

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

November 6, 2016 6. The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl Matthew 13:44-46

Anything that you value in life is precious to you. In fact, you are often willing to spend all you have to keep whatever is valuable and precious to you because it brings you joy. And so you are willing to forgo all else to keep what is valuable to you. So it is with the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is so valuable and worthy of sacrificing and/or spending all that you have in order to be in it or belong to it or have it for the joy of it. Jesus, the master teacher, taught in parables and emphasized the true nature of the kingdom of God, particularly its value in the parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl.

Thus our text of the day reads: “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” (Matthew 13:44-46).

These two brief parables are similar in meaning and application. The nature of the kingdom of God is of great valuable that is inestimable. All those who find it are greatly enriched. However, the great value of the kingdom in its richness is not apparent on the surface to all. It always takes a discerning (believing) eye to understand and find the riches of the kingdom. Furthermore, these two parables teach that one must search to find the mystery and richness of the kingdom. Then once one finds it, he invests all that he has to get it.

Thus, conceivably, the most important message of these two parables is that when one finds the richness of the kingdom, one must be prepared to give up everything to attain it. Matthew will develop this theme later when he narrated Jesus’ encounter with the rich young ruler (Matthew 19:16-30). These parables also fit in with the theme of radical discipleship requiring the willingness to give up everything for the sake of gaining the kingdom. At that point many of Jesus disciples were not willing to pay this price, so when they learned the radical nature of the kingdom, they left Him. And, Jesus Himself taught that anyone who does not count the cost of following Him cannot be His discipleship. And in regards to his worship, David said in 2Samuel 24:24, “I will not offer to the Lord my God sacrifices that have cost me nothing. ... I won't sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that haven't cost me anything”. The question that really stands out for us to answer at this point is what have you invested for the kingdom of God? Is it all that you have or part of it or nothing? In fact what has following Jesus cost you for the sake of the kingdom? Your response determines your commitment and/or dedication to this kingdom of great value.

In conclusion, brothers and sisters have you sort to find the mystery and richness of the kingdom? If so what have you given up or sacrifice to be part of the kingdom? If not, what are you doing about it? For Jesus humble Himself, experience life in the flesh yet without sin. All the same He was falsely accused and crucified. He died not for his own sin but for ours. He was buried but rose up early on the third day obtaining for us victory over sin, Satan and death. Therefore, we too must begin by humbling ourselves through repentance to enter the kingdom of God. This is the word of God for the people of God, and let God’s people say amen.

Mt Traveler members, as we conclude remember that “The true Nature of the Kingdom of God” is reflected in the following:

- **The parable of the sower.**
- **Why Jesus taught in parables.**
- **The parable of the wheat and the tares**
- **The parable of the mustard seed**
- **The Parable of the Leaven**
- **The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl**
- **And let the church say, “Amen!”**

Do you understand the truth(s) in these parables? Have you truly believed and received Jesus and the kingdom message? If not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful and faithful to cause the continual growth of God’s kingdom as you bear good fruit. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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**Mt. Traveler Missionary Baptist Church, Waverly, Alabama
Synopsis of Sermon Preached by Rev. B. C. Datiri, Pastor**

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

November 13, 2016

7. The Parable of the Net

Matthew 13:47-51

Human nature and instinct teach us to always choose the good and avoid the bad. So it is with the kingdom of God we are to choose the good and avoid the bad or evil. However, the true nature of the kingdom of God teaches us to allow both the good and evil to coexist until the final judgment by the Righteous Judge when there will be true separation of the good and the bad based on God’s standard and not human’s. The kingdom of God emphasizes a clear distinction will be made between true believers and professors of the Christian faith on the Judgment Day when separation will be made between the two. Jesus, the master teacher who taught in parables emphasized the true nature of the kingdom of God of separating the good and the bad at the judgment in today’s lesson with the Parable of the Net. Fishing can be done using the fishing rod and hook or the net. While most recreational fishing is done using the fishing rod and hook, professional fishing engages the net. When you use the net, all kinds of fish are usually caught therein and when the net is full, the fisherman pulls it up to the shore to sort the good fish from the bad.

Thus our text of the day reads: “Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. 48 When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. 49

This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. 51 “Have you understood all these things?” Jesus asked. “Yes,” they replied. 52 He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old” (Matthew 13:47-51).

This parable is reminiscent of the parable of the wheat and the tares, as both parables emphasize judgment. The true nature of the kingdom of God involves judgment. This judgment is not by humans but by Christ and his angels at the end of time. Then there will be separation between the good and the bad, the righteous and the evil, the true believers and those who profess to be believers and are not. It is for this reason that John the Baptist and Jesus demanded repentance in view of the arrival of the kingdom of God. It is also for the same reason that the kingdom message must demand repentance in our day and time.

Jesus sets this parable in context of the end of the age by emphasizing that the angels will come to separate the evil from the righteous and throw the evil into the fire of judgment, which Revelation describes as the lake of fire – that is the second death! It is indeed a sobering thought that one’s attitude and response toward Jesus and the kingdom message involves a final judgment that separates or unites you with Christ for an eternal destiny.

In conclusion, brothers and sisters have you responded positively to Jesus and the kingdom message? If so, there is no need for you to rush into judgment of others. Allow them time until the close of the age when Jesus and the angels will perform the judgment and separate the righteous from the wicked. If you have not responded to the kingdom message, what are you still waiting for to do something about it? For Jesus humble Himself, experience life in the flesh yet without sin. All the same He was falsely accused and crucified. He died not for his own sin but for ours. He was buried but rose up early on the third day obtaining for us victory over sin, Satan and death. Therefore, we must respond to the kingdom message by humbling ourselves through repentance to enter the kingdom of God. This is the word of God for the people of God, and let God’s people say amen.

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- **And let the church say, “Amen!”**

Do you understand the truth(s) in these parables? Have you truly believed and received Jesus and the kingdom message? If not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s

family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful and faithful to cause the continual growth of God's kingdom as you bear good fruit. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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November 20, 2016

8. The Conclusion of the Kingdom Parables

Matthew 13:52-58

Everyone deserves honor by others for who they are, yet most people are not without honor except in their own home town. Strangers will honor you for your integrity yet your own folks will not do so. Familiarity breeds disrespect and dishonor. This is why people who grew up with you do not notice the growth and changes that have occurred in you that deserve honor. As we conclusion the messages on the true nature of the kingdom it is fitting to conclude it with the subject that "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home". People in your home always see you as what you used to be. They don't notice the changes that have occurred in you –your growth and development, respect that you have acquired through life's experiences; in fact they do not notice the integrity you have built. As Jesus taught in His early ministry throughout all other towns and villages, His teaching was quite different and by far better than that of the other Jewish rabbi. Jesus, the master teacher taught in parables explaining the true nature of the kingdom of God and even though the people in His own hometown were amazed at his teaching when He came home, He was not honored. In fact, the people in His hometown questioned the source of His wisdom and where He had acquired His miraculous powers.

Thus our text of the day reads: "When Jesus had finished these parables, he moved on from there. 54 Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked. 55 "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? 56 Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" 57 And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home." 58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith" (Matthew 13:52-58).

This section of Matthew's writing is best seen as the concluding statement to all the preceding Kingdom parables. It is a form of a proverbial saying. The scribes were the learned scholars of the law. They should have been trained for the purpose of revealing all the mysteries of the Kingdom, yet they were blinded by their reaction to Jesus and the nature of His message and kingdom. Jesus had actually revealed the richness and mysteries of the kingdom, yet the scribes missed it. His disciples, by learning from Him were able to bring together the promise of the old covenant with the fulfillment of the new. So Matthew concludes this section on the parables of

the kingdom with a transition to the next section about the final days of preparation of His disciples. In the parables, Jesus had focused on the true nature of the kingdom and matters that His disciples should know regarding the kingdom.

When Jesus finished teaching these parables He went away from that place and came to His hometown, Nazareth, where the people were amazed at His teaching but reluctant to follow Him because of familiarity, because they felt they knew Him too well. Familiarity always breeds dishonor! After all, the people of Nazareth thought, was not this the carpenter's son? And because of their lack of faith, Jesus did a few miracles in Nazareth. This was not because they simply did not believe, it was because they would not believe as prejudice obscured their faith.

In conclusion, brothers and sisters, please allow me to summarize about the nature of the kingdom of God as presented in the kingdom parables under the following four points:

1. These Kingdom Parables came to the original audience at a crucial point in Jesus' ministry when many disciples were turning back because the Kingdom offered by Jesus did not meet their expectations and desires. Also, the radical call to discipleship and the radical nature of the spiritual kingdom were too much for them.
2. These parables were extremely important to Matthew's church since his audience had just given up all for the sake of the kingdom and needed encouragement and assurance that their decision was worthwhile. Also, they needed a reminder that it was not their prerogative to begin judging their Gentile neighbors, for God could also work His power in the life of the Gentiles and bring them into His Kingdom. By teaching the kingdom message in these parables Jesus wanted His followers to understand that making disciples is our ministry whereas judging belongs to Him and His angels.
3. Growth in the kingdom is by the power of God not human endeavor; all we need to do is to remain faithfully obedient to His word. As such disciples need to give the seed of the kingdom time and space to mature. Usually, the kingdom begins small (humble beginnings) in human hearts, but nurtured and sustained by God's power and grace it matures slowly into something beautiful and useful.
4. The kingdom involves radical commitment with the promise of accountability to God. It is impossible to escape the kingdom and its message by walking away as all who reject and follow Jesus will be judged by their reaction to the message, the kingdom, and the King.

Have you responded positively to Jesus and the kingdom message? If so, there is no need for you to rush into judgment of others. Allow them time until the close of the age when Jesus and the angels will perform the judgment and separate the righteous from the wicked. If you have not responded positively to the kingdom message, the kingdom and the king what are you still waiting for to do something about it? For Jesus humble Himself, experience life in the flesh yet without sin. All the same He was falsely accused and crucified. He died not for his own sin but for ours. He was buried but rose up early on the third day with ALL power in His hands thus obtaining for us victory over sin, Satan and death. Therefore, we must respond to the kingdom message by humbling ourselves through repentance to enter the kingdom of God. This is the word of God for the people of God, and let God's people say amen.

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- The parable of the mustard seed
- The Parable of the Leaven
- The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl
- The Parable of the Net
- The Conclusion of the Kingdom Parables
- And let the church say, “Amen!”

Do you understand the truth(s) in these parables? Have you truly believed and received Jesus and the kingdom message? If not, we invite you to come, repent, and humbly accept Jesus Christ into your heart and life by faith. I hope you will make room in your heart for Him today! Then confess with your mouth your faith in Him that He died and rose again to save you from your sin through the shedding of His blood on Calvary, and you will be saved and become part of God’s family and kingdom. Then ask Him in prayers to empower you through the Holy Spirit with wisdom, courage and boldness to be always truthful and faithful to cause the continual growth of God’s kingdom as you bear good fruit. May God bless you as you humbly open your heart to provide room for Him as the choir leads us in a song!

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November 27, 2016

9. Gratitude for Being in the Kingdom

John 3:1-21

The write of Hebrews understood very well about gratitude for being in the Kingdom when he concluded in Hebrews 12:28, **“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe”**.

