

October 3, 2021

## THE PARABLE OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Matthew 13:44



Special Music: "Christ Our Treasure" The Glorious Christ Live

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojGdgYHwxyU>

**"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.**

**Matthew 13:44**

## **WHAT ARE WE WILLING TO PAY**

**What's our pleasure?**

**What's our treasure?**

**What are we willing to pay?**

**For something that's shiny?**

**Or something that finely**

**Crafted for holiday?**

**Is it coins that we prize?**

**Or do gems satisfy?**

**Maybe a painting or two.**

**I'm countin' a fountain**

**A retreat on a mountain**

**Or maybe just a more pleasant view.**

**If we find out our pleasure**

**Or discover our treasure**

**Just what are we willing to pay?**

**Have we ever considered**

**That the cost that we've figured**

**Just might be more that we can ever repay?**

Will we sell off our soul  
So that we can feel whole  
Or is our soul just not on the table?  
How 'bout our morals  
Our crowns and our laurels  
Leaving us blind and unstable?

Is there a grand prize  
That is valued in size  
And worth more than all that we are?  
Is there a treasure  
That's priceless in measure  
That makes us willing to give up our star?

If we sell all we own  
To buy us our bone  
Will that meet all of our needs?  
Will that make us glad  
To give all that we had  
To buy us our bangles and beads?

But what if our pleasure  
Is to know peace beyond measure

**Is that something worth selling our soul?**

**To find it and bind it,**

**And let Jesus refine it**

**Make diamonds from our hearts filled with coal?**

**So, I ask once again**

**Will we give up our sin**

**And sell all our follies and fables?**

**To find peace of mind**

**Through bread and through wine**

**To sit with our Lord at his table?**

There it is. That shiny thing. That magnificent bauble. That precious gem of gems. That treasure of treasures. Our heart's desire. What we have looked for all of our lives, just on the other side of the window glass. Calling to us. Only one thing stands between us and possession of this object of our desire. The fulfillment of our dreams. What are we willing to pay to obtain this marvel that will complete us? Half of all we own? All that we own? Are we willing to sell our morals and values for it? Are we willing to go hungry and thirsty? Are we willing to give up an arm? How about a leg? Maybe a kidney? Are we willing to sacrifice relationships? Are we willing to lay down our lives just to call it ours? And if we are, what good does it do us? What sacrifice is TOO great? Where do we draw the line? Will we sell our souls? Let's be totally honest with ourselves. What is the price we are willing to pay for the thing that we covet the most?

I knew a man that started a small business in his garage. He worked long hard hours and grew that business into a decent sized company with a number of employees and a great reputation for service. While growing that business he married and had a child. Other than working too many hours, he seemed to have a great life. His dream has always been to own an island. It was his idea of freedom. He treasured the idea of living on that island, worry free, living off the land and the sea.

While he was still in his 30s, he became well aware of the value of his company. This wasn't a garage start-up anymore. He looked at the bottom line and reasoned how much he would get if he sold the business. The number was mind-boggling. Here was his chance to make his dream come true. He could

own that island. He could have all he ever really wanted. Here was his treasure in front of him. What do you think he did?

I'd love to tell you that he sold the business, pack up his wife and child and moved to the island. But that was his dream. It wasn't her dream. There were decisions to be made. What was the most important thing in the world to him? Should he give up on his dream? Accept that he would never achieve it? Take a minute and put yourself in his shoes. You have all the money you will need and the opportunity to realize your dream, but your life partner is not on board with that dream. What do you do? Where does your treasure lie? This isn't just a crossroads. It is a mind-bending, change of life moment. It's a do what you gotta do, go with your heart, sell your soul, take a chance, grab faith my the hand moment. What do you do?

**“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.”**

It's one of the Jesus' shortest parables. Here is a story about a man walking through a field that he doesn't own. He's on his way to somewhere else, but we don't know where. While it may be an embellishment, he basically stubs his toe on a treasure chest. He opens it up to find, well....treasure. Tremendously valuable treasure. He is shocked and amazed. His heart jumps out of his chest and his mind begins to immediately travel to all the things he has

ever wanted to have and to do. Buy a farm, take care of his family, have a large flock of sheep, build a big house. His wife is going to be so very happy.

Well....maybe. I mean, he doesn't own the treasure. And he doesn't own the field where the treasure is located.

Now before we continue this story, we need to talk a little about the Jewish mindset and the way property laws worked at the time of Jesus. From our Judeo-Christian teachings and belief system, we want the man to go tell the property owner about the treasure. Wouldn't that be the 'right' thing to do? Wouldn't that be the 'Christian' thing to do? Isn't that the way this story SHOULD go? And then the property owner might give the man a big reward for finding the treasure?

