world. Oh, no, no, no. Common sense in the world would be you value as many things as you possibly can, but the uncommon sense of the gospel, the uncommon sense of the kingdom, is there is only one treasure you need.

And you must go all in on that treasure. And you may come to that point in different ways, but when you get there, you will cherish Him.

[26 : 03] Not what He can give you, not where He's going to take you, not the place that He's prepared for you. No, you will value Him and Him above all other things.

Faith family, listen to me. Are you using uncommon sense right now? Right now, where you are in this season of life, of all that's been taking place over the last few weeks, are you using the uncommon sense of the kingdom of God?

You're struggling with your health. I know some of you are. You're struggling with your finances. I know that some of you are. Maybe for others of you, it's in relationships.

I am not trying to minimize, oh please, faith family, I am not trying to minimize anything that you're going through today. What I am saying is this, if you're a Christian, you already have what is most valuable.

You already have the greatest treasure that you can have in life. Even if your finances aren't what they ought to be, or even if your relationships are not what they ought to be.

[27 : 15] Those are important things, yes. And do they matter? Of course. But you already have what life is all about. And let your heart go all in on Him.

That may not be the common sense of the world, but it is the uncommon sense of the kingdom, no matter what situation you are facing today.

Here's a third thing. These parables not only teach us ways of coming to Jesus, and that once we come to Jesus, we cherish Him above all.

But thirdly, is the cost of following Jesus. The cost of following Jesus. Notice how they respond. Both of these men in both of these parables are full of joy.

They are overflowing with joy. They value this treasure. They value this pearl so much that it overshadows everything. Look at verse 44.

[28 : 17] The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy, he goes and, here it is, sells all that he has and buys that field.

Now look down in verse 46. Who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

In other words, what's common in both of these parables, their coming to Jesus may be different, but once they get to Jesus, once they experience Him, they cherish Him above everything so much so that they don't care if it costs them everything else in their life.

They sell everything they have just to get the treasure, just to get that pearl. What is the sacrifice of money or reputation or time or friends when you already have the one thing that matters most in life?

As the old hymn says, the things of this earth grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. And I don't get the impression from the text here that these men and these stories are concerned at all with the cost.

[29 : 44] They're so overwhelmed with joy in the treasure they have found, they do not care what the cost may be.

I thought about illustrating it this way. Imagine, for instance, if you're a parent or you have a child that your child is in the hospital and the doctor comes to you and says, I've got good news and I've got bad news.

The good news is the surgery that we're recommending has a 100% guarantee to solve the condition to address the issue that your child is facing.

100% guarantee no question about it. That's the good news. The bad news is it will cost you everything you have in your bank account.

It will cost you everything you have in your bank account. But it is 100% guaranteed to save your child. My guess is that there are very few if any parents who are going to look at that doctor and say, well, I guess my son is going to die.

[31 : 00] I guess my child is not going to make it. Of course not. You're going to gladly, joyfully, willingly give whatever is in your bank account.

Why? Because your heart has been captured by the love of your child. The cost, the sacrifice doesn't matter in light of the overwhelming joy and love you have in this person.

salvation. How much, even more so, is that true for Jesus? Namely, the point I'm trying to make is you don't care what the sacrifice is going to be.

You don't care what the cost is going to be because you already have what is of surpassing value. And you see this in the Scriptures.

For instance, Habakkuk 3, verse 17. We looked at this a few weeks ago. Though the fig tree should not blossom nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail, the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold, there be no herd in the stalls.

[32 : 12] In other words, if I lose everything, if everything is sacrificed and gone, yet, I will rejoice in the Lord.

I view the loss of these things in light of the fact that I already have the ultimate thing. God, I have the treasure.

What difference does it make what I might lose when I can't lose Him? Or, not just Habakkuk 3, but also Paul says this in Philippians 3, verse 7, Whatever gain I had, I count as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Do you see what Paul is saying? The same thing that we're seeing in these stories, the same thing that Habakkuk says in Habakkuk 3, namely, the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus far outshadows whatever loss I would have of worldly things.

[33 : 37] Faith family, look right here. Common sense in the world is, oh, you need to diversify, you need to experience as much, you need to find all different kinds of things as valuable in life.

That's the common sense of the world. The uncommon sense of the kingdom is, once you go all in on Jesus, once you put all your chips in on Him, once you put all your faith in on Him, the things of the world will grow strangely dim.

You won't care about the cost because you already have the treasure. Augustine said it this way, how sweet all at once it was for me to be rid of those fruitless joys which I had once feared to lose. I don't want to lose that. I don't want that to go away. And yet he says, you drove them from me, you who are the true, the sovereign joy.

You drove them from me and took their place. You, referring to Christ, you who are sweeter than all pleasure.

[34 : 55] Faith family, notice this on the screen. You know you have experienced Jesus, when and only when, you have come to the uncommon sense of surrendering everything, trading anything, and being willing to lose all things just to have Him.

