

Book	Psalms – Study 18
Topic	Parable of the Treasure and Pearl
Reference	Matt 13:44-45
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Matthew 13:44-46 (ESV) 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.

Very simple two parables. We are talking about buried treasure, looking for pearls and what are the observations that we can take from this. First observation is that both men were looking for something of value and beauty, which other people have missed. That's why it is hidden, nobody knows about it. They realize there is no halfway effort to get it, they have to risk everything. Now because this treasure is so great, they can't just liquidate half of their assets and buy it. They actually have to risk everything, which is a very important point. There is no halfway effort to get there. It is an all or nothing gig. You lose a lot of things which are precious to you, but you are willing to do it in order to get the thing of supreme value. That is what the parables are telling us about. The benefits so overwhelmed the cost so the sacrifice is worth it and they got joy and then sacrificed.

There are some caveats. Some of them are. Jesus is not saying that you buy the kingdom of God. He is not saying that you can earn the kingdom of God. Commitment is the way you receive the kingdom not the way you merit or earn it. Jesus is not trying to tell you that you have got to earn it. That means you go and exchange all your money that you have and give it to God and God automatically give you a right to heaven. He is not saying that. So, metaphors and stories give a particular point. You cannot take it to the extreme. So, commitment is a way we receive the kingdom, not the way you will earn or merit it and this kingdom will be received by repentance. That's the currency.

Now with application, which means to us that we need to give up small ambitions. The gospel shows us that our ambitions are so shallow and immaterial. The gospel pushes us into extremes. When God comes to your life, and you only want kitchen renovation or something else and that's about it and this is all that you are desiring from God. But when God comes into your life, it is a radical change. He is not doing renovation. He is building a huge palace, which means he is knocking down all the walls. So there is going to be major renovation done to your work, to your life. He wants to see a thing of beauty not a renovated kitchen. Christianity is a change of

dimension and essence. It is a completely new reality. There is no middle ground. He is trying to tell you; how radical the kingdom of God is.

Jesus scholars in America actually study the Bible and take out all the miracles, resurrection is out, virgin birth is out, the only thing left behind is the Lord's Prayer and only the part that is authentic is our father and that's about it. That is not what it is about? It is about something very-very radical. It is like the new birth where Jesus describes, you must be born again, completely different thing. So it requires unconditional surrender, nothing is more important than Jesus, you must be willing to sell. You must be willing to give everything that is what the parable is telling you.

Matthew 13:44-46 (ESV) 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.

The man got the joy by giving. Here is a man who in anticipation of the great treasure he is going to get, while he is liquidating his assets, he actually has joy. That's the difference.

Romans 8:18 (ESV) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. Considering Christ as treasure is a discipline

Now Paul is saying that we in life have suffering, but he is actually considering the difference. He is considering that the sufferings of present time are not worth comparing to the glory that is going to be revealed to us. That means considering is actually a discipline. You have got to come and consider. In the Old Testament, Achan actually sinned against God and he actually kept back some of the spoils of war and then he was punished,

Joshua 7:20-21 (ESV) And Achan answered Joshua, "Truly I have sinned against the Lord God of Israel, and this is what I did: 21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I coveted them and took them. And see, they are hidden in the earth inside my tent, with the silver underneath."

So, there is a process, he looks at the cloak, he looks at the 200 pieces of silver, he considers it and then he says, wow! Very good and then he desired. Now that's the same process you do,

Romans 8:18 (ESV) For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

So, the role of discipleship is actually looking, considering and working it out. Some of us come to Bible study feeling like it is a burden. Consideration is a role of

discipleship. As you consider more and more of Christ, he becomes more beautiful and glorifying you. The gospel mindset is in 1-Corinthians

1 Corinthians 1:30-31 (ESV) And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

How does this become a reality in your life?

