

Matthew 13:44-50

The Parables of the Treasure, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Dragnet

We are starting a new section in Matthew chapter 13, Matthew 13:44-50 this morning.

Matthew chapter 13 is The Parables of the Kingdom. So far, we have studied four of the eight parables in Matthew chapter 13. All of the four parables that we've studied were presented together. They form a unit and it was presented to the general public, as recorded for us in verses 1 through 43.

The next four parables, which we start today were presented only to the disciples, in private. According to verse 36, after Jesus gave the first four parables they went into a house and the disciples came to Jesus to inquire as to what the first four parables meant. And then the Lord presenting these next four parables to them in private as they are in the house.

The first three of these next four parables are grouped together by the word *again*. Verse 44 says, "Again." Verse 45 starts out with *again*. Verse 47 starts out with *again*. So, all three of these parables are now grouped together and are to be studied together just like the first four. The fourth parable, the last parable of this chapter is grouped separately; it is separate from the other three and it comes at the end of this section on parables.

So, for today, verse 44, we start with the fifth parable of the chapter and the first in a series of three that are to be taken together. Let's read verse 44, **Again**. And those of you following in the study guide notice that in the literal translation the word *again* is [bracketed], because the word again is not in all manuscripts, only in the Textus Receptus from which the King James comes from.

[Again], the kingdom of the Heavens. Notice the literal translation, it's *heavens*, plural. In Matthew he uses the word *heavens* instead of *heaven* because the Jews believe that heaven has three phases to it. (1) There's the immediate atmosphere around the earth. (2) There is the heavens which contain the stars and planets and galaxies. And then (3) there is the Spirit realm where God dwells. They have three phases that they understand heaven to be, the heavens, plural.

[Again], the kingdom of the Heavens is likened to treasure which had been hidden in the field (definite article), **which when a man found, he hid; and from the joy of it** (that is, finding this treasure and hiding it) **he goes and sells all** (That is, *everything, as much as he has*. Emphasis in the Greek text on *everything*. If he found a pencil on the table that he missed, he'd go sell it. Everything that he had he sold, as much as he had.) **and he buys** (purchases) **that field**. Not the treasure, but the field.

So, here's what we have. We have a man going through the field who finds treasure hidden there. It was customary in those days to take your valuables and hide them in the fields, or behind your house, someplace, a property that you owned. They didn't have banks, so in order to hide valuables from being stolen, or being taken by those in case they were attacked by enemies, they would take their treasures, they would take their valuables and hide them in the

field, or behind the house. So, this man goes through a field and he discovers a treasure, which has been hidden. It was hidden when he found it. He stumbled across it. He might've been a laborer who was digging in the field or working in the field and he comes across this treasure. So, after he finds it, he re-buries it, and because of the joy of finding this treasure he goes and sells everything that he has, so that he can take his money and purchase and buy that field.

Now, in case you have studied ahead or are aware of it, there are two views as to what this parable means, and the next parable, which is The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price. Both parables go together, but there are two main views as to what this parable means:

(1) There is the traditional view.

The traditional view that the church has gone by since 130 to 202 A.D. That's when Irenaeus, who was in charge of the doctrine of theology for the geographical area just south of France, now known as France, in charge of doctrine. Back in his era 200 A.D. the early church, and the church fathers, and the church since then has adopted what is called the traditional view as to what this parable means.

So, the traditional view says that this man is a nonbeliever who is going through the field and that he finds a treasure. And the traditional view says the treasure is Jesus Christ, which has been buried in the field. And this nonbeliever comes across this treasure who is Christ, buries it, buys the field, and now the field and the treasure are now his.

There are many problems with the traditional view. The man finds the treasure in someone else's field, so it is not his field, which means is not his treasure. He finds somebody else's treasure. Secondly, he hides it, re-buries it and doesn't go tell the owner that he found it. So, it is presenting dishonest gain here. Secretly. So, he goes now, and he sells all that he has so he can go to the owner and buy the field. "By the way, you've got this field sitting over here, I'd like to buy it. I want to give you about double what it's worth and it's all I have. I really want that field." And the owner decides, "Well, that's a good deal." So, he sells it without knowing that there's a buried treasure there that this guy is after. So, if the man is a nonbeliever and the treasure is the Lord, that means the man is selling all that he has to buy or purchase the Lord. He is paying money, he is purchasing this treasure, whom the traditional view says is the Lord. So, this would mean that the parable is teaching that the Lord and salvation can be purchased with money, and that's not what it says.

