

Mt. 7:44 ¶ "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.⁴⁵ "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 all that he had and bought it.⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering fish of every kind;⁴⁸ and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but the bad they threw away.⁴⁹ "So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, ⁵⁰ and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁵¹ "Have you understood all these things?" They *said to Him, "Yes."⁵² And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."⁵³ ¶ When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there.

This morning we will examine two more parables in this series of kingdom parables in the Gospel of Matthew.

The first parable was the parable of the soils and we learned that it is meant for the seed of the word of God to be preached to all kinds of people but only those whose heart has been prepared by God will be able to receive the truth of the Gospel and enter into the kingdom and in so doing will produce an evidence that God has changed their hearts by showing forth the fruit of salvation, the evidences of a work of God's grace.

The second parable was the parable of the wheat and the tares and we learned that the kingdom of God is not the church but is the world and within the kingdom of the world is an unknown kingdom that exists alongside other kingdoms but Jesus is still Lord and King of all even if His overarching kingdom is not accepted by the world. He is Lord, King and Sovereign over all creation and He has a kingdom that is constituted and comprised of those who are His people. Living in the larger kingdom of the world. There will be a separation of the true loyal kingdom dwellers and the false disloyal kingdom dwellers and it will occur at the final judgement.

The third parable is that of the mustard seed and from it we learned that even though the kingdom of God would have humble beginnings, it eventually would be a sizable kingdom that would progress in growth until it reaches its fullest stature and that it is made up of all kinds of people from many nations.

The fourth parable was that of the leaven. The kingdom of heaven would grow and spread to the whole world. The Gospel of the kingdom will penetrate, permeate and produce all of the results as far and as wide as it is meant to do by God's decree and His good providence.

This brings us to two parables that teach us about the value of the kingdom.

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.⁴⁵* "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 all that he had and bought it.

Here we have a link to a previous parable to help us gain some insight into the meaning of this parable. The place where the treasure is hidden is the field. Previously in the parable of the wheat and the tares Jesus referred to the field that was sown as being the world. There is no reason within the context of these kingdom parables to believe that Jesus is going to change His metaphors.

Within the world there is a treasure that is buried and to purchase that field with the buried treasure, the man sells all he has to buy it.

The treasure that is hidden in the world is the kingdom of God.

Although He is ruler over all as a Sovereign God, His actual realized realm in the present age is not a physical domain but it is His kingdom people. We are the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God dwells within us. He is ruling from heaven, His present physical domain.

The kingdom has come but society is not uprooted. This is the mystery of the Kingdom. The Kingdom has come into history but in such a way that society is not disrupted. In other words there is no Christian utopia because the kingdom is here. In the big picture the present-developing kingdom does not change much of the world as it is. The hearts of kingdom dwellers are changed and there is some influence for good wherever the kingdom is manifesting itself but the world remains as sinful as ever and is headed for the final eschaton, the completion and consummation of God's kingdom when final judgement will occur and then there will be a physical domain as God's kingdom with Christ as King and all of His kingdom dwellers worshipping Him for all of eternity.

In the present age, the children of the kingdom have received God's reign and have entered into its blessings. They must continue to live in this age, intermingled with the wicked in a mixed society. The Kingdom that is present but hidden in the world will yet be manifested in glory.

This does not mean that God is not executing any temporal forms of judgement or that His eternal decreed purposes in other matters are not being accomplished. It is all of what God has determined to be. It all functions just as it should under the Sovereign purposes of almighty God.

For this hidden treasure to be possessed a great price must be paid.

Now the question is who does the man represent, God or someone who sees the value of the kingdom and wants to be a part of it?

While it may be true that God views His people as valued and has paid a great price, to

purchase His people through the blood of Christ, it did not cost God everything to purchase His people.

The man here does not represent God. He represents those who see the value of the kingdom of God and have a desire to be a part of the kingdom.

Again we have a link to Jesus own words to help us understand this parable. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus taught in Mt 6:21, “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” The kingdom parables have focused on who the kingdom people are and how the kingdom will grow. None of the parables have been about Christ’s death. The Sermon on the Mount was an invitation to a serious commitment to discipleship.