When somebody calls you stupid or you go to work and you mess up and you feel really bad, one day when you go to work and you do really well, you close the deal, your boss say you are fantastic you will definitely good because your boss said so. So your self-esteem is based on your job. The next time you didn't do well, didn't meet sales target your boss say you are stupid. So you also feel bad. Who is the source of your joy? Your boss. Now when the boss calls you stupid, you say look Jesus Christ is my wisdom, Jesus Christ is my righteousness, Jesus Christ is my sanctification. He makes me pure and Jesus Christ will save me one day and the more you repeat that to yourself and consider that to yourself then it changes the actual basis of your joy. It is no longer based on your boss, it becomes based on him and when you do that then you become more stable. You are not threatened by people, telling you are stupid, because you are not challenging them. You don't have to because you have the wisdom of God. That's the difference.

Parable of the Tree on Repentance:

Luke 13:1-5 (ESV) There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. 2 And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? 3 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? 5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Luke 13:6-9 (ESV) And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. 7 And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' 8 And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. 9 Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.'"

What are these two things next to each other? When you actually have a disaster, in that particular parable there are two disasters. One disaster is Pontius Pilate, the roman governor kills Galileans. Second of all, there is whole bunch of people on whom the tower fell down. It is like 9/11 3000 people died.

Whenever a disaster happens, people always ask which one is more sinful. All of us go through life because there are some basic assumptions in life that we can be safe, events are orderly predictable, controllable and fair. But when tragedy happens, the problem is that we ask why did this happen? Could it have been anticipated or predicted? Could it have been stopped or changed through human action? What could I have done differently?

We ask all these questions because we think we can control the world. All of us think of some degree of control, the illusion of control, because we live in a world shattered by sin.

Genesis 2:16-17 (ESV) And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, 17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil **you shall not eat**, for in the day that you eat of it **you shall surely die.**"

Genesis 3:6 (ESV) So when the woman **saw that the tree was good for food**, and that it was a **delight to the eyes**, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

So, we all live in a world where we chose to exert our own control. When we exert our own control, we are actually thinking that we actually can control. The whole issue is control. Timothy McVeigh, because they executed him he stood up and said *It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishments the scroll, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.*

Man sin is about control. In 1975, Ellen Langer from Yale University published this issue of the illusion of control. She ran a couple of experiments about people gambling and she found that,

"This illusion may be induced by introducing competition, choice, stimulus or response familiarity or passive or active involvement in a chance situation"

So what she means is that people believe in control, people believe they can control their life, actually it is an illusion. We have this illusion of control, but Jesus says that's the wrong question to ask. Jesus says,

5 No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

Lord Byron, the poet says, only the weak alone repent. So, repentance is due to weakness, disempowerment, that's an aberration. It is actually not, it takes great strength to repent. In fact Shakespeare said,

I will repent and immediately for I might be out of heart shortly and I will have no strength to repent

He says, when it is time to repent quickly repent, otherwise you will change your mind. Repentance is very-very difficult.

Romans 2:4 (ESV) Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

We all deserve death, all of life is repentance. You can never receive anything good or bad in any response other than repentance. The conviction of two realities need to hit you before you can repent. You cannot repent unless you realize you deserve a tower to fall on you and you cannot repent unless God is committed to saving you from what you deserve. The assumption is that, God owes you a good life, but the reality is there is a creator God, we owe him everything, he owes you nothing. We dishonor him. Romans says we all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

So, whether you get shot by a gun or poked by a knife, it is same you are still dead. The second thing is that God doesn't owe you a good life, you deserve to die because of sin all of us, so when anything happens to you it is fair game, and the second thing is that God is committed to saving you from whatever you deserve. So here is the parable of the fig tree. It says, no fruit after three years the owner of the fig tree must be God. Then you have got the tree, the tree must be us. Then God wants to wallop the tree but there is somebody who says, no, no, no I will try to do something for it to have fruit. That person is Jesus. So, Jesus is there, and the fruit is repentance. The man who pleads is Jesus, he says wait one more year, if they repent there is fruit, if not no.

When bad things happen to unrepentant person, they are angry, bitter, self-pity and say they don't deserve this. When good things happen to you, Lord its about time this happened, no sweetness, you rob God of his glory. This is what an unrepentant person is like.

