

To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ: mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Amen.

⁴⁴ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for 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 beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, ⁴⁸ which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, ⁵⁰ and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” ⁵¹ Jesus said to [the disciples], “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes, Lord.” ⁵² Then He said to them, “Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.”

Text: Matthew 13:44-52 A 11/19/17 Is. 61:1-3, 6, 10-11 Ro. 8:28-39 Ps. 27 Resp. Ps. 65
Hymns: 42, 357, 767, 609

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

1. Treasure it

2. Help spread it

Dear fellow believers in Christ,

In our text Jesus tells several parables about “*the kingdom of heaven.*” The kingdom of heaven refers to “God’s activity of calling sinners to salvation through the Gospel” (Sermon Studies On The Gospels, Series A, p. 269, NPH © 1989). This morning we’ll consider **THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN** – treasure it, and help spread it.

– 1 –

Jesus begins, “*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.*” Remember, these are parables, so Jesus isn’t trying to make a point with everything that’s in them. Jesus’ point in both of these parables is that the kingdom of heaven is our one great treasure. The man who found a treasure hidden in a field willingly gave up everything so he could have that treasure. Likewise, the man who found the pearl of great price willingly gave up everything so he could have that pearl. How much is our salvation in Jesus worth? Everything!

Through His Word God brought us to understand our sinfulness and guilt before Him, and that we deserve to be punished for our sins forever in hell. The Bible teaches that we *“all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Ro. 3:23), and *“the wages of”* our *“sin is death”* (Ro. 6:23a). Thank God, through His Word He also brought us to know that by faith in Jesus all of our sins are forgiven, and we have eternal life in heaven! The Bible tells us, *“Be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven”* (Mt. 9:2). *“...the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Ro. 6:23b). The kingdom of heaven brings us peace with God and with ourselves –the peace that lasts – and true happiness. The kingdom of heaven is our one great treasure – the most important thing in our life.

The one man sold everything he had so he could buy the field with the treasure. The other man sold everything he had so he could buy the pear of great price. Although the kingdom of heaven is worth everything we have, there is nothing we can pay, or have to pay, for it. But our salvation wasn't cheap, and it wasn't easy. Jesus paid the full price for our salvation with His sinless life, and innocent suffering and death on the cross. When the jailer asked, *“What must I do to be saved?”* He was told, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved”* (Ac. 16:30-31). God gives us salvation as a free gift by faith in His Son, Jesus Christ.

– 2 –

In the third parable Jesus teaches about the spread of the kingdom of heaven. *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore; and they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth.”* Fishermen spread a dragnet out into the water. They then bring the ends of the net together, and fish are caught in it. They separate the fish, keeping the valuable, edible ones, and getting rid of the inedible ones with no value.

Jesus says, *“This Gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come”* (Mt. 24:14). God is seeing to it that His Word keeps going out all over the world until the end of time. The Bible says, *“God our Savior ... desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth”* (1 Tim. 2:3b-4). God wants everyone to hear the Gospel, believe it, and be saved! *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved”* (Jn. 3:16-17).

The Bible's message of Jesus dying on the cross for our sins confronts us with our sins that put Jesus on the cross. And there's the huge stumbling block for so many people. When Jesus came He told people, *“Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand”* (Mt. 4:17). Most people refuse to

confront their own sinfulness before God, repent of their sins, and trust in Jesus alone for their forgiveness and salvation.

The dragnet brought in both “good” and “bad” fish. God seeks to draw everyone to Jesus through the Gospel. But not everyone who hears the Gospel believes it. The parable of the dragnet is a warning to take Jesus and His Word to heart; to trust in Jesus as our Savior from sin.

Just before our text Jesus says, *“The Son of Man will send out His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who practice lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth”* (Mt. 13:41-42). As fishermen separate the bad fish from the good, so on the Judgment Day the angels will separate the unbelievers from the believers. Jesus will tell the unbelievers, *“Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels”* (Mt. 25:41). Those who do not believe in Jesus will be thrown into hell where they will be punished forever. In the parable of the dragnet Jesus warns that hell is real, and that people need to turn to Him now during their lifetime and be saved before it’s too late. The Apostle Paul says, *“We then, as workers together with [Christ] also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: ‘In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you.’ Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation”* (2 Cor. 6:1-2).

“Jesus said to [the disciples], ‘Have you understood all these things?’ They said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord.’ Then He said to them, ‘Therefore every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.’” As we read about the disciples in the four Gospels, we see that they didn’t always understand things Jesus was teaching them. But they believed in Him as the Messiah, and they wanted to grow in their understanding of Him and of God’s Word. Jesus was very patient with them, and He helped them learn and grow in their faith and understanding.

Jesus told them that they were like a homeowner with a storeroom containing “new” things and “old” things. Jesus taught His disciples about “old” things, explaining the meaning of the Old Testament to them. Jesus also taught them “new” things, showing them how He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Scriptures: the Messiah prophesied and promised in the Old Testament. As the disciples kept learning from Jesus, they became able to share with others all the things He taught them. Jesus prepared them to carry out His “Great Commission” to *“go ... and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you;”* assuring them (and us), *“and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age”* (Mt. 28:19-20).

Jesus has brought us to faith in Him. As He helps us to grow in our understanding and appreciation of Him and His love and forgiveness and salvation, and of His Word, He is making

us better able to share what He gives us with others. Peter exhorts us, *“You are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, [God’s] own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light”* (1 Pet. 2:9). “Jesus, give us the same spirit You gave Your disciples who said, *“We cannot but speak of things which we have seen and heard”* in You and from You” (Ac. 4:20).

Nothing on earth, no other religion, no human philosophy are our treasure. The kingdom of heaven is our treasure. Jesus and our eternal salvation in Him are our treasure. “Jesus help Your people to keep spreading Your Gospel until You come again, so that many more may believe in You and receive the priceless treasure of Your kingdom of heaven.” Amen.