

Matthew 13:44-46

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Preacher: Rev Robert Sinclair

[0 : 00] I'd like to turn this morning to God's Word in the New Testament and the Gospel of John and Chapter 3.

Gospel of John and Chapter 3. Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these things that you do unless God is with him.

And Jesus answered him, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus said to him, How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born? Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

[1 : 17] That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, you must be born again.

The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.

Nicodemus said to him, How can these things be? And Jesus answered him, Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know, and bear witness to what we have seen, but you do not receive our testimony.

If I have told you earthly things, and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.

[2 : 26] And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.

And this is the judgment. The light has come into the world and people love the darkness rather than the light, because their deeds were evil.

But everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his deeds have been carried out in God.

[3 : 47] Amen. And the Lord will add his blessing to that further reading of his own word. Let us then continue praising God in this time in Psalm 146, which we'll find on page 191.

Psalm 146. Praise the Lord, my soul, O praise him. I'll extol him all my days while I live to God my Saviour.

From my heart I will sing praise. We'll sing down to the end of the verse marked six, that's four stanzas, to God's praise. Praise the Lord, my soul, O praise him.

I'll extol him all my days while I live to God my Saviour.

From my heart I will sing praise. Do not put your trust in princes, mortal men who cannot save.

[5 : 05] All their plans will come to nothing when they perish in their grave.

Blessed is the one who truly looks for help to Jacob's God.

Blessed is the one who places all his hope upon the Lord.

He who made the earth and heaven and the cities with all her store.

He who keeps his every promise who is faithful evermore.

[6 : 06] Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, I'd like us to turn this morning to God's word in the Gospel of Matthew and at chapter 13 and reading at verse 44.

Matthew chapter 13 and at verse 44.

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 sells all that he has and buys that field.

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

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field and the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in a search of fine pearls. These two parables are really one.

[7 : 40] They speak of the same ideal that when someone finds something of great value they will do everything in their power to attain that value for themselves.

This or these parables also have an element of election or predestination involved in them. And whenever we talk about election and predestination we often get caricatures of what they really are. People want to bring up an example of a man who is outrageous in his life and conduct. Someone who lives a very ungodly life who does everything against God and his precepts and yet in a moment of time God converts him because God has elected him.

And so he takes this man kicking against God and all his precepts and ideals and he converts that man because he is of God's elect. Perhaps there is another man they say who is a very godly person.

Someone who is always the means of grace someone who is always seeking a way of salvation someone who prays earnestly and yet God comes to him and says no I cannot save you because you are not of the elect.

[9 : 03] Now obviously those are great caricatures of what election and predestination is about. whenever a person is brought to a knowledge or saving knowledge of God in Christ it's because God has worked something in them.

In the first instance the person who was outrageous and was made willing to seek after God he does so because God has worked that miracle in him.

Many of us here were like that who wanted nothing to do with God whose lives were full of idolatry and blasphemy and idleness in the gospel sense.

And yet the Lord worked in us that one thing needful and brought us to know the salvation that is in Christ Jesus. The second example of the person who is always seeking well that person was always seeking because God had worked in them and that one thing needful.

And you will see here in this parable or these parables something of those examples worked out in what the Lord is telling the people.

[10 : 19] Just one thing about the parables here in this chapter. You would have to read to chapter 13 before we come across one parable of the Lord in the Gospel of Matthew.

And then all of a sudden we have seven parables in this one chapter. Seven parables concerning salvation. Or seven parables really concerning the kingdom of God.

Kingdom parables which speak about what God has planned to bring people to himself and the various methods he uses to bring people to himself.

when we are made willing in a day of God's power we love what we previously had no interest in and come to rejoice in the glorious gospel of the blessed God.

Each and every one of us who have been brought to faith in Christ Jesus can say that in our testimony. Whether we were raised in Christian homes whether we were brought in out of the wilderness we can all say at one time we had no interest in the gospel.

[11 : 38] The Bible was a closed book. There was nothing in it that had any interest to us and yet in his mercy God turned that around. Made us not only interested but avid students of his word and of his precepts and examples of his grace.

When we are converted when we are born again as it says in the gospel of John there chapter 3 we come running because we wouldn't have it any other way.