That is not common sense to the world, but that is the kingdom of God. what do these parables teach us?

Jesus says, you're going to see, you're going to understand, but most will not. What they think is common, the way they're going to approach life, is not going to be the way that you're going to approach life.

No, no, no, disciples, I've got some uncommon sense that I want to teach you through these parables, and here's one. Even though people will come to Jesus differently, once they find Him, they will sacrifice everything just to know Him more.

That is the kingdom of God. So let's give just a little bit of application as we wrap up the message today. What are some uncommon sense lessons that we can learn from this today?

[36 : 21] Here they are. I've got three. We'll hit them quickly. Number one, uncommon sense number one is this. The surrendered life, is the satisfied life. That doesn't make any sense at all.

You're right in the eyes of the world, but that's exactly what is true in the kingdom of God. The surrendered life is the satisfied life.

These men in these parables experienced the fullness of joy when they surrendered everything. everything. It wasn't when they tried to make much of themselves.

No, they surrendered themselves in order to have the pearl, in order to have the treasure, and there in is where they became truly satisfied.

You say, but I don't want to surrender everything. Then you won't get the all satisfying Savior. the uncommon sense of the kingdom is you've got to surrender all to be satisfied.

[37 : 28] The surrendered life is the satisfied life. Here's a second kind of uncommon sense we learn is the surrendered life is the sane life.

The surrendered life, this giving up of everything just to get him is the sane life. Common sense would say, again, don't surrender. But uncommon sense would say, you're crazy.

You are crazy. Not to be willing to sacrifice everything for Christ and to know him more. Think of it this way. Imagine the guys in the parable here.

They become, becomes an old man and their grand kid is sitting there and they're telling the story. And the old man's like, son, you wouldn't believe what happened to me one day.

One day I was walking through the field and I stumbled upon the most valuable treasure in all the world.

[38 : 33] It was incredible. It was a once in a lifetime treasure. Really, grandpa? What did you do? What did you do with that treasure? I just buried it back in the ground and went on about my business.

That's crazy. How could you have the opportunity to experience something so valuable and just walk away?

And my fear is, yeah, I'm talking to you. My fear is that there are some of you out there listening to this message and you have been given the opportunity to trust and believe in Jesus, the all surpassing valuable one, and you have said in your sin, no thank you.

That's insane to have the opportunity to have the ultimate treasure and say no.

The surrendered life is the sane life. Oh, that you would not say no to the satisfying treasure of the universe.

[39 : 44] So, uncommon sense one, the surrendered life is the satisfied life. Two, the surrendered life is the sane life. And then lastly, uncommon sense three, the surrendered life is the saved life.

The surrendered life is the saved life. Faith family, this is not parables for super Christians.

Sometimes we read these things and we're like, that's really radical, and that must be for the people in the Bible, but I'm just kind of common everyday Joe.

Is this what's expected of me? My point would be to say this, you're not a Christian until you're willing to sacrifice everything for Jesus alone.

Here's why. You can't have any other gods before him. God it can't be Jesus and my family and my finances and whatever.

No, no, no, no. You're not a Christian until you're willing to say, I do not want my heart to ultimately find affection in many things.

[40 : 59] I want my heart to find ultimate affection in the one true thing, namely Jesus Christ. That's what it means to be a Christian. To turn from your sin and put your faith singularly in the person of Jesus Christ.

And after all, don't we already know this faith family? That at the heart of the gospel is this clear truth. Salvation comes through a surrendered life.

salvation comes through a surrendered life. And that may seem foolish to the world, but it is the wisdom of God.

You know, faith family, I never finished the basketball story. The day came when we finally picked up a basketball.

And not only did we pick up a basketball, but over the next several days and weeks, that team made it to the state tournament. And yet there was a day that I thought the coach had no idea what he was doing.

[42 : 20] I thought that coach didn't make any sense at all. But I was wrong. He knew exactly what he was doing.

He knew exactly what he was calling us to. Even though it didn't make sense to us, it made perfect sense to him, and such is the kingdom of God.

It doesn't make sense to surrender everything. It doesn't make sense to go all in on a single thing, but yet that is where you will find true joy.

So faith family, let us be a people who do not approach life the same way that everybody else approaches life, lets you and I pray for a little more uncommon sense.

Would you pray with me? Father, thank you for what you've taught us today in your word. You told the disciples, most people won't understand this, most people won't see it, they won't perceive it, but you will.

[43 : 32] And they will think you are foolish, and they will think that you are crazy, but you're actually the ones that will be living in wisdom, not the wisdom of the world, but the wisdom of God.

So would you help us as a faith family? Would you help us individually as we walk with you to walk in the uncommon sense of the kingdom, and as we learn today, a willingness to sacrifice all for the joy we find in one.

And his name is Jesus. So give us that uncommon sense that we might be truly fulfilled! In him!