

# Matthew 13:44-52

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Date: 19 May 2019

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[0:00] What is your most cherished relation?! No matter what you treasure, no matter what you're after, no matter what it is that makes you happy, no matter how great that thing is, I have good news for you.

Jesus offers you something that makes that, even that, look like dust. And shadow, all for free. The Puritan Thomas Watson said, the glittering of the world dazzles men's eyes, but it does not so much delight as delude.

The world is gilded emptiness. Let's pray. Lord, we follow the psalm.

He says, satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice, glad in you all our day.

[1:47] Amen. The kingdom of heaven. That's the theme of Matthew chapter 13.

We are the last section of these parables that Jesus is preaching. It's all been about the kingdom. And here he brings in rapid succession four very short ones, all together.

I think we are meant to read them together because they flow so well. He begins in verse 44. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up.

And in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who, on finding one pearl, great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

But what do these twin parables teach us? There is a treasure which, when we see it, we won't give a thought, a second thought, to our other treasure.

[3:00] In the first parable, a man finds treasure in a field. And what does he do? In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Not only does he consider all his other treasures less valuable, The new treasure is so valuable. He is happy, joyful to part with his other things if he could just have this.

Everything you have and hope to gain in this world. Wealth and respect and relationships and possessions and health and security is so small.

Next to the kingdom of heaven that when you see what's in store for you, You would happily, gladly, joyfully give it up in an instant.

And consider yourself overwhelmingly blessed making that example. Now, maybe you aren't looking for a new life-changing treasure.

[4:22] Maybe you're pretty content the way things are. Well, that's where the man in verse 44 was too. He stumbled upon it quite by accident. Yet it was so compelling, so much better than what he had or even hoped for.

That he gladly reordered everything in his life just to have it. It's the same with the pearl merchant who was looking for treasure. He found the one great pearl.

He saw its value and knew there's nothing better. What did he do? He sold all that he had to buy it.

And that means he gave up every other business opportunity.

He didn't hedge his bets. He didn't diversify his portfolio. This was it. He saw something of utmost value and went all in. Now, a merchant doesn't stay in business very long if he or she makes bad investments.

If they buy high and then sell low, in the soup line before long. If they purchase goods for more than they're worth, they'll be penniless or worse in no time.

[5:33] This merchant isn't an amateur. He's trading in fine pearls. You don't start with fine pearls. You start with hand tools and spices and

dyes. You have to work your way up to the jewelry of kings and queens, right?

This is a shrewd businessman. And when he sees this one pearl, when he sees its worth, he realizes it's worth liquidating. Every other investment he has.

And by selling it all, all of his eggs are in one basket. All his hope is in one great investment. He has seen all that the world's markets have to offer and nothing cares.

What could possibly be worth everything? For the men in these two parables, for me, and for you, and for everyone who would hear, what could be worth, what could possibly be worth this exchange?

And Jesus says it is the kingdom of heaven. What's so great about the kingdom? It's certainly not the subject of the kingdom.

[6:49] I'm not what's great about the kingdom of heaven. To be honest, neither are you. What's great? What's so great about the kingdom of heaven?

The crowning jewel is the king. Everything in his kingdom shines because of the light he casts upon it.

His brilliance gives the rest its glory. Thomas Watson, who I've already quoted once, you'll hear him again, gave an illustration of this point.

He used the illustration of a scale where you weigh two things against each other. He said, He said, The Lord is so super eminent a reward that we cannot set him forth in all his luster and magnificence.

That is to say, we don't have words for his glory. Put the whole world in a scale with him. And it is as if you should weigh a feather with a mountain of good.

[8:08] God is far better than all other things put together. He is better than the world. He is better than heaven. He is the original cause of all good things.

Nothing is sweet without him. What is this treasure? This pearl? What lies in store for God's? Watson continues, There in the kingdom of heaven, you shall tread upon stars, befriend angels, and fellowship, said Trinity.

The saints then be glad in the Lord. In God are treasures which can never be emptied, and pleasures which can never be emptied.