We come running because that's what we want to do. We found something that we wouldn't be without. Now why am I beginning like this about these aspects of predestination and election and God's choosing?

Because a work of grace in your heart or my heart is the essential basis of the parables that the Lord here is telling those who are gathered around him.

The parable of the treasure hid in the field and the parable of the pearl of great price are all examples of what God does in the lives of those he wants to bring to him.

[13:07] He shows them the treasure. He opens their eyes to the value of that treasure and then he draws us. He draws us to himself with cords of love.

The man who is walking in the field is walking in the field when he just stumbles upon this treasure. He's not looking for it. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in the field which a man found and covered up. It wasn't as though he was out looking for that treasure.

He was out there simply walking and he stumbles across this treasure. And then in his joy he goes. He sells all that he has and he buys the field in which the treasure is hidden. the merchant looking for fine pearls is actually looking.

[14:20] There is something in his life which has driven him to search for this one great pearl of great price and he spent his whole life doing it. And both these examples the treasure is allied to the gospel and the pearl is also allied to the gospel.

One isn't looking for it and yet when he finds it he sells all that he has and seeks that treasure for the rest of his life and gives himself up for that treasure for the rest of his life.

And the man seeking for pearls finds the goal of his life. He finds it sells all that he has and buys that pearl.

What these parables are meant to teach us is to lead us to know what to do with our lives if we find the treasure?

What response is there going to be in our lives if the treasure is revealed to us? If God in his mercy opens our eyes which have been blinded to the grace of God in Christ Jesus?

[15:29] But we're told here both men knew the value of what they had found. it's not surprising that the man who found this treasure realized what he had found.

He had been walking through the field shall we say nonchalantly looking not looking for anything particular and suddenly stumbles across this and as soon as he sees it he sees the value of what he found.

He sees how great a treasure it is and then he goes and he buys the field in which the treasure has been hidden.

if the parable had said he saw it he saw the value of what he had seen and yet he covered it up and just went on and didn't do another thing about it we'd all of us think what an utter fool this man's been and yet that's exactly what many do with the gospel the gospel is preached the value of the gospel is acknowledged the enormity of the reward is not debated about the promises given are without compare and yet many and just throw it aside and go their own way as though and they had never seen it it's like the man that James talks about in his epistle having looked into the mirror of life we turn away not knowing what that mirror has revealed us to be and we carry on living our lives as though we had never been brought to see it and so like the rich young ruler who's offered eternal life yet turns away and says

I would rather have my riches I would rather live my own life go my own way and sell all that I have and follow Christ the merchant looking for the pearls knew what he had found he was an expert in pearls he spent all his life looking for this one great pearl and eventually he found it like a person seeking for assurance of the gospel that he's heard all his life great trials great difficulties perhaps have come across that person's life great doubts and great fears uncertainties and yet when those uncertainties are removed there is this knowledge this realization but the value of the treasure of Christ is beyond compare and we must have it and so here this merchant who is looking for the pearl of great price he must have this price both in their realization of what they found could say with power

[19:04] I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord men and women like that have already had their minds open to the knowledge of Christ and see him as he really is they've seen the treasure they want the treasure they give everything that they have for that treasure and so they must have him because their minds have been turned upside down no longer is he as a root out of dry ground with no form nor comeliness he is the one who is the chief among ten thousand the one who is altogether lovely the one who is the mighty God the Lord the one who has made us the one who has created us for himself and the one who will have us for himself if only if only we would give in to his entreaties his desire for us and so we see first of all that both men knew the value of what they had found and once they had found it they had determined to have it we can't imagine either of these men having seen the value of the discoveries

decided it's just going to be too much trouble it's going to have to be too much of a change in their life they're going to have to give up too much of their life so but so they'll just leave it alone and they'll walk away they would have to be like the rich young ruler who was offered eternal life and chose instead the earthly riches the lord says to him one thing you lack conversation with the lord goes something like he comes running to the lord what must i do to have eternal life and the lord says keep the commandment and he says i've kept them all what do i like yet lack and he says yet one thing you lack go sell all that you have give to the poor and come and follow me he was being offered a life that will never end and he refuses it he turns away he was on to his riches he was on to what this life can offer and he rejects christ that would have been exactly the same of these two men having found their treasures or the pearl and turned away and says it's not worth bothering about i'd far rather have the life i live without any interruptions without any difficulties but why should a person change their priorities why should we change our lifestyles why should we sell all that we have of this world to follow christ because of the promises he makes to us come unto me all you that labor and are heavy laden and i will give you rest take my yoke upon you and learn of me for i am meek and lowly of soul and you shall find rest of your soul in me and so we have these two men with their treasures the parable doesn't have any bearing upon those who sold the field

or sold the pearl no doubt they knew what was there but they decided they would rather have the money than the treasure it must have been another merchant who sold the merchant looking for fine pearls the pearl of great price and yet he was willing to sell it the man who bought it knew its value and money and cost didn't enter into the situation he wanted it and he would give everything in his life to earn it the principle described here is that if we are determined to have what by God's grace we have been brought to see is of infinite value then God is thrilled that we should have it if we come to God empty he will not turn us away the proud he will turn away but the poor in spirit he will welcome he will take to himself and he will rejoice over all those who would come to him well we can have salvation now but we must have it in God's way many in the world today you can say you can have salvation in any way you want you can choose to live the life you're living now as long as you believe you can choose to carry on engaging with your practices and habits that you've had before you're converted as long as you believe he can you're living a loose lifestyle and that will make no difference as long as you believe

God is merciful the devil would not want anything more from you than such a lifestyle he'd be quite content for you to live that way and to say you believe and make no difference to you because as James again tells us the devils believe and they tremble very often we believe and reject God and don't even tremble at the thought of what lies in store for those who are lost and so they sold all that they had to buy it they saw the treasure they found the treasure they saw the value of the treasure and they sold everything they had to buy it for themselves are we prepared to change everything that we are in a word to sell everything that we have in exchange for Christ counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ

Jesus our Lord are we prepared to lay aside our pride our selfishness our self righteousness are we prepared to give up our sinful pleasures and our sinful practices are we prepared to turn our back in everything that really is worldly everything that still speaks so much of the world in which we live and follow Christ see we can't love Christ and not keep his commandments John tells us in his epistles if you love Christ then keep his commandments commandments it's one of the tests of faith if you love Christ then you keep his commandments you walk in the light as he is in the light you have fellowship with him you become one with him in Christ Jesus you don't say you love Christ and then walk your own way and do your own thing and think your own thoughts you follow Christ he is your teacher he is your guide he is your lover the one who wants to enfold you in his own arms and take you to himself and bring you to know that life which will never end see the scripture tells us that every sin deserves God's wrath and curse both in this life and that which is to come and every law has to be kept if we want to be as those who want to treat with God on our own merits and our own lifestyle oh well every sin or every law has to be kept in its every jot every tittle every aspect of that law has to be kept in perfection if that's too hard I'm not talking about keeping the law in our own merit

[28 : 29] I'm talking about following Christ and giving up those things which are really hateful to him pride and self-righteousness and sinful practices and pleasures if that's too hard if the price is too great then we're not like the men who found the treasure in the field or the pearl of great price those who sold everything that they might have it we haven't even yet seen the value of what we're

rejecting if following the Christian life is too hard too difficult we've got too much to give up too much to self deny then we haven't even seen the value of the treasure that's being offered to us it's like Nicodemus was told unless you are born again you cannot even see the kingdom of God let alone enter into it well the choice then is to follow or to draw back what if we draw back then what if we reject the Lord

Jesus Christ what if we go our own way there are many examples in scripture remember Festus listening to Paul listening to his reasoning out of God's word I will hear you again when I have a more convenient season how many of us say that in our lives later when I've achieved this or done that or experienced something else a more convenient season a time when I'm more at my ease a time when I fulfilled all my plans and all my ambitions Festus we understand never again had the opportunity to hear Paul and to hear the gospel and there are plenty of others who will not reject heaven will not be in the least denuded because of your refusal if you don't come many others are rushing to make their way into the kingdom they will take the kingdom of God by force they are men of violence they will come in they will do all in their power to enter all in their power to gain entrance into that kingdom which the Lord Jesus Christ has prepared for us and so the banquet will not have any vacant places every seat will be taken every place will be furnished with a guest but how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation as is offered to us in Christ Jesus knowing that salvation can't be bought can't be bought with money or can't be bought with indulgences as some branches of the Christian faith think can't be bought with self-righteousness as the

