

The Priceless Kingdom

KINGDOM COME: How Jesus Revealed It in Parables #4 - Mike Laramie - September 6, 2026 - Matthew 13:44-46

(Back to Church Sunday Vision Talk)

INTRO: Good morning church! We're in part four of our 5-part series called KINGDOM COME: How Jesus Revealed It in Parables. All five sermons are from the parables of Jesus found in Matthew 13. The series title comes from Jesus' teaching on prayer in Matthew 6:

Matthew 6:9-10 (KJV) Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

Every time we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we are praying for His rule and reign to come more fully into our lives.

NEED: Many today struggle with the issue of self-worth. On the one side, some value themselves only by what they bring to the table - how much money they make, their job title, their possessions, or their talents and skills. They tend to focus on the external. Others struggle with internal issues - poor body image, depression and anxiety, doubts and insecurities. They may lack confidence, compare themselves to others, or try to please others. Matthew, the author of this gospel, knew something about this. As a tax collector, he was an outcast, shunned from the rest of Jewish society, likely even from his own family. His gospel was written as a Jew writing to other Jews, but in many instances addressing those people who did not fit in with the societal order of the day. He wrote to bring the hope of Jesus to a world that needed Him.

Trans: We too can feel like the one who has a value problem, in one direction or the other. Our view of the Kingdom of Heaven can remedy that.

BODY: In Matthew 13:44-46, Jesus told two parables describing the Kingdom of Heaven as a treasure of priceless value that we are invited to and to which we can belong. We can rightly respond to the priceless Kingdom of Heaven that Jesus described. How do we respond to the priceless Kingdom Jesus described? The text gives three ways to rightly respond to the priceless Kingdom of Heaven.

Read text: Matthew 13:44-46 (ESV) 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. ⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

HOW TO RIGHTLY VALUE THE PRICELESS KINGDOM OF HEAVEN:

1. Recognize that God seeks us for the priceless Kingdom.

EXP: (**FOUND**) Notice that Jesus tells two small parables, ones that are only found in Matthew. They are parallel in many ways; each one follows a pattern of found; sold; bought. In this first point, we will deal with how the man and the merchant "found" the treasure or pearl.

"Kingdom of Heaven" (44-45) (βασιλεία, *basileia*) - a kingdom, the territory subject to the rule of a king; royal power, kingship, dominion, rule. 126 times in the 4 Gospels primarily in the teachings of Jesus. "Of heaven" is a characteristic of Matthew. We've been dealing with this concept for 4 weeks now, but what is the Kingdom? The kingdom of heaven is the saving reign of God that entered history through Jesus the King, is even now breaking into this present age wherever His rule is received, and will one day be fully and visibly established when Christ returns. It exists in the hearts of believers, it exists in the fellowship of the saints, and it shows up in the works of God. This is the "already-not yet" idea of the last few weeks.

In 1st Century rabbinic practice (Jesus was a 1st Century rabbi), all rabbis taught by the use of parables.

"parable" (Ἀλλήν παραβολήν, *allēn parabolēn*) - to throw alongside; a placing of one thing by the side of another, juxtaposition, as of ships in battle. "A metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life,

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arresting the hearer by its vividness or strangeness, and leaving the mind in sufficient doubt about its precise application to tease it into active thought.” — C. H. Dodd

“For those whose hearts are already hardened, parables conceal, even as the reveal new truths for those who are more receptive” (vv.13:12-12)

Those who are talmudim (or disciples) would be familiar with the Eastern way of learning - that the journey of discovery is as important as the destination. Rabbis would expect their learners to wrestle with the lesson and the text as a way to get to the truth. In many cases, since the students had large portions of the Bible memorized, the rabbi could merely quote a portion of a text for the student to consider the context and extrapolate from there. This is what Jesus is doing.

“Hidden in a field” (44) (κρύπτω, *kryptō*) - where we get the word cryptic, to hide, conceal, to be hid.

“Man found” (44) (εὕρισκω, *heuriskō*) - to come upon, hit upon, to meet with; after searching, to find a thing sought.

“Covered up” (44) (κρύπτω, *kryptō*) - same as the verb for “hidden” above. Why does the man hide the treasure? It’s almost as if Jesus took pleasure in using parables based upon a normal happening, then added a little twist to make you think more deeply. Most of these parables have an odd turn that would have really stood out to the 1st Century audience.