A Christian is a little bit different. A Christian would be a repentant person. When bad things happen, a Christian would say Lord I deserve a lot worse, what I lost - loan anyway, Jesus took my real punishment, I have an inheritance guaranteed in heaven, you will give me more than I ever deserved. If bad things happen to you and you are not dead and you deserve to die, at least you are going to say the above statements. That's the proper response of a repentant person when bad things happen.

When good things happen to you, a repentant person will say Lord I don't deserve this, this is pure grace, icing on cake, it may not be here tomorrow-does not matter, I will always have love of Father-place at table, God gets the credit and glory and you build up heart capital of trust in Him. Now the fact that good things happen to you,

you say I don't deserve this, this is icing on cake. You have to take all the things that God give you lightly, they are not forever. Everyone in our life, the family members are on loan to us. You will have to leave them one day. So it is a leave-ability issue here.

God bless you so much that you build trust in him. So when bad things happen, you don't betray him, because good things he has given to you. So the good things that God gives to you builds up capital, so when bad things come that working capital is used to defray the bad. So you become more confident, less fearful and you are not devastated by criticism. This is the proper approach to bad things, uncontrollable things happen in your life. John Newton, the great hymn writers says

The gospel makes the worst time bearable and best times leavable

Which means the poorest things that you get can still bear because of gospel. Gospel makes the best things leavable, that mean you can still leave it behind. So therefore your hope is in Christ and Christ alone.

PARABLE ON THE LAST MESSENGER:

Luke 20:9-14 (ESV) And he began to tell the people this parable: "A man planted a vineyard and let it out to tenants and went into another country for a long while. 10 When the time came, he sent a servant to the tenants, so that they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed. 11 And he sent another servant. But they also beat and treated him shamefully, and sent him away empty-handed. 12 And he sent yet a third. This one also they wounded and cast out. 13 Then the owner of the vineyard said, 'What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.' 14 But when the tenants saw him, they said to themselves, This is the heir. Let us kill him, so that the inheritance may be ours.' 15 And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!" 17 But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written: "'The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone'? 18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be broken to pieces, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.

So the setting is in the vineyard. The man keep sending people to the tenants and they keep beating them up. Now the tenants relationship with the owner, they are tenant farmers, they must tend the vineyard not for themselves but for the owner. They are obligated to tend to it by his word and for his profit. That means you cannot run the vineyard anyway you like. You must follow the bosses instruction. Not only in their own power and aggrandizement. You must recognize life as a tenant. Now the whole trouble is that, every time it comes they ended beat up, cast away or kill indicating their some degree of anger that they have towards the boss.

When you have anger, you can either suppress it or you repress it. Sigmund Freud says,

Defense mechanisms are psychological strategies that are unconsciously used to protect a person from anxiety arising from unacceptable thoughts or feelings. Defense mechanisms operate at an unconscious level and help ward off unpleasant feelings (i.e., anxiety) or make good things feel better for the individual.

Here you actually have repressed anger. There is a repressed anger in nonbelievers and Paul writes,

Romans 8:7-8 (ESV) 7 For the mind that is set on the flesh is **hostile to God**, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. 8 Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

Romans 1:18-19 (ESV) For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness **suppress the truth**.

This is a subconscious process which man has all over the world with a background of Jesus is that, telling this parable is that he was talking to the Jews,

Luke 20:1-8 (ESV) One day, as Jesus was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up 2 and said to him, "Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority." 3 He answered them, "I also will ask you a question. Now tell me, 4 was the baptism of John from heaven or from man?" 5 And they discussed it with one another, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say, Why did you not believe him?" 6 But if we say, 'From man,' all the people will stone us to death, for they are convinced that John was a prophet." 7 So they answered that they did not know where it came from. 8 And Jesus said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Basically, they are just against Jesus Christ. So there is an inward repression of anger. That's very subtle. Why did the tenants actually kill the son?

The tenants in this parable didn't murder the son because they were confused about who he was. They hated him because he challenged their ownership of the field.

So, the whole idea is that they want to control. So, we don't act, we are tenants. We don't live according to His word nor for His profit. The illusion is, we actually are dependent and contingent. We preserve our illusion of control by looking down on others not as successful, building a big house and we hate all religious kind of

people. When you bring the gospel to some of your friends especially westerners, they actually hate it. Because they have got this repressed anger.

