



## **Matthew 13:44–46**

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. 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.

## Reflection

Finding buried treasure and pearls of great price is the stuff of stories, and you can imagine how these stories, most likely told at far greater length than the summaries found in our passage today, would have drawn in Jesus' hearers. Especially when we consider that the crowds that had come to hear him preach by the Sea of Galilee, largely consisted of farmers, and fisherman and merchants who plied their trade on the important trade routes of the region. They knew about fields, pearls and treasures and no doubt had daydreamed about finding them or earning them much as we might day dream today about how our lives would change if we were to win the lotto or strike it big in business or in

the property market.

Jesus is speaking to them exclusively in parables. Our passage contains two of the seven parables found in Matthew chapter 13 – they're all about the kingdom of God. These two overlap with one important difference. We're going to have a look at both of them in turn and then consider them together. Jesus' first parable is in verse 44,

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.

Now while this has all the makings of a great story, in the ancient world finding

buried treasure in a field was a far more common occurrence than today. Without a formal banking system, and especially if you thought your house was at risk of being robbed or overrun by an invading army, one of the safest things to do with your wealth would be to bury it. And should that army come through your region, and the worst happen, and you lose your life, the treasure that you'd buried in the field would become lost, perhaps even for several generations.

Imagine you're a day labourer. Turning up day in and day out in the market place, hoping to be hired by some wealthy landowner. One day while you're weeding someone else's field, your hoe strikes a rock that makes an odd sound, only you didn't strike a rock, you've struck it rich!

Imagine that! Your life would change forever in that instant. Off you'd go and sell everything that you own, and borrow as much money as you can, so that you can buy that field and be set forever. Ever daydreamed about a day like that? That's what the kingdom of God is like says Jesus.

Or again, in verses 45 and 46,

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.

You're a merchant, a trader, you have a shrewd eye for value, your special area of expertise is fine pearls. Pearls are highly sought after even today. Yet in the an-

cient world, they were far more valuable, far rarer than they are today – much more like diamonds.

You've been in the game for a long time, it takes a lot to get you excited these days, but today, you come across a pearl like you've never seen before, it takes your breath away, it's priceless, without peer, it represent the business deal of a lifetime, only you're not sure if you'll ever be able to part with it now that you've seen such perfection. You must have it so without a moment's consideration, you sell everything, cash everything in, just so that you can reach out and touch it and claim it as your own. The kingdom of heaven is like that pearl says Jesus.

At one level these parables are easy to

understand. The kingdom of God is priceless, it may be hidden but when you come across it and see it for what it truly is, you simply have to have it. In an instant, you're prepared to give up everything you own, just so that you can possess it, and you're filled with joy as you do so. Nothing else in your life can compare with its worth. We're reminded of Paul's words in Philip-  
pians 3:7–8:

7 But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ

Just like the two men in our passage today in a moment all their previous possessions and pursuits changed into shades of grey compared to incomparable treasure that is now before their eyes and within their grasp. One stumbled across it, he wasn't even looking for it, the other was searching, but still couldn't believe what he's found. Both were chosen by God and blessed with riches beyond all imagining, beyond all deserving, given eyes to see, and ears to hear, so that for them, their greatest treasure is Jesus.

## **Think**

Is Jesus your greatest treasure? What do you daydream about? Riches, or business deals, or him? The next promotion at work, early retirement or him? Are you seeking



first his kingdom, his righteousness? The bible says where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Is your heart wholeheartedly with him?

His kingdom is priceless, from the moment that God opened their eyes to see the treasure in their midst, both men's lives were changed forever. They were filled with joy. Is your life filled with joy?

It's a bit like this. Say your great aunt died, and you didn't know her that well but it turns out she was ridiculously rich, you know, Gina Rinehart type rich, mining licenses in the family that you knew nothing about. Say she died and left you an inheritance, she left you an unthinkable amount of money, ridiculously large, say one billion dollars, BRW Rich List sort of stuff -

but she put it in trust so you could only access it on your next significant birthday. For you it might be twenty-one, or fifty, for me it would be forty. So in a few year's time.

One billion dollars coming to you, just a matter of time. Think about how that would change your life. Sure it might still be tight making your mortgage repayments in the meantime, life will still have its up's and down's, but with a billion dollars coming your way soon... Think about how the prospect of such a windfall just around the corner would change everything. The joy you'd feel in the present as you think about your future so secure. And that's just money! Ours is the kingdom of heaven, something far, far greater, an inheritance, that can never perish, spoil or fade. How

much more should we be filled with joy as we go about our day to day?

## **Pray**

Close this time now in prayer. Pray that you and I both would seek first the kingdom of God and be filled with joy as we do so. Pray that Jesus Christ would be our treasure, the one we pursue, the one we delight in, and the one that we so willingly share with the so many who are seeking the riches that can only be found in him.