So friends, if the Christian life is drudgery to you, you're doing it wrong. We are meant to enjoy and delight and celebrate.

[9:17] The king, this king even, he actually exists. We are his.

The king lives. This king offers himself to us. God wants us to have joy and riches in him. Now, this is not the prosperity gospel, a corruption of this idea where, you know, if we're very, very good, or believe real hard, or give lots of money, he'll bless us with health and wealth.

If he is the means to get what you really want instead of the thing you really want, you've got this whole Christianity thing wrong. You've missed the whole point. The joy he gives, the blessing he bestows, is in fact himself.

He wants us to have unsurpassable joy, which can only be found in him. Now, that doesn't mean that the Christian life is always easy, or fun, or free from sorrow.

His word promises, in fact, additional hardships because we are Christian. But in the midst of those, there is an overarching, overshadowing joy in Christ that supports us in the worst time and draws us joyfully heavenward at all times.

[10:43] It is not just a future reality. There is great joy in this greatest treasure today. Christianity is not simply a delayed gratification scheme.

No, certainly we will have him in his fullness on that day. truly also have Christ's kiss. And so there is rejoicing today.

One commentator looked at the parable of the treasure in the field and the great pearl and said this, in both cases, the treasure comes to the man in the field and the pearl merchant's possession immediately so that it is unlikely that the blessings of the kingdom of heaven are seen as purely Thomas Watson again.

God is a pleasant reward. He is the quintessence of delight. He is all beauty and love. And then he brings that into today, not just some future thing. Today. To be feeding upon God's thoughts, which we can do each day in his word, is delicious.

Psalm 104, my meditation of him shall be sweet. Of a prospect of God by faith, today is pleasant.

[12:08] 1 Peter 1, in whom believing you rejoice. There is real, actual, present joy in God today.

we will enjoy the pearl of great price fully on that last day, but we have true enjoyment of him now. I hope you have ears to hear and eyes to see and a heart to enjoy him. The magnitude of his glory, the depths of his mercy, even now.

when we see that there is only one great treasure and when we see these men selling all they had to get it, there are actually two, I think, ways we could misunderstand these parables that I want to quickly...

First, we don't purchase our way into the kingdom. Jesus isn't telling us that we have to contribute or pay or be really good or buy our way into this treasure.

[13:18] That's not what he's trying to communicate by these parables. The king's offer of the kingdom is free to everyone who will repent and believe in him. If the kingdom is truly as good as we have said it is, is there any way you could afford it?

what Jesus means by the two men selling everything that absolutely nothing, no treasure, no pleasure, no position, nothing cares to them.

Next to this, all else and me. Which can lead to the second misunderstanding. This doesn't mean don't be happy about anything else.

Valuing the kingdom of heaven does not mean that Christians turn into ascetics. We turn into monks who go live in the desert somewhere and reject all good things in this world.

We receive as good gifts all the things that the Lord has made. The Lord wants us to take an appropriate satisfaction in satisfying things.

[14:33] This is the Lord who made, Psalm 104, wine to gladden the heart of men, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's hearts.

This is the Lord who said to husbands in Proverbs chapter 5, let your fountain be blessed and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight.

Be intoxicated always in her love. These are not the words of a killjoy God. He made this world good because he is good and he wants us to enjoy his good gifts.

But he asks, what is your pearl of greatest value? And just going back through the things we've just now listed, if wine is your great pearl, it will destroy your liver and your relationships and your life and in your intoxication, you will forget God and you will miss the great trick.

If health and vitality and your ideal weight become your great pearl, you'll consume your time, your wealth, your attention on health and appearance and you'll lose sight of the great pearl even as your health, vitality, appearance inevitably decay away any.

[16:04] If bread is your great pearl in a literal or in a metaphorical sense, it will turn you to yourself, your greed, drive away the other joy.