Ten reasons millennials are backing away from God and Christianity

- 60 percent of millennials say that Christianity is “judgmental,”
- 64 percent say that “anti-gay” best describes most churches today.
- Tolerance is new idol
- Defiant posture of young adulthood

Fredrick Nietzsche one of the most famous non-Christian people at the time 200 years ago. He described man as *ubermensch* which means superman.

- *Christian Church was, therefore, an institution that created morality in order to subjugate the masses. ...illusion*
- *Urbemensch creates his own morality, based on his own experiences which is grounded in this secular physical world (as opposed to some non-earthly afterlife).*

So basically Nietzsche said, God is dead and morality is a way which the Christian church uses to manipulate people basically, so he rebelled against that. Richard Dawkins said,

“The God of the Old Testament is arguably the most unpleasant character in all fiction: jealous and proud of it; a petty, unjust, unforgiving control-freak; a vindictive, bloodthirsty ethnic cleanser; a misogynistic, homophobic, racist, infanticidal, genocidal, filicidal, pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadomasochistic, capriciously malevolent bully.”

He had a lot of anger inside. When Dawkins was asked, is there anything God could do to get you to believe in him?

“No. If God showed up in the room, I would want to know what sort of psychological or naturalistic explanation is going on here.”

Here is the guy who is so angry with God that he actually contradicts himself. He says, there is no evil, no good nothing but pitiless indifference, because there is evolution. At the same time he says, *condemns harassment and abuse of homosexuals, religious indoctrination of children, the Incan practice of human sacrifice*

All these are actually immorality. On one hand, you deny morality and on the other hand you condemn people of being evil by what standard. So actually we contradict ourselves. Aldous Huxley, another famous philosopher wrote ‘Brave New World’ and he writes,

"I had motives for not wanting the world to have a meaning For myself, as, no doubt, for most of my contemporaries, the philosophy of meaninglessness was essentially an instrument of liberation ... from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality of Christianity because it interfered with our sexual freedom. There was one admirably simple method of justifying ourselves: [agnosticism]."

So he actually admits that the only reason why he is agnostic and doesn't believe in God is because he wants sexual freedom. He is not really being honest about him.

Luke 20:15-18 (ESV) 15 And they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What then will the owner of the vineyard do to them? 16 He will come and destroy those tenants and give the vineyard to others." When they heard this, they said, "Surely not!" 17 But he looked directly at them and said, "What then is this that is written: **"The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone"**? 18 Everyone who falls on that stone will be **broken to pieces**, and when it falls on anyone, it will crush him.

So, the whole idea is that the killing of Jesus Christ is the ultimate indictment of human wisdom and the illusion of control. Why is it that Jesus Christ had to come and die? Because Jesus Christ represented the ultimate indictment of human wisdom. Human wisdom says, the person who is going to save us must be powerful, must be like a messiah, must be strong, because human wisdom worships power. So when God comes and send someone like a lamb who sacrifices and dies for you, human wisdom chooses the power, it rejects the lamb, but the lamb is the one that rises from the dead. So therefore, you actually indict yourself in judgment. The very thing you rejected actually condemns you. So therefore, what God has done, God has taken away.

1 Corinthians 1:28-31 (ESV) God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

Lord has to destroy your wisdom, your dependence on your cleverness. If he doesn't destroy that, you will never turn to God. That's why this metaphor of the cornerstone is there. So, the tenant relationship to the messengers tell us about the longsuffering merciful God and keep sending messenger after messenger after messenger and right now God has sent his son, Jesus Christ, to give us time to basically repent.

CHALLENGE:

Why should I believe in God when life is such a mess?

The trouble is that life will never let you control it. The fact that you cannot control your life means you are not in-charge. If you are not in-charge, you are a tenant and you live in the vineyard and one day the owner will come back. You have to live in the vineyard by his word and for his profit. A lot of us believe that God owes us a good life, you don't recognize that you are just a tenant.