

COMMISSION TEACHERS

INTRODUCE

Alright, if you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to Matthew chapter 13. Matthew 13. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to Matthew 13. If you open one of the hard-backed black bibles under your seat, Matthew 13 will be on page **819**.

INTRODUCTION

If I were to say:

- White rice. Pinto beans. Chicken. Corn. Sour cream. Cheese. And lettuce.
 - Where am I at? Yes...Chipotle.
 - Modern manna from heaven.

How about this...

- Double-double animal style with fries and a chocolate shake.
 - Where am I? You bet...
 - I just spent 6 hours in line at IN-N-Out.
- Venti Pike's Place with room.
 - Where? Starbucks.
 - Don't hate if you're a coffee snob!
- Supersize those fries. McDonalds.
- Cold-cut-combo? Yeah...Subway.

- What about this one...
 - I don't even need to tell you my order...
 - they bring me my food,
 - and I say, *"thank you,"*
 - and they respond, *"My pleasure."*
 - Chick-fil-A!
 - God bless that Christian chicken!

I'm calling today's sermon **SLIDE MY PLEASURE**.

- We're in Matthew 13
- which is known as the Parable Discourse,
- and today we find two parables
- linked with a similar emphasis.

So, let's begin today by working through and explaining the parables, and then we'll look at the principles of the parables.

So, parable number 1, Matthew 13:44

MATTHEW 13:44

[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."

EXPLAIN: BURIED TREASURE

Now, this parable seems simple enough.

- Man finds a treasure in a field.
- Buys that field to acquire that treasure.

But there are a few things to note about this parable.

First, the practice of hiding one's treasure, whether that was silver, gold, jewels, or the like, in a field. To bury it, was actually a normative practice.

You see, banks were not used the same way they are today in this time period...especially for the common Jew. So, to bury your treasure was a safer alternative.

- Even Jesus mentions this as a practice in Matthew 25
- when he tells the parable of the talents,
- and the man with the one talent
- went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

Therefore, in such an unstable region like Palestine,

- you can imagine that if invaders or conquerors were coming,
- it would make plenty of sense to take your treasures
- and bury them on a piece of your property
- where only you would find it.

But then, if you were captured, or killed, that treasure would be forgotten in the ground.

EXPLAIN: THE MAN

So, a man finds a treasure like this in a field.

Now, we don't know what the man's relationship is to this field...

- whether he is a farmer or laborer working in the field,
- or whether he is a treasure hunter and finds the treasure.

But he is not the field owner.

- And he must not have been a man of means,
- because he has to liquidate all of his belongings
- to buy this field.

Now, just as we saw last week with the yeast hid in the dough,

- the treasure is hidden in the field,
- the Greek word is *kryptō*.

So,

- the man finds the hidden treasure,
- but doesn't take it.
- He covers it up.
- Goes and sells everything he has
- and buys the field...
- so that he could gain the treasure.

EXPLAIN: ETHICS

Now, the question of ethics arises here, right?

- Now, this is not the point of the parable...ok?
- But I don't want us to get hung up here.

Is this dude being kinda sketchy?

- I mean, if there's some buried treasure in my field,
- I'd want to know about it,
- and not get swindled out of it
- by some dude who just re-buries it.

What about the ethics here?

Again, not the point of the parable, but just for our understanding of this...

- First, in these days, by rabbinic law...
 - a hidden treasure
 - would be rightfully claimed by the one who found it...
 - not by the owner of the land.
- Second, this property owner is obviously not the one who hid the treasure,
 - since he would have dug it up before he sold the property.
 - Therefore, the treasure is not his, only the land.
 - The treasure belonged to some previous land-owner.
- Third, this man who found the treasure is actually showing great moral integrity.
 - He could've just taken the treasure,
 - and no one would've been any the wiser.
 - Rabbinic law gave him the right to lay claim
 - to the treasure without buying the land.
 - But instead, he put it right back in the ground,
 - liquidated every single possession he had,
 - and bought the entire field
 - so that he could do what was right to get that treasure.

No lack of ethics. No one was defrauded.

But that's not the point of this parable at all!

THE POINT OF THE PARABLE

The point of the parable is here is a man who found something so valuable that he sold everything that he had to get it.

- I mean, imagine that!
- Every single thing he owned.
 - Family heirlooms.
 - All his possessions.
 - Anything of value that he may have had.
- He was so overjoyed,
- He was so ecstatic
- that he was willing to do anything to get that treasure.