When a person has the secret of the kingdom of God revealed to them it is a joyous thing and they will do all that is necessary to enter the kingdom. Jesus is not saying that a person can buy his way into the kingdom. That would refute all He has taught on the Sermon on the Mount about false righteousness, the theater of piety and a man centered religion.

The man in the story was probably poor. He had to sell all he had to purchase the field but it was worth it because of the joy of the treasure that was discovered. He did not have a previous knowledge of the treasure. It was buried.

I did not have true knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom until God revealed Christ to me. It was the same for you, if you are God’s true child. To those who find the treasure, by the grace of God, they are willing to give up all for the treasure. This takes us back to the Sermon on the Mount where we learned that “blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God.”

What is it that we give up for the treasure? Let’s revisit Mt. 5:3

So, how does one become blessed by God for being poor in spirit?

Notice that the poor does not refer to material wealth, therefore wealthy people are not excluded from being blessed by God in the kingdom. Their riches have nothing to do with this favor or blessing of God.

What does it mean to be poor in spirit?

The word for poor is ptochos; an adjective from ptosso (to crouch, cower) it speaks of one who crouches and cowers, as beggars when they are seeking to collect alms from passers-by. The word used here is applied to the beggar Lazarus in Luke 16:20,22. So the word takes on the meaning of being beggarly. Those who are economically stable are not beggars or beggarly or poor concerning material wealth.

But Jesus uses this tremendous word picture to describe a spiritual condition that must be

met to become a member of the kingdom of God.

Now, some may ask, “But are we not already spiritually poor if we are dead in our trespasses and sins? If we have not experienced the richness of His mercy and His grace are we not poor? The answer to that is yes, emphatically yes! As Paul writes:

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved). The richness of His mercy when it is coupled with saving grace is only for those whom He saves and then become the blessed as we have been discussing.

Therefore, if we must be poor in spirit but are already poor in spirit is Jesus saying that we must somehow become more poor in spirit by doing something so we can merit His favor? The answer to that is emphatically, no! We are already as spiritually bankrupt and destitute as we will ever be if we are in a condition of being unredeemed sinners. We are dead in our trespasses and sin.

So what is Jesus saying? It is obvious that He means we must be brought to an understanding that we are poor in spirit and once we realize that, once we understand that we are spiritually destitute and bankrupt it then allows us to progress to the next phase of the Christian experience and that is mourning over our sinful condition.

These Jews would have an understanding of this from OT scriptures, for example:

Ps 51:16 For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering.¹⁷

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.

So, the favor of God is poured out upon those who are poor in spirit and know it because of the grace of God. By the Word and the Spirit we come to this understanding by an act of God's grace.

It is an all encompassing act of God's grace because as we have said we are dead in our trespasses and sins until God makes us alive. We are children of wrath, followers of the prince of this world, we are alienated from God and we are His enemies. We are without hope and without help in this present world. We are incurable haters of God who do not seek after Him according to His way and we make up gods in our own image until by wonderful, amazing and violent grace, God gives us a heart to know Him as He really is and tears down the idols of our imagination. This wonderful entrance into the kingdom of heaven is of grace and by grace and it is for His purpose and for His pleasure and thereby we are the beneficiaries of this grace, for the glory of God our Father and our Savior Jesus Christ.

And once we know this we are willing to give up all, we are willing to actually acknowledge that

we are sinners and unrighteous and condemned, or as the parable says, pay all. We are willing to give all of our life as it is, wretched and ruined by sin, for the treasure that is the kingdom of God and all it possesses for us. And in this we find great joy. Joy is a promise given to us by the prayer of Jesus just prior to His death and glorious resurrection when He prayed to His Father in heaven Jn17:13 "But now I come to You; and these things I speak in the world so that they may have My joy made full in themselves.

D.A. Carson writes, "The kingdom of heaven is worth infinitely more than the cost of discipleship and those who know where the treasure lies, joyfully abandon everything else to secure it."