(2) The second view is the Christological view. Christological.

And I'm glad to say that more and more people are starting to see that the Christological view is the correct view of this parable. And I will attempt to present that to you, not as a matter of education, even though that's important, so that you have accuracy as to what these texts are saying, but also ministry as to what this parable is ministering to us.

(a) First of all, in the Christological view - Verse 38. In the Lord's explanation of The Parable of the Wheat and the Tares He has already told us that the field is the world. The field is the world. He's already told us that the man going through the field - Wheat and Tares, Mustard Seed - that it's the Son of Man, that it's Jesus who is going through the field.

(b) Secondly, "the kingdom of the heavens is likened to treasure." This *treasure* that is buried in the field, so it's treasure that is buried in the world. So, there are many general uses for the word *treasure* in the Scriptures, but there's one in particular that fits our Jewish scenario that we have here.

And keep that in mind and carryover for next week because Jesus is going to ask them in the Scriptures for next week, "Did you understand these parables without an explanation?" And they're going to say, "Yes, we do," because it's given from a Jewish standpoint. The Lord will go on to tell them later on, every scribe brings something new and old from out of his treasure. Scribe is Jewish, a Jewish leader. So, this is all Jewish. They understood this parable because these terminologies strike home with the Jew, and the Jews study them.

Our Jewish scenario has here in the Old Testament the treasure is Israel. The treasure is Israel. In Exodus 19:5, the Lord says, **Now therefore, if you will obey My voice indeed and keep My covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure** (that means a treasure of possession) **unto Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.** They are a special possessive treasure that belongs to God. In Psalm 135:3-4, **Praise Yahweh; for Yahweh is good: sing praises unto his name; for it is pleasing. For Yahweh has chosen Jacob for himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure.** God has chosen Israel to be his treasure. And so, the term *treasure* to a Jew has to do with Israel.

And then the man in the parable finds the treasure and re-hides it. He puts it back into the field. In John 15:19 Jesus told the disciples or the apostles, whom He is sitting with, that **If you were of the world, the world would love its own: but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.** So, He's telling them, "I chose you from out of the world, but you are going to be in the world."

In John chapter 17, in Jesus' prayer to the Father He talked about how the disciples had been taken out of the world and put back into the world. They are in it but not of it. The treasure, Israel and the disciples.

(c) Thirdly, it says the man buried the treasure and because of the joy of finding it he goes and sells all that he has to buy that field. It talks about Jesus with joy in Hebrews 12:2 when He died on the cross, that we are to be **Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of the faith; who from the joy that was set before him having endured the cross, having despised the shame, and He sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.** As terrible as the crucifixion was on the cross, for the joy of what it was to accomplish, Jesus endured it. Jesus went through it. For the joy, this man went and sold all that he had, in order to purchase the treasure.

(d) Scripture says that the Lord gave Himself for the whole world. It is the fourth point this morning. He gave Himself for the whole world. In John 3:16 that most of us already know, **For God so loved the world** (not just Jews, not just Gentiles). **For God so loved**

the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

In I Timothy 2:5-6, Paul says, **For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who has given himself a ransom for everyone** (that's what the text says, "on behalf of everybody in the world") **to be testified in its own time.**

In I John 2:2 it says that Christ is the propitiation concerning our sins. Propitiation means *satisfaction*. Christ is the satisfaction concerning our sins and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. So, He gave Himself, putting this all together, and all of this, this particular doctrine within the Christian faith of Christ giving Himself for the world is culminated and summarized in Revelation chapter 5. Sometime read Revelation chapter 5. That's where, in the last days when the judgment is to come, there was a book with seven seals on it, and heaven was lamenting because no one was worthy to come and take the book and to break the seals of it. But then Christ comes, as the Lamb that was slain, and He takes the book and He is the one that breaks the seals, which unleashes all of the judgments that are described in the book of Revelation. Now it is interesting, the language in Revelation chapter 5 with the seals and the description of the book, it is equivalent to a title deed. Back in Ezekiel it tells us about the title deed to the earth. What Jesus has done is He has purchased the world. He has purchased the earth. He is the only one worthy to come and break the seals and have those judgments unleashed upon the earth. So, that's something I want you to keep in mind, is that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, but there only some who respond out of the world. His sacrifice was the payment made for the purchase of the whole world.

