



PARABLES

JESUS THE STORYTELLER



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

Today we are continuing in our series on The Parables of Jesus; today focusing on THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE AND THE PEARL.

And this morning Jesus is going to confront us with two short stories that pack a powerful punch.

Because in these parables we are challenged to evaluate what stands as our highest treasure in life... what is of most value... and what brings us the most JOY.

I am going to say a prayer, asking the Lord to open our hearts to His words this morning. May He be glorified as a result.

Pray:



Illus:

Ok, so imagine you are out with your family after dinner walking your dog on your property when all of a sudden your dog starts digging.

You see that it's digging at a metal can that has been buried on your property. You pull the can out of the ground and when you get it inside you discover it's full of gold coins. You go back outside and find another can and then another, in all 8 large cans holding 1,411 gold coins worth **10 million dollars**.

This actually happened to a California couple in 2013 [they wanted to remain anonymous for obvious reasons, didn't want random people showing up at their home digging in their yard]. This find is known as the Saddle Ridge Treasure and to this date it is the largest buried treasure find in American History.



Now don't go home and start digging in your back yard 😊. This happened in California. The only thing you are likely to find on your property is your utility cables 😊.

But you know this story illustrates the **JOY** of finding a treasure buried right under your feet.

A treasure is defined as something of great worth or value or a collection of precious things.

And when we think of a treasure we naturally think about money or some earthly means of wealth...which is why Jesus chose the objects He did in this parable and then compares them to the Kingdom of Heaven.

What Jesus wants us to know is that the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THE GREATEST OF ALL TREASURES.



The Kingdom of Heaven is where the will of God is being perfectly and universally done. It is where all things are right, and nothing is wrong, because God reigns there.

Matthew uses the phrase **kingdom of heaven** thirty-two times in his Gospel, and he is the only gospel writer who uses it at all.

The other three use “the kingdom of God.” It is most likely that Matthew used **kingdom of heaven** because it was more understandable to his primarily Jewish readers.

Jews would not speak God’s name (Yahweh, or Jehovah), and would often substitute *heaven* when referring to God.



It's important that we understand what the Kingdom of Heaven is because it is the entire point of Jesus' parables here. Again... Jesus wants us to know that the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS THE GREATEST OF ALL TREASURES.

Another thing that Jesus is trying to address in this parable is the fact that while many of us would be filled with JOY upon finding a buried treasure \$\$\$..... how does that compare to the JOY we have in the Lord?

And what we are going to see in this parable, and what I hope to fill you with this morning is the perspective that in a comparison between **Earthly Treasure** and the **Kingdom of Heaven** as a means of producing JOY in one's life... **it isn't even close.**

Matthew 13:44 (NIV)

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

44 **“The kingdom of heaven is**

like treasure hidden in a field. When a

man found it, he hid it again, and then in

his joy went and sold all he had and

bought that field.

PARABLES

Let's read our first parable. The Parable of the Hidden Treasure. Jesus says in Matthew 13:44.

Read:

Often Jesus would interpret His own parables... He didn't in this case 😞 but even still there is a lot here to take notice of.

Jesus uses illustrations which His contemporaries could easily relate to. Given the potential for political instability and invasions, as well as the non-existence of safety deposit boxes or a bank, ancient Jews would often bury their valuables. Sometimes these treasures were abandoned, and finding one that had been left behind was a once in a life time event.

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PARABLES

And so the context for this parable would be very relatable to His audience, they would understand from Jesus' words here that he is relating the Kingdom of God to something very rare and precious.

Also, notice that the man in this parable didn't go looking for the treasure he found. It's almost as if he stumbles upon it. And then with JOY flooding his heart, he happily goes and sells all he has to buy the field.

He doesn't hesitate, without thinking about it he quickly moves to SELL EVERYTHING HE HAS to acquire something he knows is of far greater value.

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The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

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The treasure in this parable represents Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers mankind.

And while we cannot pay for salvation by selling all our possessions, once we have found the prize/the saving grace Jesus offers, we disciples of Jesus ought to be willing to give up everything to possess the freedom it provides us.

Often we think that following Jesus means making sacrifices that we don't want to make... grudgingly, under compulsion.

But this parables helps us to see what should **motivate** our obedience to Christ.