If sex or marriage is your great pearl, you'll obsess over your spouse or your lack of one. You'll base your happiness on another person who cannot bear the weight of holding up all your satisfaction. Not possible. All these and more are good gifts from God which he wants us to enjoy but which if we make them our greatest pearl who collapse under that and let us down, ultimately rob us of the real joy, having Christ as our great joy.

when he is the foundation and bedrock of our joy, when he is the treasure, we consider best. When he's the pearl, we can't be without. Then we can enjoy all those other things, wine and bread and marriage, and more as we were meant to in relation to him.

[17:20] We can enjoy wine and oil and bread and marriage in our hearts, say, you know, this is it. This is the thing I'm after. I'm going to spend my life pursuing this. Or, we can enjoy wine and oil and bread and marriage and more in our hearts saying, thank you.

They're tokens of your love for me. I'm enjoying them. And in receiving them from you, I'm actually enjoying you more as the great gift. And, in fact, I can enjoy the gifts knowing they come through. Psalm 92. For you, O Lord, have made me glad by your work, at the works of your hand, I sing. The question is not, do you desire other things?

Do you find joy in other things? Of course you do. And God wants you to. The question is, what is your great treasure? What's your chief desire? To which kingdom are you finally?

Those who don't have the pearl of brightest price, Jesus speaks in verse 47. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.

[18:46] It's full, men drew it ashore, and sat down and sorted the good into containers, but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age, the angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery firm.

In that place there will be weeping, gnashing of teeth. What is left for those who neglect so great a salvation?

the pearl of great price is the source of all other goodness.

Right? Sunsets are beautiful because he formed the laws of physics which govern and allow the fusion reaction that powers the sun.

relationships are wonderful because he made our spirits so that we are not just biological machines.

[19:55] James chapter 1, every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

When we reject this treasure, the source of every treasure, it's not as if we're passing up one good thing for another. When we pass on the very source of goodness, nothing good will remain.

In the pit of hell, there is only weeping and gnashing of teeth because there is only one fountain of goodness and its streams do not flow there.

but even now, Christ, who is the treasure outshining the stars, he can be yours.

He cannot purchase this treasure. His worth far outstrips the galaxies before you could not possibly afford and receive him.

[21:06] Even this moment, if you will die to self, repent of your sin. He hears the hearer, let him hear.

You understand? That's what Jesus asked in verse 51. said to him, have you understood all these things? They said to him, yes.

He said to them, 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, what is old.

This treasure is not to remain hidden. Treasure is meant to be beheld. to shine, be seen.

We despise and almost pity the miser who hoards his riches to himself. Ebenezer Scrooge is wealthy, but he's not a happy man.

[22:13] The one who enjoys wealth is the one who brings others into their feet. That's the mission of the church, to love others by calling them to the one inexhaustible tribe.

To call them away from dust and mist and ashes to glory. Ed Welch has put it well. We call people away from a banquet in the grave and give them a seat at the table of God.

treasure is not to remain hidden. In love we are to bring it out. Ted Tripp has written a lot on parenting.

I'm going to read a lengthy quote. It is about bringing out treasure before our children, but it is not just for children. It's for you, for everyone you know.

Our children search for pleasure, for something to delight them. They look for something that will be exciting and dazzling. Part of our calling every day is to hold out for our children the delights that they were made for, the delights of knowing God.

[23:47] As we see children try to fill their appetites, and friends, this is for us, as we see ourselves, as well. Try to fill their appetites. We need to help them understand the greatest delight.

We need to draw them into our confidence and share with them times when we have known the wonder of God's presence and the glories of delighting in him.

Do you share soul satisfying joys of savoring the presence of God? Do you ever talk about God's presence with your child? Children need to hear this message all the time.

We have a glorious God. Life is found in knowing him. Life is not found in abundance of possessions or satisfying your appetites or having a string of successes or all those other things. The greatest joys you can possibly experience as a human being are those joys found in the presence of God. The greatest beauty, the highest value, the deepest satisfaction, the longest lasting joy, the most satisfying delights, the most fulfilling pleasures, the most wonderful friendships, the most satisfying experiences are not found in going places, doing things, and owning things. [25:06] They are found in knowing God. If you want your children to have a reason to sing on Sunday, give them a glorious God.