But the way that the Jews looked at this was that the treasure was a part of the property and the man was under no obligation and should feel no guilt about not telling the owner. Now, if the man had dug up the treasure and taken it from the field without telling the owner, that would have been stealing because the chest was part of the property. The fact that the property owner was unaware of the chest had no consequence. However, there was nothing wrong with this man buying the property in order to obtain the treasure even if he never told the property owner about said treasure. Not to mention that the point of the story is not about the relationship between the man and the property owner. The story is about what this man was willing to do to obtain the treasure.

He doesn't do anything immoral or illegal to purchase the land where the treasure is located. He does sell everything that he has in order to have the money to pay the property owner what he was asking for the property. I'm not

sure that made his wife too happy, assuming he had a wife. As much as I would like to make this about relationships, it's really reading more into the story than is here. The only real relationship in the story is between the man and the treasure. The property, property owner, and the man's current assets were all a means to obtain the treasure.

We know what the man did. He sold everything in order to buy the land and get the treasure. But, what would you do? If you felt no obligation at all to tell the land owner about the chest, that everything was above board, what would you do? Would you sell all that you have and buy the land?

Because, isn't that the real question? Are we willing to risk everything in our lives on a sure thing? If Jesus is comparing the treasure chest with heaven; that heaven is a treasure beyond measure; a treasure that stops us in our tracks and gets our heart pumping; then what are we willing to pay for the opportunity to be in the presence of God for all eternity? What is that worth to us individually? Do we understand that we can sell everything that we have and still not buy a spot in heaven. The cost of heaven cannot be measured in money or gold. We talk about everyone having a seat at the table of Christ, but so often we forget that a price had to be paid. And the price was paid for believers and non-believers alike.

Some of us don't want to hear that. We want to believe that we are special and that Jesus paid that price just for us. We don't want to think that God would send His son to die on the cross for non-believers. But that doesn't change the



fact that He did just that. That Jesus died for all sin. That he took on sins of the world. Not just believers.

Do you remember the story of John the Baptist and the day that Jesus came to him to be baptized? John 1:29 tells us “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, **‘Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!’**” Not some sin. Not just believers sin. The sin of the world.

If Jesus paid the price, if he gave his life and rose again for everyone, then what does it actually cost us? Nothing and everything. I know that sounds ambiguous. But that is because we live in a commercialized, capitalistic, quid pro quo world dominated by finance and a warped sense of self-worth. When you go to the bank to get a loan and they ask you for your net-worth, they aren’t talking about how much you love you have for your neighbor or how many people you have fed and clothed. They only want to know about your physical assets. That is how they determine your net-worth. It doesn’t make any difference if you love Jesus or give to charity on a regular basis. They don’t care if you go to church or belong to the Rotary Club, Masons, Lions Club or any other organization no matter how service oriented they are.

But that is not how Jesus sees your net-worth. To Him, your soul is priceless and worth the cost that he paid. He does expect something though. Hear His words from Matthew 16:24-27:

**Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever**

wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.

“Take up your cross and follow me.” It sounds so minimal and yet, it is everything we have. We kind of flounder we hear those words. What Jesus is asking takes a great deal of faith and commitment. But don't forget, it was Jesus who made the bigger commitment. He gave His life for us before we were even a twinkle in our mother's eyes.

Yes, I know I didn't finish the story about my friend. I'm not sure you actually want to know how that story turned out. Call it a sign of our times. My friend did sell his company for millions and millions of dollars. He did buy the island and he moved there. He chose to live out his dream. But here's the catch. He divorced his wife, gave her half the money and went to live on the island alone. I think his wife was fine with it. Not the choice I would have made, but then, I'm not him. He basically gave up what I believe to be the most important things in life in order to live out the most important thing to him. I haven't spoken with him in years, but he seemed happy the last time I did speak to him.

What about us? Are we taking our treasure seriously? Do we value our commitment to Christ beyond anything we can imagine? Are we choosing each and every day to take up our crosses and follow Him?

I get up the morning each day and am so thankful to have another day to serve. I thank Jesus for that. And I thank each one of you as well. Without your support and care I would not be able to serve. You are a priceless treasure to me.

This message is not about giving more to the church. It's not about supporting more charities. It's not about looking under the couch cushions for extra change. Nothing like that. Those are all things of this world. What I want us to think about this week is the value that God places on each of us and why. He genuinely doesn't care if we have \$10 or a \$100,000,000 dollars. What He cares about is the value of our hearts and what we are doing to keep those hearts filled with God's love and grace.

**“and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.”** The gift of our lives in service to God is a thank you for having paid the cost for us to obtain the treasure of heaven.

God bless you all!

AMEN

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