JOY

Matthew 13:44 (NIV)

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

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Because you see Church in the Gospel of Jesus Christ we find freedom. And it is our freedom in Christ that brings us inexpressible JOY.

We Christians don't have JOY for no reason, but rather we carry JOY with us because we have found the real treasure. The most joyous people I have known in my life all had one thing in common... JESUS.

Many in our world live in a delusion that only earthly treasures can buy us joy/freedom. If you win the lottery you can quit your job, sit back, take it easy, golf everyday etc., and yet we know that none of those things will fill our souls with JOY. History is filled with people who had all the treasures anyone could dream of, but they weren't free at all. They possessed nothing more than temporary band-aids for a more persistent problem.

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The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

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You see Jesus knows about our persistent problem... SIN. Our sin is what robs freedom/joy from us, but church even if we know this we are still prone to look for our treasure in temporary things.

God knows that we are prone to over focus on the here and now, while underinvesting in the Kingdom.

And so here Jesus seeks to reorient our thinking towards what will truly set us **free**, highlighting what will truly bring us **joy**.



Illus:
You know during the pandemic I came across a local story about two brothers from Philadelphia who lost their freedom, and then found it again. They had been wrongly accused of a terrible crime, and then new evidence vindicated them.

And so what is it like to walk free again after years behind bars? Lee Horton and his brother Dennis know the feeling. They were convicted of robbery and murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole. They always maintained their innocence. Well earlier this year, after being locked up for a quarter of a century, they were granted their freedom and released.

I want to read an excerpt from Lee Horton who reflected on the JOY of freedom.



I'm going to tell you honestly. The first thing that I was aware of when I walked out of the doors and sat in the car and realized that I wasn't handcuffed. And for all the time I've been in prison, every time I was transported anywhere, I always had handcuffs on. And that moment right there was ... the most emotional moment that I had. Even when they told me that the governor had signed the papers ... it didn't set in until I was in that car and I didn't have those handcuffs on.

And I don't think people understand that the punishment is being in prison. When you take away everything, everything becomes beautiful to you. ... When we got out ... we went to the DMV to get our licenses back. My brother and I stood in line for two and a half hours. And we heard all the bad things about the DMV.



We had the most beautiful time. And all the people were looking at us because we were smiling and we were laughing, and they couldn't understand why we were so happy. And it just was that - just being in that line was a beautiful thing.

I was in awe of everything around me. It's like my mind was just heightened to every small nuance. Just to be able to just look out of a window, just to walk down a street and just inhale the fresh air, just to see people interacting. ... It woke something up in me, something that I don't know if it died or if it went to sleep. I've been having epiphanies every single day since I've been released.



*One of my morning rituals every morning is I send a message of 'good morning, good morning, good morning, have a nice day' to every one of my 42 contacts. And they're like, 'how long can (he) keep doing this?' But they don't understand that I was deprived. And now, it's like I have been released, and I've been reborn into a better day, into a new day. Like, the person I was no longer exists. I've stepped through the looking glass onto the other side, and **everything is beautiful**.*

Much like Lee testifies here about his release from prison and the inexpressible JOY that fills each day.

This is how we [who are in Christ] should feel...
EVERYTHING IS BEAUTIFUL. Our hand-cuffs have been removed by Christ, WE ARE FREE.



PARABLES

JESUS THE STORYTELLER



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

But the reality is many of us get jaded, this world is cruel and harsh.

At one point in our lives many of us felt the inexpressible JOY of knowing Christ.

And then life happens... and perhaps the treasure doesn't seem as valuable as it once did.

The treasure gets buried underneath all of the other priorities that compete for our time and attention.

And you know it's not that the treasure lost its value, but that we've lost our perspective.



PARABLES

JESUS THE STORYTELLER



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

The couple who I mentioned earlier who had 10 million dollars buried in their back yard.

Just because the treasure was buried didn't mean that it had lost its value...not at all. It was only that the treasure wasn't seen.

Likewise there are aspects of our walk and relationship with God that lay buried underneath the ground.

We have little/no JOY in our relationships

We have little/no JOY in our vocation/work

We have little/no JOY with our self-image/who we are in the world.

We have little/no JOY with our _____.



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JESUS THE STORYTELLER



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

And we mistakenly think that our JOY will be complete if we only had a little more of this, or a little more of that.

And once we get more, we realize that we actually just need a little more.....and this never ends.

