

Lesson 255

The Surpassing Value of the Kingdom of Heaven



Story Elements

- **Text:** Matthew 13:44-46
- **Setting:** circa AD 28 in Galilee
- **Characters:** God, Jesus, the disciples, and parable characters
- **Plot:** Jesus illustrates the surpassing value of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- **Key word(s):** “_____ all that he hath” (v 44, and a near identical phrase in v 46) – these phrases show the surpassing value of the Kingdom of Heaven.
- **Climax:** **Matthew 13:44, 46** In these brief parables, the high point of the story is found in the moment the characters realize they have come across something of extraordinary worth.

The Hid Treasure

1. Here the Kingdom is compared to treasure that is found _____.
 - (a) In ancient days, before there were banks and safes, people would deposit their treasures in fields to guard them from _____.
 - (b) Oftentimes the treasure would be abandoned because of _____ or even forgetfulness. Anybody who purchased land also owned anything in the ground, and so buying the land guaranteed that “by Jewish law, the treasure would become his own.”¹
2. The man in the parable accidentally happens upon treasure and realizing it is worth more than all of his possessions, he secures its safety, and then he sells everything in order to have the field and its hidden _____.

Isaiah 65:1 *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not.*

- (a) Jesus Christ, and _____ in Him, **is the treasure**. Life in him is precious and invaluable.

Colossians 2:3 *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

- (b) The Gospel field in which the treasure is hidden often goes neglected by many. Matthew Henry explains:

“The gospel is the field in which this treasure is hid: it is hid in the word of the gospel, both the Old-Testament and the New-Testament gospel. In gospel ordinances it is hid as the milk in the breast, the marrow in the bone, the manna in the dew, the water in the well (Isa. 12:3), *the honey in the honey-comb*. It is hid, not *in a garden enclosed*, or *a spring shut up*, but *in a field*, an open field; *whoever will, let him come, and search the scriptures*; let him dig in *this field* (Prov. 2:4); and whatever royal mines we find, they are all our own, if we take the right course.”²

The Pearl of Great Price

3. Here the Kingdom is compared to a pearl that is sought _____ by a knowledgeable merchant.

¹ Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 2 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 45.

² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 1681.

- (a) The merchantman is like one who is seeking spiritual truth and when he finds the Gospel of Christ, recognizes it as invaluable treasure and likewise sells all to obtain what is priceless. Henry expounds:
 “A true Christian is a spiritual *merchant*, that seeks and finds this pearl of price; that does not take up with any thing short of an interest in Christ, and, as one that is resolved to be spiritually rich, trades high: *He went and bought that pearl*; did not only bid for it, but purchased it. What will it avail us to know Christ, if we do not know him as ours, *made to us wisdom*?”³
- (b) As with the previous parable, the high value item is Christ and salvation in Him.

The Parables Applied

4. Notice the similarities and differences in the parables:
- (a) Both parables follow a similar narrative: there is a **finding** a treasure, a _____ everything, and a **buying** the treasure.
- (b) The distinction between the parables is in the manner of finding: one finds treasure accidentally, and another find the pearl _____.

APPLICATION ➔ J.C. Ryle emphasizes, “These two parables are meant to teach us, *that men really convinced of the importance of salvation, will give up everything to win Christ, and eternal life.*”⁴

5. Some interpret these parables in an opposite fashion, i.e., Christ is the purchaser of the treasure and pearl, and we are the priceless treasure which he gave all to acquire.
- (a) Many hold to this interpretation because they think the previous interpretation changes salvation from faith to works (i.e., we have to sell all to acquire salvation).
- (b) However, those who believe Christ is the purchaser in the parables miss the point: it is not the process of salvation that Jesus is illustrating, it is its _____.

Luke 14:33 *So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

Philippians 3:8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,*

Answer Key: key word(s) “selleseth” • 1. accidentally; a) thieves; b) death • 2. treasure; a) salvation • purposefully • 4. a) selling; b) purposefully • 5. b) priceless

³ Ibid., 1682.

⁴ J. C. Ryle, *Expository Thoughts on the Gospel, VOL I, Matthew, Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books; 2007) 151.