That's the point of the parable.

Now, on to the second parable, which is paired with this one, but has some nuanced differences.

MATTHEW 13:45-46

[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.

EXPLAIN: MERCHANT

So, now, instead of a poor man who finds a treasure, we have another man, but he is called a merchant.

- And the Greek term here implies
 - that he is not a shop owner,
 - or salesman,
 - but a wholesale merchant.
- This was a man who would travel the world
- buying goods at wholesale,
- and then sell them to shops or salesmen.

So, this man would have been much wealthier than the first man, especially because he was a fine pearl merchant.

EXPLAIN: PEARLS

Now, in the ancient world, pearls were considered the most prized of all jewels. They could be likened to diamonds in our day. And so, this merchant was dealing in the most valuable of wears.

Biblically, pearls are a sign of extravagant wealth and status as well.

- Jesus says in Matthew 7, **don't cast your pearls before swine**,
 - essentially contrasting the most precious thing, a pearl,
 - with a common and unclean animal, a pig.
- Paul, in 1 Timothy 2 encourages women to dress modestly, **not with gold or pearls or costly attire.**

- And even in Revelation 21
 - when trying to describe the gates of the new Jerusalem,
 - they are called gates made of a single pearl.
 - The pearly gates, right?

So, this merchant is searching for fine pearls and finds one of great value, and he sells all that he has to get it.

Now, again, pearls aren't the biggest deal to us, but in the ancient world they were of unreal value.

- Cleopatra famously had two pearls worth roughly \$28.5 million dollars each in today's money.
- This would be like finding the Hope Diamond or something.

So, he finds it, and as a merchant he probably had a decent portfolio...ok?

- He owned his business,
- probably a home or property.
- He had money in pearls,
- maybe he buried some of his wealth in his field?
- Who knows?

But, just like the first man, he liquidates it all! To acquire one pearl.

- This is a horrible financial decision!
- The one thing you don't do, if you're a smart investor,
- is to put everything into one investment.
- No, you diversify!

So, in both parables, both men do the exact same thing.

- The one man sells everything he has
 - to buy a field and acquire the treasure.

- And the second man sells everything he has
 - to buy a pearl of great value.

Now, let's talk principles of these parables. What are the principles?

Well, let me give us three.

PRINCIPLE 1

First principle is this:

SLIDE THE KINGDOM IS WORTH EVERYTHING.

This parable is telling us that...

- there is no halfway way of getting the kingdom.
- There's no trying it out.
- It's all or nothing.
- They're going to have to risk everything.
- They're going to have to lose everything.
- They're going to have to sell everything.

But it's worth it!

THE KINGDOM IS WORTH EVERYTHING!

You see, it's really popular to think that Jesus is just an additive to our lives.

- Like, we have created an entire category of Christians
 - that really doesn't exist in the Bible.

We call them nominal Christians.

- But if you see Jesus as just an addition to your life...
- you're just kinda nominal about your relationship with him...
- if that's you...all you're doing is settling for something much less that you ought.

When Christians settle for nominal or half-hearted type of Christianity, we don't end up experiencing the full life that God desires for us.

- God desires a life for you that is abundant!
 - That's full of his glory
 - and full of his blessing
 - and full of your joy!
- We settle for far too little!

This is why I think in the first parable Jesus adds that **IN HIS JOY he goes and sells all he has.**

Did you notice that? Joy comes before he gets the treasure!

- **He didn't sacrifice...and got joy.**
- **No, he got joy...and then he sacrificed.**

See, the basic desire of all human beings on the face of the earth is to be happy...to have joy. This is why you've done everything you've ever done!

That's it. To be happy!

- You say, *"Well, I know some people who love misery."*
- Yes! They are happy being miserable!
- But it is happiness that they're after.

THE KINGDOM IS WORTH EVERYTHING...

- It's where that complete joy is found.
- But we settle for less.

MERE CHRISTIANITY

C.S. Lewis uses this illustration in Mere Christianity. He says this:

“Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what He is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that those jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised. But presently He starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is He up to? The explanation is that He is building quite a different house from the one you thought of - throwing out a new wing here, putting on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

APPLICATION

You see,

- You just wanted God to show up and help you get through your schooling.
- You just wanted God to show up and help your marriage survive.
- You just wanted God to show up and make you a better parent.
- You just wanted God to show up and help you with that sickness.
- You thought you just needed a little bit of God...