But friends what if the key to our JOY isn't found in getting more... but rather GIVING UP.

Notice in this parable the man GIVES UP EVERYTHING FOR THE HIDDEN TREASURE.

He didn't try to amass more in an effort to secure JOY... rather he GAVE UP.

And I think this is a really important point.

Matthew 16:24-26 (NIV)

²⁴ Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. ²⁶ What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

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To emphasize this point Jesus also says a few chapters over in Matthew 16:24-26.

Read:

Here we see the similar themes of losing something to find something far better, far greater.

Friends if you are here today and you consider yourself a disciple of Jesus, you must confront yourself with the question... .What am I willing to lose down here, to gain everything up there? Because that’s what it is.

Our entire world system is focused on enticing us with TEMPORARY GAINS..... that have ETERNAL CONSEQUENCES.



PARABLES

JESUS THE STORYTELLER



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

This week we learned the tragic news that our friend, our church family member Joan Wagner went home to be with the Lord.

She was taken suddenly in a car accident. Just last week she sat in these pews.

And you know I got to know Joan pretty well in my time here at Brandywine. And I think Joan would have loved this parable, because her life echoed out its truth.

If you knew Joan, she was always talking about Jesus, she was always willing to teach, to sing, to serve, because she knew the treasure of the Gospel. Joan knew that she couldn't buy her salvation or earn her way to heaven, but she served Jesus with JOY... serving the Lord was her JOY, her treasure.



PARABLES

JESUS THE STORYTELLER

The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

And now she is in the presence of her King... enjoying treasures forevermore.

I bring up Joan to illustrate that we do not know how long we have to live. We know this is true, but we also each live in a little delusion (sometimes) that life will just continue to roll on.

Friends life will not roll on, we all will face our Maker some day.

Are you focused on eternal treasures, or temporary ones?

Matthew 13:45, 46 (NIV)

The Parable of the Pearl

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

PARABLES

Moving on I want to also examine the second parable in this set, the Parable of the Pearl.

Although these parables are similar, there are significant differences I'd like to highlight.

Read:

Pearls were more highly valued in first-century Palestine than diamonds are in our culture. Other biblical passages (Revelation 21:21) use pearls to illustrate all-surpassing worth.

And here we have a merchant who is looking, high and low for not just any type of pearl, but FINE PEARLS.

Matthew 13:45, 46 (NIV)

The Parable of the Pearl

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

PARABLES

The fact that he is a Merchant seems to indicate that he is skilled, and notice this parable doesn't emphasize his JOY at finding the FINE PEARL (*as the last one did*) but rather his ATTENTION TO DETAIL... and the RARE VALUE of the find.

Here again Jesus is emphasizing additional aspects of the Kingdom, it must be sought after, it requires our attention, because it is of such great value.

Earlier back in Matthew 6:33 Jesus challenges his disciples to..... ***seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.***

Matthew 13:45, 46 (NIV)

The Parable of the Pearl

45 “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. 46 When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

PARABLES

And so therefore we know that the Kingdom of God is something that we must pursue.

It isn't something that we can earn ourselves, and it's not about our works but rather His completed work, but church our free will must be aimed towards Kingdom priorities.

What this means is that just as a merchant might look for rare gems in a market. We who are seeking after Christ must look for the great value in the Gospel of Jesus Christ... and then stake everything on it.

You see friends the Kingdom must be sought after, because we can miss the opportunities we have in our lives due to apathy, neglect, complacency.



PARABLES

To illustrate this point. What you are looking at here is the largest pearl every found inside of a giant clam.

A tourism officer in the Philippines recently unveiled this family treasure: a [75-pound pearl](#). A woman by the name of Aileen Amurao, received this pearl from a relative when he was moving; he had found the pearl inside a giant clam while fishing and "kept it as a good-luck charm."

The pearl then stayed under his bed for 10 years.

The man who found this pearl had NO IDEA of its value, which is now estimated at **93 million dollars**.

This guy had 100 million dollars under his bed for 10 years and didn't even know it.



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Doesn't this story make you wonder what other treasures people might be hiding under their beds, in their closets, or up in their attics, all unnoticed.

But I think you can recognize the correlation here.

The Kingdom of Heaven should not go unnoticed in our lives. Mankind has been given a gift in the fact that Christ died to make this Kingdom available to us.

