

Title: Kingdom Bound: Kingdom Secrets (Parables)– Matthew 13:44-53

Aim: The value of the kingdom to us, should be the same as to Jesus.

Intro: Anything you want or have that is so valued by you that you would give anything/everything to have/keep it? Your marriage? Children? Home? Freedom? Life? When it comes down to it, is there really anything of so great a value in the material things we own or would like? But it's the people in our lives, the relationships we cherish & the things that are irreplaceable, those are the things we might give everything to secure, obtain (& some have given the last full measure). How valuable to you is your relationship with God? Though we cannot purchase a right standing w/God nor relationship w/Him, we know that in our world today there are some who suffer & have even died for the name of Jesus. Would you suffer/die for the cause of Christ? Of what value to you is the kingdom of God? We should recognize that the kingdom meant/means everything to Jesus, & He gave everything for it, in obedience to His Father & for the glory of His name. Theme: KB – for/by. I submit to you that the Kingdom of God is of priceless value to King Jesus & therefore should be to us who are kingdom bound.

Matthew 13:44-53 [READ]. As noted couple of weeks ago, in chap 13 of his gospel account, Matthew recorded 7 parables told by Jesus concerning the kingdom of heaven (God). 1st 4 (sower/soils, wheat/tares, mustard seed & leaven) he spoke to crowds of people gathered to hear Him. The last 3 (today) spoke to His disciples alone, after explaining to them the meaning of the parable of the wheat/tares (36-43). As w/the parables of the mustard seed & leaven, so the 5th & 6th parables Matthew recorded have similar meaning, w/some nuances, & so can be taken together, tho each will stand alone. 1) **Parable of the Hidden Treasure** – vs 44. A man found – either because he was searching or w/out searching came upon – a treasure hidden in a field. One of the few ways people in that day had to secure valuables was to bury them. It doesn't matter to the point of the parable why this particular treasure was hidden in this field or how the man came upon it, but after discovering the treasure the man covered it up again & went away to liquidate his assets – sell all he had – in order to buy the field & thus own the treasure. Some would say that we (individual believers)

each are the man in the story & Jesus is the treasure worth everything, worth giving up everything to have, & that part is true. Jesus is worth everything. But we know that we cannot buy relationship w/Christ – rather we are the bought ones (tho that’s not necessarily the meaning of this parable). We cannot earn our salvation nor work our way into God’s good favor. Jesus paid for the sins of those who believe. We are saved by grace. So that’s not what Jesus was getting at, neither in this parable nor the next. Most commentators agree that the man alluded to is Jesus Himself. The field, as in the other parables before, is the world. So what did Jesus find in this world that He would give up everything to get? Again, some would say it is the individual believer, whom Jesus values/loves so much that “He left the splendor of heaven,” emptied Himself of all but love, took on our likeness, & paid for our sins & for us w/His own life blood. The saying goes that if anyone of us was the last/only person on earth Jesus would have died for us. All of that sounds wonderful & certainly has a measure of truth in it, but it seems to make us (each individual believer) the centerpiece of God’s eternal plan, & that’s not so. We who believe are the beneficiaries of God’s eternal plan, but it’s much bigger than you/me. And, while it’s certainly true that Jesus gave everything to do His Father’s will, to bring glory to His Father, I don’t believe that’s what Jesus was pointing to in this parable. I think it is the kingdom. Jesus came to establish the kingdom of heaven (God) on earth as it is in heaven, & He gave everything so that He might obtain it. The kingdom of God on earth is most certainly hidden from the view of most of the world, but He has bought it & it will one day soon be revealed. Author Ray Stedman also has a slant on this parable that has some merit. His perspective is that the treasure found here in this parable is the “secret of international peace in all the world – every nation; peace & prosperity - & that secret is Israel restored to its ‘peculiar treasure’ status spoken of in Ex.19. God is not thru w/Israel. He has hidden it away (that He might graft in believing Gentiles), but will restore it (as spoken of in Rom.9-11).” That, I think, is a valid perspective, & so this parable may then refer to the value to Christ Jesus of the Kingdom of God, particularly in regards to Israel, God’s chosen nation/people. Jesus, Son of God & Son of Man, died to redeem for