- a little inspiration...
- a little of him added into your life to make things better...
- to make you happier...

But these parables are teaching that HE IS WORTH EVERYTHING!

- The kingdom is the only way to get everything...to get joy!
- No little cottages...but a palace.
- No mere renovation...but a rebuild from the ground up!

THE KINGDOM IS WORTH EVERYTHING! It's my pleasure!

BLANK SLIDE

PRINCIPLE 2

Now, the second principle from these parables is very interesting.

So, there are some similarities in these two parables.

- In both stories you have a man...
- They both they find something of great value...
- they both understand its value...
- and in both stories they are willing to pay any price for it.

So, they're very similar! But there's one big difference.

- In the first parable,
 - the man just happens to come across the treasure.
- But in the second parable,
 - the man knows exactly what he's looking for.

What does this tell us? It's my second point:

SLIDE

THE KINGDOM IS ENTERED FROM DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

EXPLAIN: THE MAN WHO STUMBLED

The man in the field,

- unless he was a treasure hunter,
 - which the text gives us no indication of,
- was not looking for treasure.

He was going through whatever routine he went through,

- working,
- or plowing,
- or building something,
- or preparing the soil for whatever.

And he was in the field

- and he was just doing his thing...
- just living his life...
- and he stumbled across a fortune.

APPLICATION: PAUL

And there are people who enter the kingdom like that.

It would seem that they just stumble across it!

Think about the apostle Paul:

- Was he seeking to enter the kingdom?
- No way!
- He thought he was in it.

But then he's on the road to Damascus,

- and Jesus kicks him off the horse,
- blinds him,
- speaks to him,
- and saves him.

Then he goes through something of a Jesus cross fit boot camp,

- and goes on to pretty much
- single handedly plant churches
- all over the known world.

But he was just doing his thing.

He was just plowing his field, as it were, and he stumbled into a fortune.

There are people who aren't particularly seeking it...but they stumble into the treasure.

EXPLAIN: THE MAN WHO SOUGHT

And then there was the second man, the one who looked for the pearls. He knew what he was looking for!

Where the first man stumbled into it...the second man sought it out!
And we might call these people seekers...ok?

- Now, they might not know exactly what they're seeking out...
- but they certainly are on the hunt...
 - for meaning,
 - and depth,
 - and truth.

This merchant was really seeking something of genuine value.

APPLICATION: PETER

I'll throw the Apostle Peter in on this one, ok?

Peter seems to be on the hunt for Jesus through the New Testament...
but he just fumbles and bumbles along the way.

But he's on the hunt!

- Jesus calls Peter as he's fishing the Sea of Galilee, and Peter drops his net and follows him.
- Jesus is walking on the water while his disciples are in a boat, and Peter gets out of the boat and walked on water with Jesus.
- Jesus asks, *"Who do you say that I am?"* And Peter says, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."*
- Peter is given the nickname of "the rock" and will be a pillar of leadership in the early church.

But...

- As Peter walks on water his faith falters, and he starts to sink.
- Right after he confesses Jesus as the Christ,
 - he rebukes Jesus for talking about his death,
 - and Jesus calls him Satan.
 - When Jesus likens you to the devil...not good!
- On the night Jesus would be arrested Peter fails him by denying he even knew him three times.
- And even after Peter's restored, in Galatians, we find out that Paul had to rebuke Peter for showing favoritism and having some racist tendencies.

Now, the question is:

- when did Peter enter the kingdom?
- When did he get saved?
 - Was it when he first followed,
 - or upon his verbal profession,
 - or when Jesus restores him after his denial?
- We don't really know.

APPLICATION

So, you've got Paul who goes horse, ground, super Christian.

And then you've got Peter who's kinda all over the place!

- There are people who come into the kingdom,
 - almost by accident.
- And then there are people who search, and search, and search.
- And then there are combinations of both, right?

Where do you fit in that continuum?

THE KINGDOM IS ENTERED FROM DIFFERENT CIRCUMSTANCES.

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PRINCIPLE 3

Now, one more principle to point out here. Something interesting happens in both parables.

- In both the word **buys** or **bought** is involved.
- They liquidated everything, and BOUGHT what they desired.

- Now, some people just really get nervous here and they say,
 - *“Wait a minute...*
 - *You’re not telling us you buy your salvation,*
 - *are you?”*

So, what does this part of the parable mean?

Well, in a sense, the kingdom is bought.