If you think it's an odd choice to sleep with 100 million dollars under your bed for 10 years.

It's it even more odd to live your whole lifetime only dabbling in the things of God... when He is the true treasure to be found in life.

Jesus has many who love his kingdom in heaven, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share his feast, but few his fasting. All desire to rejoice with him, but few are willing to suffer for his sake. Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many admire his miracles, but few follow him in the humiliation of the cross. ~ Thomas à Kempis

PARABLES

German Theologian Thomas à Kempis wrote about how we are prone to underinvest in the kingdom:

Jesus has many who love his kingdom in heaven, but few who bear his cross. He has many who desire comfort, but few who desire suffering. He finds many to share his feast, but few his fasting. All desire to rejoice with him, but few are willing to suffer for his sake. Many follow Jesus to the breaking of bread, but few to the drinking of the cup of his passion. Many admire his miracles, but few follow him in the humiliation of the cross.

Isn't this so true. Jesus is for the most part universally admired. Even secular atheists have positive things to say about Jesus, although they do not believe Him to be Lord.

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PARABLES

You see what Thomas a Kempis is hitting at here is humanity is prone to miss the Kingdom Treasure God offers through Jesus Christ because we only want the blessing of knowing Jesus without the true cost of discipleship.

Church let's go inward with this parable, because its easy to agree with Jesus' words here but to still be left unaffected.

Evaluate your walk with Jesus and ask yourself this question that will help us weigh what place God and His Kingdom hold in our lives.

Treasuring the Kingdom

Does my greatest joy come from my relationship with God or from my circumstances?

PARABLES

Does my greatest joy come from my relationship with God or from my circumstances?

We often allow our circumstances to determine our JOY don't we. And admittedly it's hard not to.

Many of us have experienced losses, hardships, addictions... and at the end of the day we just want to escape our circumstances. And under this compulsion we often reach out to ***whatever earthly means*** eases our pain. Often this only serves to make our circumstances even worse.

But within Christianity we have a TREASURE that is not bound by life's circumstances. This TREASURE transcends our circumstances and makes JOY available AT ALL TIMES.

Treasuring the Kingdom

Does my greatest joy come from my relationship with God or from my circumstances?

PARABLES

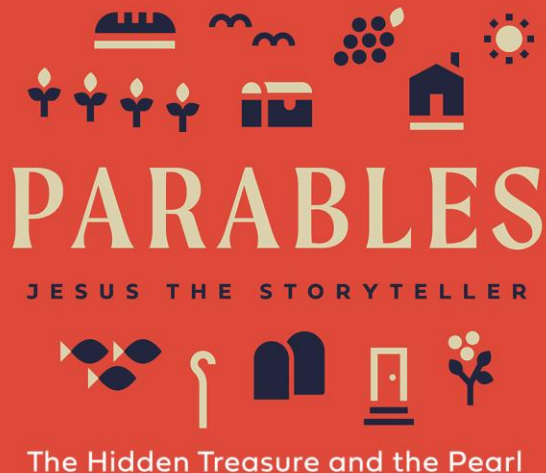
But friends this only happens when Jesus is at the center of our lives.

If your JOY is dependent on your job... then your job will master you.

If your JOY is dependent on whether you're well respected or viewed as accomplished by others... then the approval of others will master you.

If your JOY is dependent on how your kids/grandkids turn out..... then that will master you as well.

And don't get me wrong, those things are important. But if we get the most important thing right TREASURING THE KINGDOM... then we will be mastered by our Lord and Savior Jesus... and then our JOY will be complete. (John 15:11)



Illus:
Imagine an six-year-old boy playing with a toy truck and then it breaks. He is besides himself and cries out to his parents to fix it. Yet as he's crying, his father says to him, "Son, a distant relative you've never met has just died and left you one hundred million dollars."

What will the child's reaction be? He will just cry louder until his truck is fixed. He does not have enough cognitive ability to realize his true condition and be consoled.

Friends in the same way, even Christians can lack the spiritual capacity to realize all we have in Jesus. This is the reason why the Apostle Paul prays in Ephesians 3 that God would give Christians the spiritual ability to grasp the *height, depth, breadth, and length of Christ's salvation. And what a great salvation it is!*



PARABLES

JESUS THE STORYTELLER



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

You see what Jesus is telling us in these parables is that the hard work has already been done. The Kingdom has been established and now our responsibility to be willing to follow the man and the merchant in these parables and be willing to give up all we have to gain Jesus.

