

“Credo, Domine; adjuva incredulitatem meam,” Mark 9:24.

“Domine, volumus Jesum videre,” John 12:21.

MATTHEW 13

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid again. In his joy, he goes away and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one very valuable pearl, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸When the net was filled, they pulled it onto the shore. They sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw the bad ones away. ⁴⁹That is how it will be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous who are among them. ⁵⁰And they will throw the wicked into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ⁵¹Jesus said to them, “Did you understand all these things?”

They answered him, “Yes.”

⁵²He said to them, “Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained as a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure both new things and old things.”



A dozen years ago an 80-year-old man named Forrest Fenn buried a treasure in the Rocky Mountains. It was filled with precious gemstones and golden nuggets. Hundreds of thousands of people went searching for treasure. A couple was interviewed who had met searching for Fenn’s gold. They fell in love and were married because of their mutual interest. Four people died looking for it, even though Fenn explained that he put it where an 80-year-old could find it. Forrest Fenn buried this treasure because he wanted to offer hope during the 2008 economic downturn. It wasn’t discovered during the housing bust. However, this past June, someone did find it and the \$2 million offered inside.

Doesn’t it make you want to go find your own treasure? If your neighbors discovered something valuable in their backyard, you might wander out with your own metal detector or shovel. Hidden treasure gives us a thrilling feeling. And it’s no wonder Jesus compares His kingdom to exciting tales of pearls and gold.

We even get a parable of fish. Would it be safe to combine them and call it a pirate adventure? Come with me and sail an epic adventure in Matthew 13 as ...

JESUS SETS OUR HEARTS ON HIDDEN TREASURE

Notice first the comparison Jesus draws. He is telling us about the kingdom of heaven. A man found buried treasure; he struck it rich. He's spilling over with joy. He can barely contain himself. But he needs to secure that treasure. He buys the land for what it's worth without the treasure, but in so doing the treasure is his. This is the point: A citizen of this world who has found the kingdom of heaven wants to give up all he has in order to secure it for his very own.

In the second parable, a wandering merchant goes from place to place, seeking out precious pearls. We aren't told that he knows what he'll find, just that he knows what makes pearls valuable. But instead of finding little pearls, he finds one very valuable pearl. He doesn't need anything else, he reasons. He wants this one treasure.

So what is that treasure?

- Solomon says in Proverbs 4:7, "*Wisdom is supreme; therefore get wisdom. Though it cost all you have, get understanding.*"
- Or think of Proverbs 2:3-6, "*If you call out for insight and cry aloud for understanding, ⁴and if you look for it as for silver and search for it as for hidden treasure, ⁵then you will understand the fear of the LORD and find the knowledge of God. ⁶For the LORD gives wisdom, and from his mouth come knowledge and understanding.*"
- Job also spoke of divine wisdom as a rare, hidden treasure. "*Neither gold nor crystal can compare with it, nor can it be had for jewels of gold*" (28:17).

Jesus is "*the wisdom of God*" (1 Corinthians 1:24). As we grow to know God better, we stand in awe of his greatness and of his love in Jesus Christ, "*in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*" (Colossians 2:3).

That's right, in Jesus are hidden all treasures worth valuing. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is also our brother, who has suffered and died for us. Thus we are not talking about a place, but the activity of God. He was active and working out God's plan of salvation. He is active and working on our hearts. Singing is not a place, it's an activity. Walking is not a place, it's an

activity. Ruling is not a place, it's an activity. The kingdom of heaven exists wherever God graciously rules, and God graciously rules in sinners' hearts by faith in Jesus Christ. So the treasures of this kingdom include knowing "*the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.*"

May these Scriptures be known in our homes and hearts. Proverbs 23:3-4, "*By wisdom a house is built, and through understanding it is established; through knowledge its rooms are filled with rare and beautiful treasures.*" Luke 17:21, "*The kingdom of heaven is within you.*"

Yet do we really value the treasure Jesus wishes to offer us? Are we very good pirates of God's kingdom? We may actually consider something else rather precious. We hoard sins. The sinner has precious sins we don't want God to forgive, something very secret and special. We may bury it for a while, but only to go back and dig it up for our personal use again. Lies, cheating, gossip, and plotting to bring down someone's good name is very hard for others to discover. The debt of sin mounts. There is a day of judgment for all the treasure hunters who plundered their neighbors along the way. There is a dragnet to catch the souls of all who gather the gold of fools. Will you go back to that tin and dross again? Or will you hear your Savior's offer to bury the fool's gold of sin at sea, under the sea, deeper than it can ever be discovered, and cast it to the wind to blow as far as the east is from the west? It takes God's law to dig sin out of our hearts, but it takes God's gospel to make us richer than kings and queens.

That's what Christian education is all about. Hearts of wisdom. Treasures of the gospel. Christ's cross marks the spot. We bring out treasures old and new for a generation of seeking His kingdom. This is our church's best long-range plan, investing in God's sons and daughters, securing for them the law and gospel every week. Each week in your homes or online, Sunday school classes will meet. Each week at church, adult Bible study will dig deep in the Word. Each week you will learn again that the cross of Christ marks the spot.

Consider it an epic adventure every time! Search for it as for hidden treasure! Trade all you have for this pearl of pearls! His treasure doesn't run through our fingers like gold doubloons in a chest; it fills up our souls as mercy and peace are meant to do. It feeds us with the body and the blood. It opens up storehouses of comfort and assurance. It forgives our sins and credits us the account of Jesus Christ. It comes to us by grace – God's Riches At Christ's Expense. One day it

gives us heaven, and, by faith alone in Jesus Christ, this glory can never be stolen from us in this life or the next.

As of yesterday, there is a new treasure hunt. It is said that ten treasure chests, each with a million dollars, can be located within each of 10 participating states. (Indiana is not one of them, but Illinois and Ohio are.) You can purchase a map for \$49.99. There is even supposed to be a reality show following a few of the treasure hunters. It's called the Blackbeard Treasure Hunt. How much fun and time and excitement could we spend looking for one of those \$1 million chests! But the treasure that lasts is already yours. How much more fun and excitement will we have seeking after the eternal treasure! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.