

Matthew 13: v. 31-33, & v.44-46.

Theme: How valuable is God's Salvation to you?

³¹ Another parable He put forth to them, saying: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field, ³² which indeed is the least of all the seeds; but when it is grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches."

³³ Another parable He spoke to them: "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened."

⁴⁴ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for 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 beautiful pearls, ⁴⁶ who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Introduction

Today we will complete the third teaching block in Matthew's Gospel.

You can identify the teaching blocks of Matthew by observing the marker posts that conclude the teaching of Jesus.

This is the way that Matthew structured his material in his gospel.

If you look at Matthew Chapter 7: v. 28 we have the little key sentence "**And when Jesus had ended these sayings...**

This unit began in Matthew 5: v. 1.

Now we can move over to Matthew 11: v. 1 where it says, "**Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding his twelve disciples...**

In Matthew 13: v. 53 we read, "**Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these parables...**

We can therefore discover that the next teaching block after chapter 13 is from Matthew Chapter 18: v. 1-35, because in Matthew Chapter 19 v.1 it reads, "**Now it came to pass when Jesus had finished these sayings...**

I have chosen to go through these 5 teaching blocks at Communion so that we can have a clear picture of what Matthew regarded as the **important teaching sessions of Jesus.**

As we have already discovered this third teaching block involved the teaching of Jesus **through parables.**

Today we will cover **four parables** because they are very short and it will not take very long to discover the main teaching point of each of the parables.

These four parables are the parable of the **Mustard seed**, the parable of **Leaven**, the parable of the **Hidden Treasure** and the parable of the **Pearl of great price.**

1. The parable of the Mustard seed. – v. 31-32.

Firstly we are told that the context of the parable is still in relation to the **Kingdom of Heaven.**

We are told that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field.

We are also informed that a mustard seed is **the smallest of all seeds**, but when it is fully grown it is greater than the herbs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and nest in its branches.

Firstly I would like you to look at three slides.

The first slide shows us how small a mustard seed is.

The second slide shows us how tall a mustard plant can grow.

The third slide actually shows a mustard seed tree which is very old.

It is amazing that something so small can grow into something so large.

The question we need to ask ourselves is **what is the main point of this parable?**

It is important to realise that we can link this parable to the first two parables which involve the **planting of seeds.**

In the parable of the sower, **the seed was compared to a person's heart.**

Spiritual growth came when a person's heart obeyed God's word.

The second parable was a **warning about judgement.**

This was the Wheat and the Tares.

We learnt that judgement day is coming for people who reject Jesus Christ and the message of the Bible.

Now we are faced with another seed that grows into an amazing large tree.

The seed in this case represents the Holy Spirit that is planted into the hearts of people who repent of their sin and turn to Jesus for mercy.

The start of the Christian Church was very small but it grew in an amazing way and today there are **2.18 billion Christians in the world.**

However that is the number today. There has been a 2,000 year history of Christianity and the true figure over this period would be **very high.**

This parable reflects **the power of God to do His work in people's hearts,** if those people are willing to receive Him.

John 1: v. 6-13. In N.K.J.

⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John. ⁷This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. ⁸He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light. ⁹That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The question that I ask you today is, **“Are you willing to receive Jesus Christ into your heart by faith?”**

If you are, then now is the time to do it. The Bible says,

“Now is the day of salvation” (2 Corinthians 6: v.2)

However if God has already begun His work in your heart, you can be sure that He will continue that which He has begun.

Philippians 1: v. 3-6 in N.K.J.

³I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, ⁴always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, ⁵for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete *it* until the day of Jesus Christ;

2. The Parable of the Leaven – v.33.

Firstly we must understand that **“Leaven”** is the same as **“yeast”**.

Yeast is a sugar eating fungus that is used for many things.

In the context of our message it is used for **making bread.**

The yeast makes the dough rise, which is how we make bread.

This parable is also about growth and that is the main point.

However there are two things we can consider in this parable.

The first is that once the Leaven is put in the dough it starts to grow.

Growth is automatic. It may be a slow process but the process is happening although you can't see it happening.

That is the same with God's Kingdom.

It is **always growing** although you may not see that growth in your own situation.

Secondly God's Kingdom exerts influence. **The whole of the dough must be influenced by the Yeast.**

In other words, God's Holy Spirit must **continue to influence every area of our lives so that we can grow to be more like Jesus.**

God changes hearts in order to transform hearts.