- In a very real sense it is bought.
- But we need to figure out how that translates
- from the parable to us, ok?
- Because Paul says in Romans 3
 - that salvation is God’s free gift,
 - and it is not of works lest any man should boast.
- We don’t purchase it on our own with our own goods.
- But it is bought nonetheless.

There is a purchase transaction in salvation.

- You say, *“Well, what is it?”*
- *If it isn’t money.*
- *And it isn’t human works.*
- *What is it?”*

Well, here it is. The transaction is this.

You give up all you have...for all he has.

Did you get that?

- That is the essence of the transaction of salvation.
- I give up all I have...
- and God gives me all he has.

And this is the last point I want to make from these parables:

SLIDE THE KINGDOM DEMANDS A RESPONSE.

You have to be willing to sell everything!

What that means is that you look at anything in your life and you say:

- *“nothing is more important than Jesus to me.*
 - *If it’s a choice between that and Jesus...*
 - *if it’s a choice between that and Jesus...*
 - *if it’s a choice between that and Jesus...*
- *I am willing to take any loss for the sake of Jesus.*
- *It’s my pleasure!”*

Now, before you say, *“Sure, I’m all in on Jesus...”* Just take stock.

- Are you willing to let others know you are a follower of Christ?
 - Like your neighbors,
 - or co-workers,
 - or friends,
 - or family members?
 - If you’re afraid or embarrassed
 - of letting others know you’re a Christian...
 - then your image is the thing you aren’t willing to sell.
- When it comes to your money or your sexuality...if you say,
 - *“Well, if I have to do that with my money...*
 - *or that with my sexuality...*
 - *well, forget it!”*
 - What you’re saying is you aren’t willing to sell those things.

- If you say, *“I will obey God if...”*
 - whatever it is on the other side of that IF
 - is the thing you aren’t willing to sell.
- If you say, *“I was trying to be a Christian...”*
 - *but then this thing or that thing happened...*
 - *how can I possibly love a God*
 - *who would allow this to happen?”*
- What you’re really saying is,
 - *“there’s something that I will not sell to keep Jesus.*
 - *There’s something more important than that treasure...*
 - *than that pearl.”*

This will cost you everything that you have...

- We exchange ourselves,
- our sin,
- our will,
- our control of our lives...
- for Jesus Christ.

Now, I don’t think that people at the moment they’re saved

- will understand all the ramifications of that.
- But I believe true salvation is marked by a willingness
- to do that more and more as that understanding unfolds.

THE KINGDOM DEMANDS A RESPONSE.

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CONCLUSION

So, the kingdom is like a treasure worth so much you'd give up everything to get it.

The kingdom is like a pearl that's so valuable you'd liquidate all you have to acquire it.

- Have you done this?
- Have you entered the kingdom?
- What is your response?

You see, I think we all-too-often, and foolishly settle for less than this.

ILLUSTRATION: POTTY WATER

A few years ago, we were over at some friend's house for dinner with a few couples.

- And all the kids are playing in the house,
- you know running around,
- dressing up like princesses,
- pretending every stick is a gun or a sword. Ok?

And all the adults are out on the back porch sitting around a fire pit just hanging out.

- Now, one couple's two-year-old son
- came outside from playing inside.
- And he runs over to his momma,
- and she notices that his face and shirt are all wet.
- *"Oh buddy, how'd you get all wet? Did you spill your drink?"*

Well, little buddy can't talk that well yet,

- but one of the older kids pokes his head out the door and yells,
- "He was playing in the potty,"
- and then runs back to join the other kids.

So, apparently...

- this two-year-old boy
- was taking double handfuls of water from the toilet
- and just lapping it up,
 - which obviously makes sense, right?
 - I mean, bro was thirsty.

But it's like, *"Buddy, that's potty water. That's not for drinking."*

And his parents were kinda germophobic...so they were horrified!

APPLICATION

But this is a picture for us, church.

- We run to things...
- and lap up water...
- that just won't satisfy.
- Like, that's not for drinking!
- That's potty water.

And what Jesus is teaching in these parables that there's something better.

- There's a treasure.
- There's a pearl.
- And they're worth everything!
- There's nothing better!

You give up nothing when you give up everything...

because you gain everything in the kingdom of heaven.

Would you give up everything...to gain everything in Christ?

It's my pleasure!

Let's pray. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

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- Keller, Tim. *On Priorities*.
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- MacArthur, John. *Entering the Kingdom*.
- Osborne, Grant R. Matthew: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament.