

Faith In the Home: Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

Faith in the Home: Sermon Notes and Applications for the Family
Matthew 13:44-52, "The Great Misunderstanding"

In the 13th chapter of Matthew, Jesus tells a lot of parables (stories) to teach truths about the Kingdom of Heaven. The "Parable of the Hidden Treasure," and the "Parable of the Pearl of Great Value" not only remind us of the necessity of placing God first in our lives, but also how our salvation is attained. These parables get to the crux of why true Christianity is different from every single other religion, cult, faith, or philosophy. I say true Christianity because there are those who think they are Christian, and yet they completely misunderstand what the Gospel is and does.

Here are the parables: "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

According to these parables, the Kingdom of Heaven is so valuable that it is worth giving everything up for. That is correct. Being a part of God's Kingdom should be our priority, but where people fall short in interpreting this parable is similar to their understanding of how to be saved. They make the move to emphasizing your own work in this world to attain the Kingdom. Wrong! In doing so they turn Christianity into every other religion or cult in the world which teach that your salvation is based on your works, your sacrifice, and you're suffering. Your hope is your broken, imperfect self. Your hope is trying to convince God that your good enough, or your hope turns to the false belief that God would not send someone to Hell.

Again, these parables rightly point out that God should be the most important person in our lives. However, these parables also show how Jesus Christ flips the script of common religious belief and reveals to us how important we are to God. You and I cannot give up everything and buy the field. You and I cannot sell enough to purchase that fine pearl that is the Kingdom of Heaven. We cannot save ourselves from ourselves. So, while these parables rightly remind us the importance of God in our life, they do so, by reminding us that Jesus, the Son of God, gave up everything for the Kingdom of Heaven, and we have been baptized into that Kingdom. Therefore, not only did Jesus die for you, but He was willing to because to Him you are a treasure and a pearl worth

sacrificing everything for. This is what most people misunderstand. That God loves us enough to die for us.

How do we teach and convey these things to our children?

1. The Gospel of Jesus reveals to us the value that God has for us. It allows to have assurance of our place in God's Kingdom rather than worry. This changes the reason for why we do things. For example, we are called to worship God together ("going to church") on a weekly basis. Are we going to say, "Look at me God! I haven't missed a Sunday in a year. Remember this about me after I die." No, we go to worship to gather with other who believe like we do, and to be reminded together what Jesus has done for us. We want to honor God's will because He has already saved us.

2. Remember the temptation is always to focus on what "we," "us," "I" or "me" has to do. We get to rest, rejoice, remember, and be reminded of who we are to God and what He has done for us.

3. In conversations that you may have with non-believers, ask for what there understanding of Christianity and salvation is. A lot of people think its works or action based. They don't understand that Christianity is the only religious faith that teaches that God helps the broken person. God helps the broken and the unrighteous, and sees them with great value hence the "treasure," and the "pearl."

4. Remember, to Jesus, you are a treasure, and a pearl worth dying for.