In II Corinthians 8:9 it says, **For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, in order that you by His poverty might become rich.** He emptied Himself. He gave all that He had, that you and I might be spiritually rich with the things of the kingdom of God.

In Titus 2:14 it says of Jesus, **Who gave Himself on behalf of us, in order that He might redeem us from all iniquity** (or lawlessness) **and He might purify unto Himself a peculiar people.** He gave Himself for our sins that we might become a people for Him as He purchased us. He gave Himself for us.

In Galatians 1:4 it says, **Who having given Himself on behalf of our sins, so that He might deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father.** He gave himself as the payment, as the sacrifice.

Galatians 2:20, **I have been crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in the faith of the Son of God, who has loved me, and has given Himself for me.**

In Philippians 2:6-8, that great section about the coming of the Lord and what He did in His approach to life, it says, **Who, being in the form of God,** (at the beginning He's with God, He's in the form of God) **He did not think it robbery to be equal with God.** Jesus didn't find it blasphemous nor did He see it as robbing God by being equal to God.

That is a powerful doctrinal statement. **But He made himself of no reputation.** Literally, *He emptied himself* of coming and saying, "I'm God, you guys have to do things my way." **He emptied Himself and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.** For God to become a human being, that is pretty low for God to do. **And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.** So, God comes from glory, empties Himself of all of His rights to say, "You need to serve Me not Me serve you." He comes and empties Himself. Takes on the form of a human being and submits Himself, makes Himself a servant not a king, and He submits Himself to death, but not just death, but the death of the cross. He gave Himself. He gave all that He had that He might buy the treasure.

The purpose of it all, it tells us: to purchase us.

In I Corinthians 6:19 and 20 Paul says, **What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, (that is, the Holy Spirit) which you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought with a price: (you were purchased with a price) therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are of God.** We were purchased by Him on the cross. Not only did He die for our sins, but He purchased us. He purchased that treasure in the field and from the promises and the gospel coming out from the treasure in the field which is Israel, Gentiles are also participating in that as we'll see in the next parable.

So, in summary, Jesus purchases the field: the world, and sacrifices Himself for the sins of the whole world and purchases that treasure from out of the world for Himself. So, by His death and giving of Himself, He owned the field. It wasn't somebody else's. It belonged to Satan for a while, but by His death on the cross He purchased that field and He purchased that treasure which is Israel.

Next parable, Matthew 13:45 and 46. Again reading these two verses, notice the word *again*, so this is connected with the last parable. It says, **Again, the kingdom of the Heavens is likened to a merchant man, seeking good pearls.** Notice the word *seeking*, that is a present participle, which means He was continuously seeking for good pearls. **Who when he had found one very valuable pearl (that is, a pearl that is of great price) he went away and had sold everything, as much as he was having, (emphasis in the literal) and he bought it.** He bought that pearl.

So, the traditional view for this one is just like the last one, that the man is a nonbeliever who is continuously seeking for the valuable pearl. And that pearl of great price, the traditional view says is Christ. So, the man is continually looking for this valuable pearl amongst all pearls, and he finds this valuable pearl, and thirdly, he sells everything, and he purchased that pearl, that is Christ.

And the problems with this view are similar to the last one. The nonbeliever is said to be seeking the pearl, continuously seeking that pearl. That is the opposite of what the Scripture says about the nonbeliever.

In Romans 3:10-13 it says, **According as it has been written, "There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that is understanding, there is none that is seeking for God."** Man, in his natural, sinful state is not seeking for God. **"They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that does good, no, not one."**

And in contrast to this, in Luke 19:10 it says, **For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which has been lost.** It's Christ seeking us. We don't seek Him. It is not in our human nature to do that. We are not interested. If you're interested in the things of the Lord, it is because the Lord put that desire there to draw you to Himself. He is seeking to save that which is lost. The lost is not seeking Him. So, Christ cannot be bought or purchased. Christ and salvation is a gift.