Himself a people of His own possession (Titus 2:14), sons of Abraham by birth & by new birth, Israel then somehow included, now hidden, but soon to be revealed, when the King comes again. 2) Parable of the Pearl of Great Value – vs45-46. Again, the merchant – a business man on a journey, especially for trade, in search of valuable goods – the merchant is Jesus Himself. He was looking for the best value in pearls & in his search the man found a single pearl of great value. Recognizing its value, he went & sold all had, liquidated assets, to buy this one pearl. Again, some have said (& I have thought it possible) that the pearl is Jesus, but we cannot buy Him or relationship w/Him, so that cannot be. As said, Jesus is the merchant who bought the pearl of great value. What did He buy w/everything He had? Again, it's the kingdom. But once again, we hear from Ray Stedman, who speculated that the pearl may be the Church, of whom Paul wrote in Eph.5 that Christ so loved the Church that He gave Himself up for her (the example for the Christian husband, who is to so love His wife). Stedman pointed out that the “Hebrew people didn't consider pearls of much value, but Gentiles did. And, the pearl is the only jewel that is the product of...hurt. The oyster takes the thing hurting it & transforms it.” “The cross,” he said, “is God's answer to the hurt the world has caused. Jesus dwelt w/us, became like us, that He might deliver/transform us. He came & gave all He had.” That also is a valid point, to which I would add the possibility that the pearl of great value represents the kingdom of God in regards to the Church. But I would still maintain that both these parables speak of how highly the King values the kingdom (& the people of the kingdom). As Carson wrote, “The extravagance of [these parables] dramatizes the supreme importance of the kingdom.” That being so, if the kingdom of God is of so great importance to the King, then shouldn't the kingdom of God be of great importance to the subjects of the King? To the followers of King Jesus? Isn't that what Jesus calls us to? Isn't that why Jesus commanded us to “*seek 1st the kingdom of God & His righteousness...*,” promising us that “*all [things we need] will be added to you*”? Shouldn't the kingdom of God be of 1st importance to us as it is to Jesus? That means that we, like Jesus, are to give everything we have for the sake of the kingdom – not to gain the

kingdom, but to serve the King & do kingdom work! We need to let our minds wrap around that thought. Isn't that what it should mean when we sing "I surrender all?" Besides the benefits of being part of God's kingdom here/now & in eternity, shouldn't our lives be spent in kingdom work? And, again I remind you that we can do nothing of ourselves. Anything we do for God can only be by God's gifting us to do it & enabling us to do it by the power & leading of the Holy Spirit. But instead of setting up our own little kingdoms which cannot last, we should give our lives for the sake of the kingdom of God & to the glory of God. Easily said, but I want to challenge you to think & pray about what that means. Neither your life nor mine has any value in & of itself. We were made for God & for the kingdom. The only thing of eternal value is kingdom work – which includes the discipling of our children, our investment in Christ's Church, our investment in the progress of the gospel, both worldwide & immediately around us. Think about what that means. 3) Parable of the Net – vs47-50. The net spoken of in this parable is a drag-net, a large fishing net, spanning a large area, catching many fish of all kinds, whatever is in its path. Certain fish were edible & valuable, while others were not, so the fishermen would drag the net ashore & then sit down & 1 by 1 sort thru the fish, putting the sellable, edible ones in containers to be taken to market, while throwing the bad, inedible, unsellable ones away. Jesus gives us the meaning of this parable – vs49-50. I think it interesting that Jesus would tell 2 parables pointing to the day of judgment – 1st the wheat/tares, where the tares represent "sons of the evil one" (vs38), gathered at the harvest/close of the age & cast into the fiery furnace of God's judgment/wrath. Then here, the bad fish represent those who are evil/lost (may not think of themselves as evil), who, at the close of the age, when the net is full, will be separated from the redeemed & cast into the fiery furnace, where there will be "weeping & gnashing of teeth," when their lost-ness & condemnation is realized, & no hope is given to escape the wrath of God. Pray for the condition of men's hearts, that they may receive the word of the gospel & bear the fruit of life in Christ. Pray for the lost ones you know/love to see the value of Christ & His kingdom & become part of that kingdom which is growing & will fill the whole earth. Apart

from Christ, apart from the kingdom of God, there is no life that will last, no hope. Jesus then asked His disciples if they understood all these things, to which they replied “yes,” whether or not they really did. Then Jesus said to them – vs52. A scribe was generally a student of the law & sacred writings who was entrusted w/teaching others. Jesus was saying that His disciples, having learned from Him life truths, were to teach them to others. We who belong to the kingdom of God, subjects/children of the kingdom/King, have been entrusted w/a storehouse of divine truth. We have been taught in order that we might teach – make disciples – that’s the Great Commission. We have a treasury of truth – as David Brown wrote, “old truths in ever new forms,” new truth embodied in Christ & life giving. We have so much to offer the world, our loved ones, friends, neighbors. We have Jesus the King. We are to conquer w/the gospel, take captive by the love of Christ poured out into & thru our hearts. Bro/sis, we are kingdom bound! Let us be kingdom minded, King Jesus focused, Holy Spirit filled & gospel proclaiming!