If you want your children to have a reason not to sin on Monday, give them a glorious God. If you want them to think of nobler things than the latest entertainment, give them a glorious God. If you want them to dream grander dreams than illicit sex or more money or more stuff, give them a glorious God. If you want them to have a reason for confidence, life seems to spin out of control. Give them a glorious God. When friends are offering the pleasures of sin for a season, they need a glorious God. Godly fear, that sense of awe and reverence that inspires true worship requires a glorious God.

God is the one before whom they should tremble and worship with reverence, and awe. The glory of God will stoke the fires of true worship and godly living.

[26:27] All of that is said in the context of raising children and parents, that is your chart. But it is just as true. And it is also your responsibility as a member of the church of God.

God. The first for you, do you want fullness of joy? Do you want to put sin to death? Look to heaven and see the glory of the true and best treasure.

Psalm chapter nine. Will you give thanks, or I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart. I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.

I will be glad and exalt in you. I will sing praise to your name, O most heart. Set your eyes on the greatest treasure.

If you want, have a reason not to sin on Monday, look to a glory. Right? Temptation always makes an offer.

[27:33] Always. When contemplating sin, and I want you to think right now, the last time you chose to delve into sin, it was for a reason.

Temptation was offering you something. When we contemplate sin, to indulge in lust or greed or gossip, whatever temptation comes our way, it's offering us something.

Pleasure, advancement, enjoyment, something. Will you, like the man in the field, or the pearl merchant, do the math?

Which is greater joy? The empty promises of sin, or the pearl of great price? What does pornography offer you?

What does greed offer? What does gossip offer? offer? Temptation always makes an offer.

[28:42] There's pleasure, there's joy to be had here. But how much joy is actually being offered? And how lasting is it? And can it actually deliver on the promise of the promise?

when you are tempted towards sin, whatever is on offer, compare it to this treasure, this pearl of great price, and ask, which is better?

Do you like praise and worship? Singing songs is the gathered church of God. Do you enjoy it? And I promise I'm actually not switching topics here.

Do you enjoy singing songs of praise? Do you friends? When we choose God over sin, that is also when through our choices we declare God, your ways are better than sin.

There's more joy and satisfaction in you than in my temptation. That's declaring the goodness and glory of God, not just with our words and our songs, but with the overflow of our hearts into our lives.

[30:04] So if you enjoy praise and worship, you're going to love obedience. This treasure is for our children.

It is for ourselves. It is for others. Others, Psalm 32, be glad in the Lord, rejoice, O you righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart.

This is both an obedience, calling others to this treasure, it's an obedience, and it is love. Obedience because God commands it, and love because there's no greater gift than the greatest treasure of all.

You can't possibly give someone something better. So we bring out treasure. Words of verse 52, we bring out treasure in the church among the people of God.

Colossians chapter 3, let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your, that's plural, your all, all your hearts to God.

[31:17] Now, why tell the people of God about a treasure they already have? We all, from time to time, walk, sometimes great, sadness, and suffering, and sorrow.

Yet, we have a comfort greater than any trouble. So we must be reminded. Right? 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul writes, the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, the sound of a trumpet of God.

And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will always be with the Lord.

And what does Paul want us to do with that information? Therefore, courage one another with those words.

Friends, that's what it looks like. Bring out verse 52 among the people of God. We point our children to the treasure.

[32:40] We point ourselves back to the hidden treasure. We point the church to the pearl of great price and we offer treasure to those who do not yet have it. When the pearl of great price is Christ was born into this world, the angel of the Lord appeared to Shepard, and the glory of the Lord shone around them and they were filled with glory.

The angel said to them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good of great that will be for all the people. For all the people. He was born this day, the city of David, a Savior who is Christ. Christ. friends, the most generous thing you can do is share this inexhaustible treasure with someone who is God. Lord, we follow the psalmist and say our soul waits. for you, O Lord. You are our help and our shield.

Our heart is glad in you. A great truth. Because we trust in your holy name. Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

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