Ephesians chapter 2:8 tells us, **For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.** You can't purchase it. You can't buy it. **Not of works.** You can't even work for it. Say, "I don't have any money, but I'll tell you what, I'll give you a day's work for that item." You can't even work for it. **In order that not anyone should boast.** No one can say, "I have Christ because of what I have done," or, "how I did things." So, that's the traditional view along with its problems.

Now for the Christological view. Again, first of all, in verse 38 it tells us the man who's walking through the field is Christ, the Son of Man.

Secondly, the pearl represents the same as the treasure in the previous parable. But here the pearl represents something more specific about Israel.

In Revelation 18:16 the term *pearl* is a very important word and has specific meanings within Jewish literature in the Scriptures. In Revelation 18:16 it says about this new city Jerusalem - the new Jerusalem that is going to come down from heaven after all the judgment is over, after the tribulation is over, this new city Jerusalem is going to come down out of heaven – And there is an angel that says, **"Woe, woe that great city, that had been clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and had been decked in gold, and precious stones, and pearls!"** All kinds of jewels in this new city.

In Revelation 21:12 it is continuing to talk about the city. **And this city, having a wall great and high, and it had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names had been written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.** Twelve gates, three on each side, with the names of the children of Israel on those gates.

In Revelation 21:21, **And the twelve gates were twelve pearls: each gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass.** We could get into that, but we don't have time. The city is transparent. It is the glory of God inside the city that shines out through this transparent city and it's a prism, is what it is. It has all these different colors. It's not gold, real gold, it's a gold color. It's transparent but

there's a gold color that comes through the streets, because the glory of God is shining through it. Each gate is a pearl for the twelve tribes of the children of Israel. Israel knows what a pearl is. Specifically, not only did Jesus die for the treasure and choose the treasure, but He also died specifically to choose out the twelve tribes of Israel and through them work the gospel. The Lord gave His life for the pearl. The Lord gave His life for Israel.

The pearl upon which the believer was established are the apostles and prophets of Israel, being the foundation for us that we are built upon, with Jesus being the chief cornerstone. It tells us that in the Scripture. Ephesians 2:19-20, **Now therefore, you (Gentiles) are no more strangers and foreigners, but you are fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; And you are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.**

So, He buys the treasure, He finds the pearl of great price out of all the nations of the world. This pearl then becomes, specifically, the twelve tribes of Israel and through the twelve tribes of Israel and through the treasure, the gospel message will go out throughout the world. We become a part of that by responding to the message that he has chosen Israel to give.

And, as you know, the Jews rejected Jesus as their Messiah. So, Revelation chapters 9 through 11 tells us that because the Jews rejected Him as their Messiah, we have been grafted in. We Gentiles are now proclaiming the gospel message that the Jews were supposed to be doing, and one day the Jews will be grafted back in, and the Jews the Gentiles will become one.

Next, The Parable of the Dragnet in verses 47 through 50. **Again the kingdom of the Heavens.** And again, notice the word *again*, it is connecting to the first two parables. **The kingdom of the Heavens is likened to a dragnet.** Not just an ordinary net. There are two types of nets used in the Scriptures:

There is a casting net given to us in Matthew 4:18, a casting net. That Greek word is **ἀμφιβληστρον**. Completely different word that what's used here.

Here the Greek word is **σαγήνη**, which is a ~~casting~~ dragnet. It's a large net that's towed between two boats, and they tow it through the water and just gather up everything they can. That's why when the boats gather up their catch they have to take it in shore. They have to pull the net in shore because it's just too heavy, and then they separate out the fish.

So, **The kingdom of the Heavens is likened to a dragnet having been cast into the sea, and having gathered together from out of every kind** (that is, every kind of people, every generation) **which, when it was filled, (this dragnet) after having drawn it up upon the shore, and after having sat down, they gathered the good into containers.** The word *vessels* is a *container*, it's probably *baskets*. **And the rotten** (or bad ones) **they cast away.** No good for eating. If you notice this, this is parallel to The Parable of the Wheat and Tares. The Parable of the Wheat and Tares, Jesus said, "Let the wheat and tares grow together and at the harvest, then we will separate them out, and the wheat we'll put in the barn and tares will be burned in the fire." **This way it will be in the completion (or end) of the age: the angels will go out and will**

separate the evil ones from out of the midst of the righteous. Notice that the evil ones are in the midst of the righteous, that is God's people. Same as verses 41 through 43 with The Wheat and Tares. **And will throw them into the furnace of fire; there will be** (not just wailing, or weeping,) **there will be bitter weeping and there will be gnashing of the teeth** in this furnace of fire.

