



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

Matthew 13:44-46

Jesus told two stories to show that the kingdom of God is a treasure more valuable than anything in this world. Jesus in **no way** meant that someone could pay money to enter the kingdom of God! There is **nothing we can do** to earn our way into God's kingdom (Romans 4:1-3). Jesus paid the price for us to enter. We must simply have faith in Him.

Jesus shared these stories so His listeners would value the kingdom, and desire to be a part of it.



Day #1: Priceless

One donkey: 25 shekels
One gold ring: 18 shekels
Kingdom of God: Priceless

We have all seen the TV commercials that give a list of prices for things you can spend money on, and then name something that is **priceless**. Priceless means that something is more valuable than any amount of money.

The message of Jesus was that there was one thing that was truly priceless.

† *The kingdom of heaven is like treasure that was hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again. He was very happy. So he went and sold everything he had. And he bought that field. - Matthew 13:44*

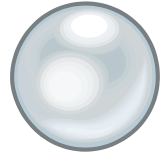
We could read this parable and talk at length about the things the man had to give up. We might imagine that it was difficult for the man to give up all he owned. But that is just the opposite of what Jesus' said! Jesus never said the man was sad to give up what he had. The man was joyful! He rushed to give away what he had so that he could gain the **far greater** treasure!

This is the same with those who find the kingdom of God. They are overjoyed with the priceless gift that Jesus offers. They know it is of greater value than anything else in the world.

* List things in your home that came with a price tag (such as tables, chairs, television). Now list the blessings of God's kingdom that money can't buy (such as love, life, joy). These things are truly priceless!

Day #2: Great Exchange

† *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a trader who was looking for fine pearls. He found one that was very valuable. So he went away and sold everything he had. And he bought that pearl. - Matthew 13:45-46*



No doubt, the pearl collector was used to bargaining to pay the lowest price for his pearls. After all, buying and selling pearls was his job. But this time was different. This fine pearl was of such great value, that he did not even mention the price. He knew it was worth far more than everything else he owned. He didn't have to think twice about the exchange. He knew it was an incredible bargain!

Those who find the kingdom of God come to the same conclusion. The things we give up are nothing compared to what we gain.

We give up the punishment for our sin. We give up a life that ends in death and separation from God. We give up trying to earn our way into God's favor. We give up doing things our own way. In exchange, we receive new life in God's kingdom. We are accepted by the one true God. We receive God's Holy Spirit, His joy, love, peace, direction, power, and eternal blessings.

* Have you placed your faith in Jesus and gained entrance into His kingdom? If not, ask God to make the truth about the kingdom very clear to you (John 16:13). If so, thank Jesus for making the priceless kingdom available to you.

Day #3: All Who Believe

Jesus told two similar parables describing the kingdom of God as a great and valuable treasure (Matthew 13:44-46). There is one difference between these two parables. One man found the treasure completely by accident and the other man had searched for it.

The man who found treasure in a field by accident was like the people who were not Jews. They

Day #3 continued:

were not God's chosen people. They did not know about God's promises, so they were not looking for the Messiah to come. However, when Jesus came, those who heard Him and put their trust in Him entered joyfully into His kingdom.



Those who aren't Jews did not look for a way to be right with God. But they found it by having faith. - Romans 9:30

And the pearl trader was very much like the Jews. They did know God's promises. They spent their lives looking for the Messiah that God promised to send. When Jesus came, He offered a kingdom of peace and justice, forgiveness and eternal life. This kingdom was FAR better than the earthly kingdom they had been looking forward to. Those Jews who had faith in Jesus entered the kingdom.

I am not ashamed of the good news. It is God's power. And it will save everyone who believes. It is meant first for the Jews. It is meant also for those who aren't Jews. - Romans 1:16



Take a piece of play jewelry and hide it. Ask your mom or dad to find it. Let this be a reminder that God's kingdom is a treasure that God wants everyone to find (1 Peter 3:9).

Day #4: Moses' Choice

The kingdom of God is not something we can see with our eyes, but it is real, and it is incredible. It takes faith to choose what you can't see over what you can see.

You may remember the story of Moses in the Old Testament. At the time of Moses' birth, the Jewish people were slaves to the Egyptian people. The Jews were treated harshly, and Pharaoh even ordered that all the Jewish boys who were born had to be killed. Moses' parents hid Moses so he would not be killed. Because they loved him, they gave him up to be raised by Pharaoh's daughter.

Moses was a Jewish boy, being raised in Pharaoh's palace. He was treated like an Egyptian prince. He had everything the world had to offer. However, when Moses found out who he really was, he left the palace to join God's people.



*He chose to be treated badly together with the people of God. He chose that instead of enjoying sin's pleasures for a short time. He suffered shame because of Christ. **He thought it had great value. He considered it better than the riches of***

Day #4 continued:

Egypt. He was looking ahead to God's reward. - Hebrews 11:25-26

Moses did this because he had great faith (Hebrews 11:24). He saw with kingdom eyes. With his human eyes, Moses could see the palace and the gold, the slaves obeying his every command, and the people bowing down to him as he walked by. But with his kingdom eyes, Moses could see the eternal kingdom that God promised. With kingdom eyes, Moses could see peace and joy and a relationship with the Creator of the universe. Moses gave up everything else to follow God, his King.



Look at the verses above. How does God's kingdom compare to things of this world? What did Moses give up? What did Moses gain?

Day #5: No Fool

In the early 1950s, five missionaries left their homes and their loved ones to take the message of Jesus to a terribly unfriendly tribe of people in Ecuador. The mission was dangerous, but these men were willing to risk their lives to go where God told them to go.

These men gave up everything they had because they were certain that life in the center of God's will was FAR greater than life anywhere else. The treasure of God's kingdom was so great and so real, that they wanted to share it with the Auca people who had no other way of hearing about it.

One of the men, Jim Elliot, wrote in his journal:

He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

It was clear to Jim and his friends that God's kingdom was of eternal value.



The holy people of the Most High God will receive the kingdom. They will possess it forever. It will belong to them for ever and ever. - Daniel 7:18



What are some things that you cannot keep for eternity? What are the things that you cannot lose in eternity? Which things are of greater value?

(Note: Older children may want to read more of the life stories of Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Pete Fleming, Ed McCully, and Roger Youderian, all martyred while planting kingdom seeds for the Auca people - many of whom now call themselves, "God-followers.")