Do people normally go digging in fields that they don’t own? “Under rabbinic law if a workman came on a treasure in a field and lifted it out, it would belong to his master, the field’s owner; but here the man is careful not to lift the treasure out till he has bought the field.” (Carson)

There are a couple different interpretations to these parables, and perhaps you’ve heard teaching that the Kingdom of God is so precious that we need to work hard to search it out, that we should give everything we have to obtain it, and there is some merit to that argument, but I’m going to take a minority position – it is a position others hold, so I don’t think I’m in danger here, but let’s get in to it:

Let’s ask some questions about the parable, but first, let’s remind ourselves of where we’ve been in recent weeks. Who’s the man in the parable of the soils? It’s God. Who is the man in the parable of the weeds? The owner of the field? God. Who is the farmer who goes out and plants a mustard seed in his field? God. Who is the woman that bakes leaven into her bunch of dough? Obviously, Sarah. But the implication of the parable...? It’s God. Now, who is the man searching in the field? Who is the merchant?

So who is the one who did the finding?

Jesus quoted from the OT extensively in His teaching, and it’s possible that He’s doing that again here. Consider Ezekiel 16:3-7:

Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴ And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. ⁵ No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. ⁶ And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ I said to you in your blood, ‘Live!’ ⁷ I made you flourish like a plant of the field. And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full adornment.”

Notice a couple things here. God finds the woman Jerusalem in an open field, cast out and abandoned (hidden). In verse 7, God nurtures Jerusalem to full maturity (full adornment). The Hebrew phrase for “full

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adornment” is actually translated most literally as “beautiful jewel.” So, Jesus may be pointing to Jerusalem as a stand in for the people of God being the “treasure” found in a field!

ARG: This is consistent with Jesus’ previous teaching:

John 4:23 (ESV) But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

Luke 19:10 (ESV) For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

ILL: There is no better illustration of this from the outcast Matthew than the parable of the lost sheep. Matthew 18:12-14 (ESV) *“What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. So it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”*

APP: You have never encountered someone who was not made in the image and likeness of God. We all have inherent dignity and worth. Make an honest assessment: do I value myself too highly with the things of this world? Do I not see the inherent value that God assigns to me? Perhaps you need to deal with your image issues and realize that you are so special to God that he sold everything for you.

2. Realize God’s total payment for our entrance into the Kingdom.

EXP: (SOLD) In these parables, the second thing that both the man and the merchant do is sell everything he had.

“In his joy he goes” (44) (χαρά, *chara*) - cheerfulness, calm delight, gladness, joy(-ful, -fully, -fulness, -ous). Joy is the reason/motivation for the action: because of his joy, he goes and sells everything. The man's sacrifice is joy-driven because of what he has discovered.

“Sells all that he has” (44) (πωλέω, *pōleō*) - to sell, be sold. Jesus pictures the man liquidating his possessions in order to obtain something of greater value. Carson and other commentators see the extravagance of the transaction as the point: the man's response makes sense only if the treasure is genuinely worth more than everything he owns combined.

The Kingdom of Heaven is not an addition, but the one possession that reorders all other values. - We don't just add Jesus to our lives, he is our lives. You are worth the cost.

If Jesus paid it all then our response is realizing his payment is our means into the Kingdom of Heaven. It is totally sufficient!

Our value isn't derived from our own efforts, nor should we settle on the sole idea that God has given up everything for us. Many people today use this fact of scripture and twist the Gospel to permit certain sins in their lives. “God is love” therefore He loves me where I am so I can stay where I am, or other twists of God's character and work lead people to pagan worship and practice rather than realizing the total payment of Christ was to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven and out of the rule of this present world.

Our motto is “Come as you are and be forever changed by the love of Jesus” NOT “come as you are and remain as you are”. We believe that those who realize the total payment of God in Christ for the salvation of our souls will be transformed by His love!

After the Ezekiel passage we read, Israel made this mistake and sought to flaunt its blessings among pagan Gods rather than respond rightly to the Blesser, to God, who took on all the cost in purchasing them. Christ did not shed his blood to purchase something of no value but of great value. It cost him everything, how do we respond?

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ARG: We brought nothing to the table, Jesus did it all.

Romans 5:8 (ESV) “but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

If we were the ones who discovered God then what could we possibly sell to gain His worth?! He saw us in the world and chose to pay the price for us but his purchase is not a loss to Him but gain for His glory and Kingdom.

1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.”