We've studied this issue and subject of hell back in verse 42, this is an exact quote used back in verse 42. Let me recap it for you. The Bible teaches that there are two places that are called *hell*. One is *Hades*, which is a Greek word that means *the place of unseen spirits*. So, once people leave their bodies, at least before Christ came, they went into this place called *Hades* and it is described for us in Luke chapter 16:19-31. That people go there. Hades is compartmentalized. On one side was Abraham and all the Old Testament saints, over there waiting for Messiah to come and deliver them from out of this place. The other side was a place of torment. The same place just divided with a gulf between them and those who had rejected Christ were over in this place of torment. Over in the place of torment is another compartment for demonic spirits where they were chained until, and waiting for, the day of judgment.

There is a second place is designated as *hell* in the Scriptures, and it is called *the lake of fire* also known as Gehenna. *Gehenna* means *Valley of Hinnom*, which was right outside of Jerusalem. It was continuously burning, and people would take their garbage and trash and they would dump their trash into this valley, continually burning. They called it Gehenna. They likened it to hell, continually burning. The lake of fire is described for us in Revelation chapters 19 and 20. This is the final resting place for people who have rejected Christ. We are told that at the end of Revelation chapter 20 that both death and hell, Hades, are thrown into the lake of fire. Everybody who's in Hades is thrown into the lake of fire.

Now going back to Hades. Hades has only one compartment now and that's for those who have rejected Christ, waiting for the final judgment. The other side that was Abraham and the Old Testament saints, Matthew chapter 27 says that when Jesus rose from the dead, those three days and three nights that He was in the heart of the earth He went down and released those Old Testament saints and brought them with Him out of the Resurrection. And Matthew chapter 27 tells us that many of the Old Testament saints were seen walking through the streets of Jerusalem after the resurrection of Christ.

So, for the believer, Paul says that when you die, at your point of death your spirit leaves your body and you go immediately into the presence of Christ. But those who have rejected Christ go to this place called Hades. And in the end Hades, and death, all those who have rejected Christ will be emptied out into the lake of fire, it is the final, Gehenna, resting place for those who reject Christ.

Three things in closing:

- (1) It tells us in Mark 9:44 that the fire in hell is unquenchable. It never goes out.
- (2) Secondly, in Matthew 25:41, that the fire is eternal, it will be forever.
- (3) In Revelation 20:10 tells us that the suffering in hell is eternal, it is not temporary.

It is continuous and that's what our text tells us, "There will be bitter weeping and gnashing of the teeth." If you look up other scriptures pertaining to hell, Jesus told some of the Jewish leaders that if you reject me you will go to a place where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth, and there is the gloom of darkness. I've had people, even in this neighborhood, tell me, jokingly, "Yeah well, I'm going to hell so don't worry about me. Don't try to save me. My friends will be there. We will be partying." But, no, it'll be dark and you will be alone. You'll hear the weeping and the gnashing of teeth, but you'll be alone and you'll be in the dark. It won't be a party. It will not be a party.

And so, we put these three parables together. That Jesus Christ came and gave Himself and sacrificed Himself to purchase the treasure. The Jews are His chosen people. And that treasure, He was to use to bring the gospel to the world, and to tell the world that Jesus already died for the sins of the whole world. Good news! But not everybody would receive it. But in the final day, there will be like a dragnet. It will be a harvest going on by the angels, bringing in the wheat and the tares together, bringing in all the kinds of the fish of the sea, and they will be separated. Those that belong to Christ and those who do not. Not just belief, but belong to Christ, who have surrendered to Him and have been born of His Spirit. That is what causes a person to belong to Christ.

We will get into the fourth parable and the ending section of this chapter next week.

Let's close with prayer.