

A Journey with Christ the Messiah The Kingdom of God is Like... A Treasure Hidden in a Field

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50

INTRODUCTION:

This morning we are continuing a series that I have entitled *A Journey with Christ the Messiah*. In the last several weeks we have embarked on a journey through both the Old and the New Testaments with the purpose of discovering Christ the Messiah that is written there. We have looked at Old Testament prophecies and saw Jesus fulfilling all of the Messianic prophecies concerning Him. We have looked at His birth, His miracles, and His seven "I AM" proclamations. We have examined His death, burial, and resurrection from the dead and the significance of those events. Recently we have reviewed His teaching especially in parables.

Four years ago I read the verse found in Matthew and Luke.

Matthew 6:33 (NASB)

³³ But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

This verse started a lengthy study concerning the kingdom of heaven. Jesus told us that the first thing we should seek for is His kingdom and His righteousness. I thought to myself, "If Christ put so much emphasis on the kingdom, if we are to seek it first in our Christian walk with God, then maybe I should know a whole lot more about it.

The phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" occurs 31 times in the NASB. All in Matthew.

The phrase "Kingdom of God" occurs 65 times in the NASB. All in the New Testament.

The word "Kingdom" occurs 155 times in the New Testament.

Matthew often uses "kingdom of heaven" instead of "kingdom of God," but the two terms are synonymous. The "kingdom of heaven" does not refer to heaven as a place, but to God's reign as King. Where there is a king, there must be a kingdom.

There are two ways to think about this kingdom. In one sense when the kingdom is mentioned, it is mentioned as an **invisible** kingdom. All of those who are in the body of Christ by a true saving faith in Him. They are the true church. They have the Holy Spirit in their lives.

In another sense, there is the **visible** kingdom. This kingdom is made up of all of the invisible as well as the people who proclaim to be believers but are not. They are 'visible' to us because we cannot distinguish a true Christian from a believer that is not born again. They may appear to be genuine, but inwardly they do not know, love, or serve God.

Jesus starts many parables using the phrase "**The kingdom of heaven is like**" or "**The kingdom of God is like**".

All Stand and Read Scripture

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-50 (NASB)

³¹ He presented another parable to them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a **mustard seed**, which a man took and sowed in his field; ³² and this is smaller than all *other* seeds, but when it is full grown, it is larger than the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that THE BIRDS OF THE AIR come and NEST IN ITS BRANCHES."

³³ He spoke another parable to them, "The kingdom of heaven is like **leaven**, which a woman took and hid in three pecks of flour until it was all leavened."

...⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like a **treasure hidden in the field**, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a **merchant seeking fine pearls**, ⁴⁶ and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a **dragnet cast into the sea**, and gathering *fish* of every kind; ⁴⁸ and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good *fish* into containers, but the bad they threw away. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, ⁵⁰ and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

As we prepare to continue this journey, let's bow in a word of prayer.

Prayer

Let's continue the journey!

ILLUSTRATION:

Paul Harvey, The Rest of the Story.

The Man and the Birds

The man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge, he was a kind decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But it was that he just couldn't swallow the Jesus Story. The story of God coming to Earth as a man. It just didn't make sense, and he was too honest to pretend otherwise.

"I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I'm not going with you to church. He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he'd much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the church service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read

his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound...Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud...At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window. But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it.

Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow. He tried catching them...He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms...Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn.

And then, he realized that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me...That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

"If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safety....(I could tell them about) the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand."

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And (as) he stood there listening to the bells he realized that what he was wanting to do for those frightened birds was exactly what Christ had done for him...and he sank to his knees in the snow.

BODY:

INTRODUCTION:

I. IMMINENT DANGER!

The first thing we should know about the kingdom of Heaven is that we need to be in it. God wanted everyone to know about the kingdom of Heaven. It is a place that shields us from the deadly storms of this earthly kingdom.

The man in Paul Harvey's story saw the birds outside his window. He knew that they had arrived too early and were unprepared for the extreme cold weather that was coming upon them. He saw their imminent danger and just wanted to bring them to warmth and safety in his barn. But the birds did not understand their plight and they could not understand the concern of the man. He was only frightening to them. So they avoided the man and they went about living their life, as they knew it, in the storm. They had no clue that safety and warmth was just a very short flight away through the open doors of the barn.

The man thought to himself. "If only I could turn into a bird and walk among them, then I could speak to them in "Birdeeze" and they would understand". But, of course, he could not transform into a bird, nor could he speak "Birdeeze".

Man is in the same plight. We live in an earthly kingdom that is saturated in sin. Many live in this kingdom not realizing that they are in imminent danger of dying in their sins.

II. WARMTH AND SAFETY.

God knew that mankind needed a way to escape this life of sin and be sheltered in his "barn", the kingdom of heaven.

Although the man in our story was unable to transform himself into a bird and speak "Birdeeze", God was able to transform Himself, through His Son, and made Him man. He lived and walked among men. He spoke to us in "humaneeze" (in our language). He warned us of our sin and, most importantly, how to escape its clutches.

When Christ was among us it is important to note the emphasis of His teachings during His ministry.

Matthew 4:17, 23 (NASB)

17 From that time Jesus began to preach and say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

23 Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

It is also important also to understand how Jesus described His kingdom. Pilate was questioning Jesus just before the crucifixion and ask Him about His kingdom.