He paid it all for our redemption and so that we might “die to sin and live to righteousness.” The gift of grace is free to us but cost God the life of His Son. Now, we have the opportunity to realize the gate of the Kingdom of Heaven is open and the gate is faith in Jesus Christ. He welcomes all, but even in this reality some enter, and some act as though the gate is shut...

ILL: We have a membership to the Family Y and haven't been there in over a year. (negative example)

Some of us realize the value of having a subscription to a service but never enter it. Its value remains but we've wasted it. Owning a Bible is good, reading it is better, but obeying the Word is best. We can realize Jesus paid it all but if we never enter the Kingdom through faith in his payment then we merely have the potential for access but never benefit from it at all.

Realize God's total payment for our entrance into the Kingdom.

APP: “To obtain a right to the treasure-trove, the finder must buy the field; and to do this he parts with ‘all that he hath.’ So do men act when they discover the riches of the gospel. So did Jesus himself, at the utmost cost, buy the world to gain his church, which was the treasure which he desired.” - Spurgeon

Christ paid it all, so that we can let go. What are you still hanging on to? Are there secret sins you still have not repented of? How about consequences of sin that Jesus already paid for? What wouldn't you give up? Jesus invites us to lose our lives for his sake in order to gain them. Which relationships do you cherish more than Christ? Many Christians worldwide face persecution - you may face hardship from family as well. Is he worth the suffering? He is near the brokenhearted.

Our response is to likewise give up everything for this Priceless Kingdom. What earthly things hold us back from recognizing the value of the Kingdom?

3. Embrace God's ownership of the Kingdom.

EXP: (BOUGHT) The last thing these men do in these parables is purchase the treasure or pearl.

“Buys that field” (44) (ἀγοράζω, *agorazō*) - to be in the market place, to do business there, buy or sell

“Treasure” (44) (θησαυρός, *thēsauros*) - the place in which good and precious things are collected and laid up; a treasury, storehouse, repository, a deposit, a wealth

“Pearl” (45,46) (μαργαρίτης *margarites*) – ancient Hebrew did not have many words to describe jewels or precious stones, so this could mean pearls, gems or other fine stones. This was also a Hebrew allegory for a proverb, or words of great value.

“Bought it” (46) - same as verse 44 ... Why the repetition? Jesus deliberately ends both stories with the same action: sold everything > bought the treasure/field and sold everything > bought the pearl.

Because He bought it, He owns it.

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"But blessed be His name, He found us and brought us to Himself, and we are precious to Him, as the treasure was to the man who found it in the field." - F.E. Marsh

There is a freedom that comes from knowing that God is the One who is in charge, and I am not. We are placed here as stewards - of our possessions, our families, this planet. *Deuteronomy 10:14 (ESV) Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it.*

Even our ability to earn is given from above: *Deuteronomy 8:18 (ESV) You shall remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth*

How do we respond? The late Pastor Chuck Smith said "So God is the one who gave everything to buy the field that he might obtain the treasure. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life". (John 3:16). Our response is to believe.

Because God has included us in His kingdom, we are to practice those things of the kingdom - prayer, fellowship, Bible study...

Your life is not your own. In Ezekiel 18:4, the Lord proclaims, "*Behold, every soul belongs to Me; both father and son are Mine.*" This ownership implies authority and sovereignty, as God is the ultimate ruler and sustainer of all things. We are to live under God's authority. Recognize that He is sovereign over us - we are not "all that and a bag of chips".

We have not been redeemed to remain in darkness but we have been bought for His glorious purposes.

ARG: Now that we are part of God's Kingdom, we are to live that out:

Psalms 24:1 (ESV) The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein,

1 Corinthians 6:19 (ESV) "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."

ILL:

APP: Here's where I will return to that majority interpretation of these parables. God's Kingdom is precious and priceless, and nothing in our lives should come before our pursuit of the Kingdom. What does that look like? Let's be serious about our faith. If God owns His kingdom and we are part of it, let's do what He says. Does your career, hobbies or family obligations hold you back from fully following God? Do you give priority to attending church gatherings on Sundays, Community Groups, Bible Studies, and other opportunities for growth? (Men's retreat is coming up). Since Jesus bought us with a price, let's live like we believe that.

CONCLUSION: God's Kingdom is priceless. We can rightly value His Kingdom by recognizing that He was looking for us even if we weren't looking for Him, He paid the ultimate price for us to be a part of that Kingdom, and because He owns that Kingdom, we need to pursue it wholeheartedly.

Let's pray.