Our responsibility is to confess with our mouths that JESUS IS LORD, and to believe in our hearts that GOD has raised him from the dead..... and we will be saved (Romans 10:9).



PARABLES

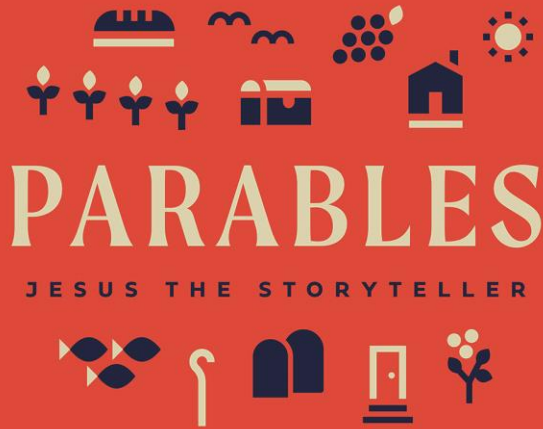
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The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

If you already believe that you are a sinner, and have confessed with your mouth and believed in your heart..... GOOD!

Then don't stop believing this Gospel message, preach this message to yourself over and over again until it sinks deeper and deeper into your heart..... continue to passionately pursue Jesus....serve Him with your gifts....be a beacon of light in our community....get engaged in ministry here at Brandywine ...and work out your faith in Jesus.



The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

However if you have not recognized that you are a sinner, and you haven't confessed that JESUS IS LORD, and you have not placed your trust in HIS RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD.....do not wait another day....today is the day for you to make the Kingdom of Heaven your Treasure.

[Pause]

As we transition towards our time of Communion Meditation, I want to share with you one of my favorite meditations concerning the sacrifice of Christ. I believe I've shared it here before, but I want to again share this quote by Charles Spurgeon, because it speaks to the mindset of the disciple who TREASURES THE KINGDOM BECAUSE THEY KNOW OF ITS COST.

“Too many of us think too lightly of sin, and that is why we think too lightly of the Savior. The one who weeps for joy at hearing the Gospel, the one who extravagantly pours out his possessions in response is the one who believes he has stood before his God with the noose of condemnation rightfully around his neck, and before he is condemned hears a voice that says, I will take that noose and I will wear it in your place.”

**Charles H. Spurgeon
PARABLES**

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Charles H. Spurgeon

Spurgeon goes on to say that this is the one who will joyfully offer his life in response to the good news of redemption in Jesus' name.

Church this is what Christ has done for us! Now may we offer our lives, may we Treasure His Kingdom above all.

Pray:

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



We celebrate an open communion here at Brandywine, which means you don't have to be a member in order to partake with us, but we do ask (*as you observe this at home*) that you be a believer in Jesus Christ.

We observe communion here at Brandywine because we see clear instructions from Jesus in scripture to remember Him in this way. In Matthew 26:26-28 we read, “While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, ‘Take and eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” These are the words that Jesus spoke to his disciples as he was preparing himself to be our sacrifice. And within the observance of Communion we see several opportunities to reflect and confess.

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



First, we should look back. We are to participate in Communion in remembrance of Christ. Communion also speaks of the intimacy and fellowship we now have with God. And so we look back. We look back to the cross. We remember what Christ accomplished for us. And we are reminded of His love for us.

Second, we are to look ahead. The Scriptures say to do this "until he comes again" (1 Corinthians 11:26). The first time Jesus came to this earth, He came as the Suffering Servant. The next time, He will come as our glorious forever King. Communion is also an observance to remind us that Jesus is coming again.

And Third, Communion is a time to look within. We are to look within and ask the Holy Spirit to show us any areas of our lives that we have not surrendered to God. And once we acknowledge these areas, we are to seek forgiveness, looking for God to transform us from the inside out.

***Let's take a moment to reflect and confess.**

Communion

Remembering His sacrifice.



Bread:

Taking the bread Jesus broke it and gave it to His disciples, He said, **“take eat this is my body”**, do this in remembrance of me.

Cup:

In the same way Jesus took the cup, saying **“this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many,”** do this in remembrance of me.

Prayer:

Thank you for your sacrifice

May we live to honor what you have done for us

May we look forward to your glorious 2nd coming