

THE PARABLES OF JESUS, #019 & #020 A Chronological Study

*"To Him who opened His mouth in parables and
uttered things hidden since the creation of the world."
Psalm 78:2*



The Mysteries of the Kingdom

**#19 - "The Treasure Hidden in the Field"
Matthew 13:44 [\[1\]](#)**

**#20 - "The Merchant and the Pearl of Great Price"
Matthew 13:45-46**

INTRODUCTION

At this time in Matthew Chapter 13 we find 2 parables that help pull this chapter together. These two are all about the **Value** of the Kingdom of Heaven and **two kinds of finders**.

[Matthew 13:44] The Hidden Treasure

The Kingdom of Heaven is like... In this parable we find the **value** of the Kingdom in that this man finds something of **great value that has been hidden. He wasn't looking for it**, but he found it, and purchased the entire field where it was found by **selling everything he had**.

[Matthew 13:45] The Pearl of Great Price

The Kingdom of Heaven is like... Again we find the **value** of the Kingdom in that this merchant **was looking for** fine pearls. As a merchant he was looking for **fine pearls** and found **one** that was **so valuable** that he purchased it by **selling everything he had**.

Now before we jump to any conclusion about what Jesus did... His kingdom is of supreme value, and He **GAVE** everything He had at the Cross in order to acquire His kingdom dwellers... this parable is not about what Jesus did. His kingdom was never hid from Him, it was never buried somewhere, it was never owned by someone else, etc. This parable is about mankind and **two types** of men, women, and children who **find** the Kingdom of God in Jesus Christ and through the Holy Spirit.

"THE HIDDEN TREASURE"

INTRODUCTION

THE TEXT

[Mat 13:44] *"The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."*

The Kingdom of Heaven

As always it is primarily important in all of our studies to pay attention to all the words. We've previously identified "The Kingdom of Heaven" as the area of God's concern where He expresses His sovereignty at a particular time in the Scriptures (and always). God, ruling from heaven, with a particular place and time, as the focus point. He is absolutely sovereign all the time, absolutely everywhere... however, the Bible often speaks of His sovereignty as to its relation to a people, a place, and a time.

In the parables found in Matthew Chapter 13, Jesus speaks to His disciples about the importance of belonging to God's **kingdom** in their time and place and its relationship to His eternal plan for their participation in both His earthly promised kingdom at His second coming, and His eternal kingdom.

We should be aware that Matthew (and the other writers of the bible) were not just recording history and teaching matters of faith for their time only. Those teachings were written down for the many generations of seekers and finders down through the ages to us... and to the many possible generations that follow us. Jesus was planting seed for us all. All seed needs to be cultivated, watered, and the harvested. Even the disciples didn't understand much of its relevancy until after His resurrection.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like...

We enter into the land of metaphor and simile. Here's some definitions... Both the metaphor and the simile are "figures of speech." A figure of speech is a word or phrase that is symbolic of something else.

A metaphor is an implied comparison (i.e., "I am the good shepherd,..."). Jesus is not out standing with some sheep and being good to them. The metaphor creates an implied comparison.

A simile is an explicit comparison (i.e., "This day is as cold as ice."). The day is actually cold. Similes differ from metaphors by highlighting the similarities between the two things. Most people use the metaphor and the simile interchangeably, not knowing the difference. I remember the difference by knowing that a **simile** is making a reference to something **similar**.

As a very young man I was always fascinated by the use of metaphor, and simile, especially in advertising. One of my most memorable was, "Winston tastes good, **like** a cigarette should," or just this past week while browsing in our refrigerator, "Great Value Chocolate Syrup". In the first example it doesn't actually say that their product actually tastes **as** a good cigarette does. It only says that their product tastes **like** they think a cigarette should taste. In the second example, just under the name it states that it doesn't actually contain chocolate... it only tastes **like** chocolate. So it's really good to pay attention to the words. (The second metaphor would have been better if they had included "Great Value Chocolate-**like** Syrup," for without it... it's just a lie.

"The kingdom of heaven is like..." well, in chapter 13 Jesus tells His disciples 9 different ways they can begin to understand what God's sovereignty looks like under His rule of a domain. In this parable (No. 6 of 9) it will include at least 9 points that Jesus wants His disciples to learn.

The Kingdom of Heaven:

1. It is like a **treasure**. This particular treasure is further described as:

2. It is like a **hidden** treasure. We are to gather that it is hidden because of the great value of what it contains.
3. It is like a hidden treasure which **a man finds in a field**. We first find that the man was not looking for a treasure.
4. Then, we find out a little later that this man does not own this field.
5. Also, someone else had hidden this treasure in a field they did not own (if the owners had hidden it... they would not then sell it).

Some of the other facts or ideas that we can glean are pretty much unimportant. We are describing **the perceived value** of the treasure, **not** building a set of doctrines based on a parable that tells us what things are "like".

6. After finding the treasure, **the man re-hid it** again. Still speaking of the value of the treasure and the way it was found.
7. The value of the treasure and the possibility of owning it, has **brought** the man **a great deal of joy**.
8. Because of the **joy**, the man leaves the field, went some distance to his home, collected all of his belongings, and sold them - enough money (**value**) just to purchase the field (the treasure was worth much more).
9. He went to the owner of the field and **bought it**.

So, what do we have in this parable?

The Kingdom of Heaven is: A treasure of great joy, that is worth everything, and must be acquired.

But there's more. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who... **wasn't looking for a treasure but found one**.

Let's see now what our second parable is all about. A summary will come at the end.



The Mysteries of the Kingdom

#020 - "The Merchant and the Pearl of Great Price" Matthew 13:45

INTRODUCTION

THE TEXT

*"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, **46** and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it."*

Let's now itemize this parable like the former one.

1. The Kingdom of Heaven is like **a merchant**.
2. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant **seeking fine pearls**.
3. The Merchant **found one** pearl.
4. The Merchant found one pearl **of great value**.

5. We are describing the perceived value of the pearl, **not** building a set of doctrines based on a parable that tells us what things are "like".

6. The merchant **greatly desired** this pearl of great value.

7. Because of the value, the man leaves the place where he has found this pearl, went some distance to his home, collected all of his belongings, and sold them - enough money to **purchase** this pearl of **great value**.

8. He went to the owner of the pearl and **bought** it.

So, what do we have in this parable?

The Kingdom of Heaven is: A treasure of **great value**, that is **worth everything**, and **must be acquired**.

But there's more. The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who... **was looking for this treasure and he found it.**

Let me quote from Dr. James Boice as he called the people of these two parables, **The People of the Kingdom**[\[1\]](#).

"The point of these parables lies in the nature and actions of those who discover the great treasure, which is the gospel of the kingdom of God. In this, the man who discovered the treasure and the merchant who found the pearl are identical in that they **acquired** what they found. There is a point of contrast that should not be overlooked, however. The man who found the hidden treasure was **not looking for it** -- his discovery was brought about by **finding the unlooked-for** treasure -- but in the case of the merchant, the finding of the pearl was the result of **a long and faithful quest.**"

Let me tell you about two different people and their relationship to these two parables, my wife and me. She was raised in a God-fearing Christian home. She became aware of her personal need for salvation at an early age. She's the one who went looking for the Pearl of great price. She knew it was somewhere and she sought after it and found it.

Then there's me. I was raised in a good and loving family but the Gospel, or even the name of Jesus, was not all that familiar to me. I was in my mid-twenties when suddenly, and without notice, I ran into the Gospel and immediately wanted what it offered.

Two routes to find Jesus and the truth of the Gospel - Two different parables of Jesus. The Hidden Treasure, and The Pearl of Great Price. That's what the Kingdom of Heaven is like.

[Isaiah 65:1] *"I was ready to be sought by those who did not ask for me; I was ready to be found by those who did not seek me".*

So, I'll let Dr. Boice recap for us, and he has a slightly different take on it.

"These parables describe the kind of people who have already been made alive in Christ.

In the first, a man finds a treasure in a field. Jesus says, "When he found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field" v. 44 Niv.

In the second, He describes a merchant looking for pearls. "When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it" v. 46 Niv.

The point of these parables lies in the nature and actions of those who discover the great treasure, which is the gospel. In this, the man who discovered the treasure and the merchant who found the pearl are identical. There is a point of contrast that should not be overlooked, however. The man who found the hidden treasure was not looking for it -- his discovery was unintentional -- but in the case of the merchant, the finding of the pearl was the result of a planned and faithful quest."

SUMMARY

1. That contrast aptly describes the past experiences of people who find salvation. Some were not particularly anxious to find Christ -- in fact, not even very interested in religion. They were going on their way when suddenly an unexpected thing confronted them: the gospel. They had never really seen it before. They were not seeking it. But there it was and at once, with that insight granted by God's internal work of regeneration, they saw that this was a prize with a far greater value than anything that had ever come into their lives previously. They see themselves as sinners in need of a Savior. They had all else besides. So, they turned to Him and believed, on the spot.

2. The other type of person is quite different. He is one who really had sought God and had found the way long and difficult. It is true that this person sought only because God had first come seeking him. It could be said of him as it is said in the hymn:

*I sought the Lord, and afterward I knew
He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me;
It was not I that found, O Savior true;
No, I was found of thee [Jean Ingelow (1878)].*

But this person did not know that during his years of seeking. Those were dark years of false leads and harmful misunderstandings. At times he nearly despaired, but then the search was rewarded. The pearl of great price was before him, and now everything else was laid aside to secure that most valued object.

Those were the ones of whom Jesus spoke when He said, "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" [Matt 28:7]."

The man and the merchant were different up to the point at which the gospel treasure was before them, from then on their thoughts and actions were identical. What did they do?

First, they recognized the value of what they had found. **Second**, they determined to have it. **Third**, they sold everything in order to make their purchase. **Fourth**, they acquired the treasure.

The point of selling all that they had to obtain their treasures is that it is a picture of renouncing everything that might be a hinderance to attaining that great prize.

If you are determined to have, what by the grace of God you perceive to be of inestimable value, then you may be sure that God is more than willing for you to have it.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS

1. What is the same about the two parables?
 2. What is different about the two parables?
 3. What is important about the two questions above?
 4. What lessons should we NOT take from the parable of the Hidden Treasure?
 5. What lessons should we NOT take from the parable of the Pearl of Great Value?
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FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS WITH ANSWERS

1. What is the same about the two parables?

Both individuals sold everything they had in order to purchase their finds.

2. What is different about the two parables?

The one who found the hidden treasure was not looking for it. The one who found the Pearl of Great Value was looking for it.

3. What is important about the two questions above?

The first question shows us that what the men **found** was so very important that they sold everything to acquire their finds. Jesus was speaking about finding the Gospel (The Good News that their sins were absolutely forgiven and receiving that good news would make

them "Children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus."). Some find Salvation while looking for it, and some find Salvation unexpectedly. Both acquire the same value in their quest.

4. What lessons should we NOT take from the parable of the Hidden Treasure?

God does not hide the Gospel from us. The Gospel does not require us to hide it either. The Gospel is free by faith and belief - it may require great sacrifice after belief, but that will be a matter of great joy. You can't purchase salvation by money or works.

5. What lessons should we NOT take from the parable of the Pearl of Great Value?

You don't have to be a merchant in order to find the Gospel. There are no other "pearls" of great value. and again, you can't purchase salvation by money or works.

Just a note about a great pastor, and trusted friend.

James Montgomery Boice was an American Reformed Christian theologian, Bible teacher, author, and speaker known for his writing on the authority of Scripture and the defense of Biblical inerrancy. He was also the Senior Minister of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia from 1968 until his death in 2000.

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Jeremiah 18:15

"Don't stumble from the Ancient Path"

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[1] James Montgomery Boice, The Parables of Jesus, 1983