God's Holy Spirit is always working and we must co-operate with the Holy Spirit as He works in our hearts.

We never arrive at perfection until we get to Heaven, but God can perfect the things concerning us as we co-operate with His Holy Spirit.

The sanctification process is always on-going.

3. **The Parable of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price. v. 44-46.**

Both of these parables have the same meaning so we will deal with them together.

The first of these parables tells a story about a man who finds hidden treasure in a field and goes and sells everything that he has in order to buy that field.

We are not told that he was digging for treasure, so perhaps he came upon the treasure quite by accident?

In the next parable we are told that a merchant was actually seeking pearls and in his search he discovered a very valuable pearl.

He went and sold everything that he had in order to purchase that pearl.

Both of these parables have one thing in common.

Both of the people found something of such great value to themselves that they were prepared to sell everything that they had in order to obtain the thing that they valued most.

Although the parables have the same meaning the stories are slightly different.

Let us first look at the parable of the hidden treasure.

In those days it was common to hide your treasure, such as silver or jewels, in jars in the earth.

Enemies were constantly invading the land and the safest place to hide your valuables was to bury them in the earth.

After the enemy had left you could then return to the field and dig up your treasure.

However some people never returned to collect their treasure; perhaps because they were killed in battle or couldn't return for some other reason?

So this story had meaning for the people at that time.

The picture is of a day labourer who went out to work one day in a field and by accident came across some treasure.

He was so joyful that he sold everything he had in order to buy the field and **claim the treasure for himself.**

Jesus said that this is what the **Kingdom of Heaven is like.**

The Kingdom of Heaven is **so valuable and so joyful** that it is worth giving up **everything that we have in order to obtain it.**

Philippians 3: v. 8-11 in the N.K.J.

⁸Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is* from the law, but that which *is* through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; ¹⁰that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, ¹¹if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

Paul was very convinced that His Salvation was worth everything to him.

In fact after writing 11 chapters to the Romans to explain the Gospel message he wrote these words:

Romans 12: v. 1-2. In N.K.J. and in the N.L.T.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service. ²And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him. ²Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

Paul says that our reasonable service for God is to sacrifice our lives for Him.

The second picture is of a merchant seeking beautiful pearls.

The merchant discovered a very valuable pearl and sold everything that he had in order to obtain it.

Although this parable has the same meaning as the hidden treasure, it is clear that **the merchant is seeking for something better in the pearl industry.**

He was not really satisfied with his present pearls and was seeking for something more.

This can be a picture of people today.

They may have many things in life, but those things do not satisfy the heart. Although they don't always realise that they are searching for something better in life, they are in fact not spiritually fulfilled.

When somebody is searching for truth and the meaning to life, and find Jesus, they **will be fully satisfied and be willing to wholeheartedly serve Him in sacrifice.**

The question that you need to ask yourself today is, **have you found Jesus yet?**

He is the pearl of great price.

His Salvation is so valuable, that whatever you have to give up, it will be worth it, because all other things are only temporary. Salvation is for eternity.

If you are not willing to surrender your life for Jesus, then perhaps you haven't found Him yet.

Jim Elliot, the famous missionary, who was killed by Indians in S. America said this,

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

Jim Elliot lost his life for the sake of reaching remote Indians in the Amazon jungle.

However, God later used his wife to reach these Indians and many became Christians.

Jim Elliot lost his life, but he gained Heaven.

So what are the entry requirements for the Kingdom of Heaven?

What must we do to gain entry into the Kingdom of God?

1. Recognise that you are born into this world with a sinful heart. You were initially created by the God of the Bible for a friendship. That friendship was destroyed because of disobedience.

Romans 3: v. 23 in N.K.J.

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

2. Understand that the teaching from the Bible is that the punishment for sin is death. We have to face facts that one day we will all die.

Romans 5: v.12. in N.K.J. &

¹² Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—

Rom. 6: v. 23.

²³ For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Believe that God sent His Son, Jesus Christ into the world to take the punishment for our sins, so that we could be reconciled to God and brought back to Himself.

John Chapter 3: v. 16.

¹⁶ For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

2 Corinthians 5: v. 21.

²¹ For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

4. Ask Jesus to forgive your personal sin and come into your life to be your Saviour and Lord. Promise to follow Jesus, wherever He leads you.

John 1: v.12

¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

5. When you have done this, tell somebody.

Romans 10: v. 9.

⁹ that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.