



TREASURE HUNTERS (MATTHEW 13:44-52)

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges us to think about what we value most. He uses two parables to get his message across. In the first, a farm labourer discovers a treasure hidden in a field. He realises that it is a valuable find, that it will make him a wealthy man. He buries it again, and sells everything he owns in order to buy the field.

In the second, another man discovers a great treasure. But unlike the farm labourer, this man does not discover the treasure by accident. He has been searching for it. He is a merchant who deals in fine pearls. He knows exactly what he is looking for, and when he finds the most valuable pearl he has ever set eyes on, he is in no doubt what to do – he sells everything he owns so he can have that pearl. Pearls in the time of Jesus were the most valuable of all goods. Now that the merchant has that pearl of great value, he doesn't need to search any more.

Both the farm labourer and the merchant appreciate the value of what they have discovered. They are prepared to risk everything, to spend every penny they possess, in order to have it. Both know it's worth the risk, that it would be foolish to let the opportunity pass them by.

In these parables Jesus is asking if we perceive the kingdom of heaven in the same way. Do we see it as a treasure that is worth more than everything else we value in life? Are we prepared to give up everything, to risk everything, in order to have it? Jesus did. He gave up everything he valued – his family, his home – to do his Father's will and to preach the Good News. For Jesus, there was no treasure greater than doing his Father's will. He was even prepared to give up his life to hold onto it. As Christians, God and God's kingdom must be our greatest treasure. It must mean more to us than anyone or anything else. ■

REFLECT

People have always taken risks in order to find treasure. Think of the 200,000 who took part in the great California Gold Rush of 1849. Or those who spend all they have on "get rich quick" schemes or other ventures in the hope of striking it lucky. Think of an investor who gambles early on the success of a new company and who makes millions when the company is floated on the stock exchange.

Both the farm labourer and the merchant in today's Gospel know the value of what they've discovered. They are prepared to risk everything to have it because they know it's worth the risk.

Today's Gospel isn't about keeping a sharp eye out for hidden treasure or taking up a career as a venture capitalist. It is about values, priorities, knowing what's important, what our real treasure is. And for Christians the answer is clear: our treasure is the kingdom of God. Our treasure is Jesus. If we follow him, imitate him, live his way, then we will find what we are looking for, the most valuable treasure of all. The gift of salvation is a treasure far more valuable than all the pearls in the sea. ■

DO

Think of the most valuable thing you own, possibly your house. Now think of the words of Jesus in today's Gospel. Even your house, even everything you own lumped together, counts for nothing compared to God and God's kingdom.



LEARN

For Christians the only treasure that matters is the kingdom of God.

Wisdom is a gift of God.

SAY

"Lord, give me the grace to recognise the treasure in my life and the strength not to sacrifice it for things that are worthless. Amen."

PRAY

We live in a materialistic world, which defines happiness in terms of the size of one's bank account and the extent of one's possessions. Pray for yourself and others that you will have the wisdom to know what is truly important.

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

God is in his holy place,
God who unites those who dwell in his house;
he himself gives might and strength to his
people.

GLORIA

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

COLLECT

O God, protector of those who hope in you,
without whom nothing has firm foundation,
nothing is holy,
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us
and grant that, with you as our ruler and
guide,
we may use the good things that pass
in such a way as to hold fast even now
to those that ever endure.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of
the Holy Spirit,
one God for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING

1 Kings 3:5:7-12

A reading from the first book of the Kings.
The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream
and said, "Ask what you would like me to
give you." Solomon replied, "Lord, my
God, you have made your servant king in
succession to David my father. But I am a
very young man, unskilled in leadership.
Your servant finds himself in the midst of
this people of yours that you have chosen,
a people so many its numbers cannot be
counted or reckoned. Give your servant a
heart to understand how to discern between
good and evil, for who could govern this
people of yours that is so great?" It pleased
the Lord that Solomon should have asked for
this. "Since you have asked for this" the Lord
said, "and not asked for long life for yourself
or riches or the lives of your enemies, but
have asked for a discerning judgement for
yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I
give you a heart wise and shrewd as none
before you has had and none will have after
you."

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalm 118

Response:
Lord, how I love your law!

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord,
is to obey your word.
The law from your mouth means more to
me
than silver and gold. (R.)
2. Let your love be ready to console me
by your promise to your servant.
Let your love come to me and I shall live
for your law is my delight. (R.)
3. That is why I love your commands
more than finest gold.
That is why I rule my life by your precepts:
I hate false ways. (R.)
4. Your will is wonderful indeed;
therefore I obey it.
The unfolding of your word gives light
and teaches the simple. (R.)

SECOND READING

Romans 8:28-30

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Romans.

We know that by turning everything to their
good God cooperates with all those who
love him, with all those that he has called
according to his purpose. They are the ones
he chose specially long ago and intended to
become true images of his Son, so that his
Son might be the eldest of many brothers.
He called those he intended for this; those he
called he justified, and with those he justified
he shared his glory.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
I call you friends, says the Lord,
because I have made known to you
everything I have learnt from my Father.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:44-52

(For shorter form Mt 13:44-46, read between
> <).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to
Matthew.

>Jesus said to the crowds, "The kingdom of
heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which
someone has found; he hides it again, goes
off happy, sells everything he owns and buys
the field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a
merchant looking for fine pearls; when he
finds one of great value he goes and sells
everything he owns and buys it. <

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a
dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul
of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen
haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect
the good ones in a basket and throw away
those that are no use. This is how it will be at
the end of time: the angels will appear and
separate the wicked from the just to throw
them into the blazing furnace where there
will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

"Have you understood all this?" They
said, "Yes." And he said to them, "Well then,
every scribe who becomes a disciple of the

kingdom of heaven is like a householder who
brings out from his storeroom things both
new and old."

>The Gospel of the Lord.<
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings
which we bring from the abundance of your
gifts,

that through the powerful working of your
grace

these most sacred mysteries may sanctify
our present way of life

and lead us to eternal gladness.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his benefits.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine
Sacrament,

the perpetual memorial of the Passion of
your Son;

grant, we pray, that this gift,
which he himself gave us with love beyond
all telling,

may profit us for salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.