Thanksgiving is an expression of gratitude. And anyone who is truly in the kingdom of God is always full of gratitude. Gratitude is a deep emotional expression of appreciation for what one has and not a consumer-driven emphasis on what one wants. To be in the kingdom of God and have eternal life is a reason for gratitude. Gratitude helps you to see things from God’s perspective and think differently knowing that every day is a day of thanksgiving. The focus is taken from self-indulgence to selflessness. And whenever you are in a “stuck moment” when it is hard to see positive forces because obstacles are blaring and fears are looming, that is a good time to be grateful. Not that you are grateful for what has made you stuck in a situation, but appreciating what doesn’t. Gratitude helps us see our situation in a way that can lessen panic, and open up our thinking to new solutions. The problem, however, is people aren’t hardwired to be grateful. Like any other skill worth having, gratitude requires practice. And the benefits of practicing gratitude can be life-altering as gratitude puts situations into perspective allowing us to see the good as well as the bad to help us realize what we have and lessen our self-indulging need for wanting more all the time. Also, gratitude strengthens relationships, improves health, reduces stress, and, in general, makes us happier. To know that you belong to the kingdom of God and that you have eternal life alleviates fears and worry, and warrant that you be grateful. But if you don’t know how to see and enter the kingdom of God it is impossible to be content and grateful for what you do not have, no matter your position in the community as you would

constantly be in a state of fear and worry the future and its uncertainty.

Thus our text of the day reads: “Now there was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. 2 He came to Jesus at night and said, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.” 3 Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again [The Greek for again also means from above; also in verse 7]”. 4 “How can someone be born when they are old?” Nicodemus asked. “Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother’s womb to be born!” 5 Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit [Or but spirit] gives birth to spirit. 7 You should not be surprised at my saying, ‘You [The Greek is plural] must be born again.’ 8 The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.” [The Greek for Spirit is the same as that for wind]. 9 “How can this be?” Nicodemus asked. 10 “You are Israel’s teacher,” said Jesus, “and do you not understand these things? 11 Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. 12 I have spoken to you of earthly things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. [Some manuscripts Man, who is in heaven]. 14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, [The Greek for lifted up also means exalted] 15 that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.” [Some interpreters end the quotation with verse 21]. 16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. 18 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. 19 This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. 20 Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. 21 But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.” (John 3:1-21).

John in this text helps us to understand that if we do not know how to get into the kingdom of God and are unable to see and enter the Kingdom God, we would have no room for gratitude because our hearts will be preoccupied with worry. Nicodemus couldn’t even sleep because he was worried and had to come to settle the kingdom matters with Christ at night! When you are not born again, it is impossible to truly honor God and be grateful. But it is amazing that many who profess to know God do not honor Him by practicing gratitude. Rather they act foolishly because their hearts are darkened. The scriptures say, “For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened” (Romans 1:21, NIV). Gratitude helps you appreciate kingdom matters more. Complaints, grumbling and ingratitude darkens you heart such that you tend to act more foolishly. How often do the words, “Thank You, God”, ever come from your lips? How often does genuine gratitude fill your hearts? This is not a peripheral issue; it is actually central and critical to your faith. Every day ought to be a day of thanksgiving to every genuine believer. For those who have been truly born again, gratitude and not murmuring or grumbling is their trade mark. For whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God. Gratitude is pleasant in the sight of

God because is not something done in the dark. So because you are in the kingdom and children of the kingdom, I hope you will practice gratitude not only on Thanksgiving Day but every day. Gratitude is an attribute of being in the kingdom.

Have you responded positively to Jesus and the kingdom message? If so, be grateful that you are in the kingdom and do not rush into judging others. Allow them time until the close of the age when Jesus and the angels will perform the judgment and separate the righteous from the wicked. If you have not responded positively to the kingdom message, the kingdom and the king what are you still waiting for? Do something about it today. Today is the day of salvation and now is the acceptable time. For Jesus humble Himself, experience life in the flesh and yet was without sin. All the same He was falsely accused and crucified. He died, not for his own sin but for ours. He was buried but rose up early on the third day with ALL power in His hands thus obtaining for us victory over sin, Satan and death. Why not respond to the kingdom message by humbling yourself through repentance and acceptance of Jesus as your Lord and savior to be born again so that you can see and enter the kingdom of God? This is the word of God for the people of God, and let God's people say amen.

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- **The Parable of the Net**
- **The Conclusion of the Kingdom Parables**
- **Gratitude for Being in the Kingdom**
- **And let the church say, "Amen!"**

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