John 18:36 (NASB)

36 Jesus answered, "My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, then My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm."

Jesus came to tell us that we living in a worldly kingdom. There is a spiritual kingdom that is not of this world. He wants us to enter His kingdom. We are to be citizens of His Kingdom even though we are presently living as foreigners on earth.

When we understand what it means to seek the kingdom of God, we will passionately seek God's kingdom and His righteousness.

III. PASSIONATE SERVICE.

In order to understand the passion that we should have when we seek God's kingdom and His righteousness, I would like to reuse an illustration that I have used before.

ILLUSTRATION:

What if someone that you knew created a machine that could reveal all of the events that were going to happen the next day. This machine would only allow him to show these revelations to only one other person who could choose to take advantage of just one of those revelations. He chose you. The only stipulation was that you had to declare which revelation you were going to use for your benefit or the event would fail to happen the next day. At that time the machine would deconstruct, never to work again. The both of you had observed the machine make accurate revelations day after day and knew it to be reliable. One day the machine told you about a penny stock on the stock market that currently is only worth one cent per share. But it reveals to you that if you invest your penny today, tomorrow that penny is going to be worth one

thousand dollars. For every penny that you invest today, that penny will be worth one thousand dollars tomorrow.

You are so convinced that you become willing to invest everything because it was the most valuable revelation that had ever been presented, so you decide to declare this event so you can take advantage of your unique knowledge.

Now that you were committed and knowing that the machine would never work again, how many of your pennies would you be willing to invest in that stock today? All of them right! As many as you could find. As many as you could get your hands on. You might start selling all of your possessions for pennies on the dollar to anyone who would buy them. You might sell your car for \$100 because tomorrow that \$100 dollars would be worth a million dollars! You would try to take out loans, even with high interest. **You would do anything that you could to accumulate pennies.**

Time is of the essence. Those stocks **MUST** be bought before the stock market closes.

You see the whole thing comes down to a passionate focus.

Matthew 13:44 (NASB)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid *again*; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Let's talk about passion for a moment and see how it can direct your life.

Once you were convinced that the penny stock was going to greatly increase in value everything that you had planned for the entire day **VANISHES!** You don't stomp your foot and say "Gosh, now I can't go to work and earn money". Your plans just vanish away. You realize that everything else going on in your life became meaningless.

- Every thought about going to work.
- Every thought about going to the coffee shop to visit with your friends.
- Every thought about repairing your car.
- Every thought about going to the dentist that day.
- Even every thought about eating breakfast, lunch, and dinner on time was no longer a priority.

Everything disappeared!

Now, all of my attention is on getting my hands on every cent that I can accumulate and invest it in that penny stock before the stock market closes.

That is what happened to this man that found this treasure.

All of a sudden he saw something of unfathomable value. He probably had many loves in his life. He probably had many trinkets he called treasures. He probably bothered himself with all sorts of vain activity. But the moment his eyes were cast upon **THAT** treasure absolutely everything else in his life became of no value. The only thing that he could think about was what his eyes had seen.

In order to do anything in the Christian life, it is motivated by **PASSION**. Not by sheer will. Not discipline. **It is motivated by passion!** And that passion grows and matures the more we know about God and the more we set our minds on the things above.

Romans 8:5 (NASB)

⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Would you not admit, that the focus of your life, the thoughts of your day and night are more given to the temporal? Your focus is far more given to the things of this world?

You may say, "But, I have to work hard in order to have food to eat and pay my bills".

Listen! Most people are not working this hard in order to have something to eat. They are doing it to pay off a house that they should never have bought in the first place. They have to work to pay for the boat that sits in their driveway. They have to work to pay for the vacation home they purchased on the lake so they could use the boat that now sits at their house. They have to go to the lake frequently in order to justify the money they are spending on the boat and the vacation home on the lake. It never stops.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

CONCLUSION:

The moment you get a glimpse of God's glory and understand how putrid this world is you will joyfully give up your shiny trinkets in order to serve your master and inherit the treasure of his kingdom. When you finally understand that Christ came to this earth to offer us a treasure of eternal value nothing else will matter.

Our master is in charge of taking care of our needs for food. Of my needs for clothing. Of my needs for shelter. He is in charge of protecting us. You see, it is a wonderful thing to be a slave to a great master.

But sometimes, here in America, we get it all backwards. We think that we must take care of ourselves. We will work long hours, make payments on all of our loans, and do all the things that we think we want and need to do. Then we promise God that whatever time, energy, or money is left, we give some of it to Him. But let me remind you that we are stewards of everything and owners of nothing. Everything that we have belongs to God. We are just caretakers of those things.

Jesus in essence is saying that the kingdom of heaven is like that penny stock that is going to increase overnight one thousand times. It is worth everything that we hold dear in this world.

Is the kingdom of heaven worth everything to you?

The difference between the penny stock and the kingdom of heaven is that the penny stock is just money. It is temporal. We cannot take it with us when we die. Salvation is eternal. It is a treasure that will never go away.

Only a fool would give what he cannot LOSE to gain what he cannot KEEP.

If you do not know Christ as your Lord and Savior, I invite you to come forward this morning and place your faith in Christ and become part of His kingdom.

He is Lord!