In this parable Jesus is telling us that what first needs to be treasured is the possession of the kingdom itself and then as disciples He taught us In the Sermon on the Mount that "where the treasure is, there the heart is also" so whatever treasure we may have as kingdom dwellers who are His disciples needs to be handled with a proper attitude of heart because the heart condition of a disciple concerning any wealth and how it is valued can affect our discipleship. The next parable says,

45 "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 all that he had and bought it.

The theme of the parable is the value of the kingdom of heaven but there is an added dimension to the truth in this parable.

Here we have a merchant of fine pearls seeking out the one of greatest value.

The merchant does not just stumble across what he is seeking. The man who found the treasure in the previous parable was not looking for it.

This merchant is able to compare the value of pearls and knows when he finds one that is of great value whereby he would sell all he has to possess it. This man is not poor like the other man. He buys and sells. He is a business man. He has an established order of things and is always looking for the best merchandise.

So, who is the merchant and what is the pearl?

Jesus said, "do not cast the pearls before the swine." The pearls represented the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus' first application was to the disciples preaching to Jews who would violently oppose the Gospel. Of course it applies to all who would do so as the gospel spreads from Palestine to the Gentiles. The merchant represents those in Israel in the established religion of Judaism who genuinely knew the value of the Law and the Prophets and who have earnestly looked for the fulfillment of these things in the coming Messiah and His kingdom. Once they have found the pearl of great value they are willing to sell, they are willing to give

up what is nothing more than religious observance and ritual, the type and shadow of the things to come for the real truth found in the Gospel of the kingdom.

The man in the first parable sold all he had to pay a price for the treasure.

The merchant in this parable pays the full price. He knows the full cost and sells all to meet the full cost.

Israel had the mysteries of the kingdom revealed in part throughout their prophetic history. There was something to leave behind to exchange it for the price of the full kingdom. The first disciples of Christ would be Jews and many paid a great price, a full price with their own lives to be members of the kingdom of God.

Any member of any other religious cult who, although lost in sin, was sincere about their false religion and knew the value of some kind of a belief in a god and was able to compare gods with gods could be the same kind of person and exchange it all for Jesus. Remember all non-believers in Jesus day were not members of religious sects.

J.C.Ryle the great evangelical Anglican of another century wrote, "When a man will venture nothing for Christ's sake, we must draw the sorrowful conclusion that he has not got the grace of God."

Beloved we have learned in these parables that the kingdom of God has great value.

To be a member of the kingdom of heaven is worth giving up all that we have and investing all that we have.

We can finish by way of reflection and application that the kingdom is also valued because Christ paid the price of redemption for us to be members of the kingdom. Jesus suffered excruciating pain and anguish as an obedient son in humiliation to be exalted to His rightful place as King of His kingdom. It cost him before it cost us anything and what it costs us is nothing but repentance and belief, which are both gifts from God.

How gracious is God to reveal to anyone that the kingdom of Heaven is valuable, that is not just some substitute for something else, that it is not just an imitation of something else. How gracious of God to reveal to anyone that the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom's King are real and tangible and life changing and filled with blessing for those who are the blessed in the kingdom.

How gracious of God to deliver us from the kingdom of darkness and to bring us into His glorious kingdom of light so that we may have eternal life. How gracious of God to let us know that what does it profit anyone to gain the whole world but to lose his soul. How gracious is God to let us know the secrets of the kingdom and to rest in His promises that are already

fulfilled, though not yet all realized, in Christ Jesus.

Do you know the mysteries of the kingdom. Are they the most valuable possession that you own? Are they the treasures of your life. If not-why not?

For any one to know these secrets you must cry out to God for His mercy and admit your spiritual bankruptcy and mourn because you are a sinner separated and alienated from God. You cannot rest in any good works that you have done. You must come to God brokenhearted and be willing to exchange the life you now have for the treasure of the kingdom. Do you see that the kingdom offers joy in Christ, dead, buried and resurrected to be the Savior and King of His people? Do you see its inestimable worth above all other things. Only God can open your eyes to these things because our nature does not desire this kind of a kingdom, a costly kingdom. But if God has opened your eyes and your ears and has prepared your heart then you will desire to buy the field or buy the pearl because you know, by God's grace, how valuable it is.

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