Jews think they might be able to make God to be in their debt somehow the great question remaining for us is are we at the point of selling all that we have to follow Christ are we at the point of denying self and taking at the cross and follow Christ if we're not we're behaving just like the rich young ruler who has eternal life offered to him he's there face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ he's there face to face with the one who can give him eternal life and he turns away sad because he had too much in himself too many riches too many things he had to give up and so he turned away from Christ and as far as we know never again had the opportunity to return to that place of mercy it's a picture of letting nothing come between us and the great prize that is in Christ Jesus one hymn writer puts it this way where all the realm of nature mine had were an offering far too small love so amazing so divine demands my love my life my home and then finally they actually bought it they found it they saw its value and they bought it both men the finder of the treasure and the discoverer of the pearl didn't just see the value of what they had found they wanted it for themselves many people say what a great gospel we have many people sit under the gospel year after year and yet never close in with the offers of the gospel many hear as [34 : 19] I see faces and recognize features in this congregation they've sat under the gospel for decades and you're still in the same place you're still without Christ you're still halting between two opinions and yet others have come from nowhere and they're in the kingdom they've forced their way into the kingdom because they've seen Christ they've seen his beauty they've heard his promises and nothing but nothing will keep them from closing in with him and they give everything they have for Christ and what this tells us is that being saved doesn't merely consist in the value or seeing the value of the gospel or the value of anything in this life we must want it for ourselves it must be everything to us the be all and end all of life itself to want it to desire it to seek it with all our heart and soul and mind and strength to receive

Christ and to rest upon him alone for our salvation not anything we are might do or might have done but receive Christ for our souls and to rest upon him alone for our salvation my heart my mind my will has to be changed preachers used to say that the truth of the gospel has to interact with our minds and there the mind filters the information information that we receive whatever branch of study or interest we have the mind is the place where everything is filtered and it's exactly the same for the gospel the mind filters the information we receive if we pay attention if we're listening if we are believing in all there's a phrase at the end of this chapter where the Lord asks his disciples he says do you understand these things do you believe these things verse 51 have you understood all these things and they said unto him yes the question there really is being asked is do you believe the things that you have understood the Lord has made it plain to them much plainer than any preacher today can make it and he's saying the things that you have understood do you believe and I ask the same thing here today in my own way the things that you have understood here today do you believe them do you trust them do you trust the word of God

that's been spoken will you place your whole life and eternity upon them and will you close in with Christ knowing that in him alone there is safety in him alone there is security and we pray that as the truth is broken so it will take root in your hearts and there bring forth much fruit to your praise and to your own glory do we know what effectual calling is in our experience many of those here who have learnt the catholicism know what effectual calling is it's the work of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit showing to us our sin and misery in this world what life without Christ in this world really means what the end of such a life will mean he defines the sin and misery of such a life and then he opens our minds to the knowledge of Christ shows us Christ in all his beauty in all his winsomeness in all his desire in all his grace in all his fulsomeness as he gives his life a ransom for the many he shows us Christ in such a way and then he renews our will he makes us willing in a day of God's power he shows us our sin and misery he opens our minds to the knowledge of Christ he renews our will and he does one thing more he enables us he gives us the ability to embrace Christ that's what effect your calling is the ability of having seen the value and seeing the worth and seeing the beauty of Christ that he takes our hands and stretches them out to embrace Christ and make him our all may it be that any here without Christ might even today know that experience and close in with him let us then conclude our worship singing to God's praise in Psalm 43 Psalm 43 at verse 3 on page 264 O send thy light forth and thy truth let them be guides to me and bring me to thine holy hill even where thy dwellings be to to the end of the psalm forced answers to God's praise O send thy light forth and thy truth let them be guides to me and bring me to thine holy hill in where thy dwelling see then will

[41 : 14] I to God's altar go to God my chief best joy hear God my God I give to praise my heart I will employ why I thy ■■■ might Mel

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