

Matthew 13:44-52

"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. {45} "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. {46} When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it. {47} "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. {48} When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. {49} This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous {50} and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. {51} "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes," they replied. {52} He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

Buried treasure.

Put Bible under a five gallon pail.

Bible is treasure. It gives us forgiveness, righteousness and eternal life from Jesus.

It's buried until somebody teaches it to us.

YOU ARE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM

I. How much do you value the Kingdom?

A. Treasure

1. Fields = banks in Jesus day
2. Kingdom = so valuable

B. Pearl

1. Make more on one
2. Kingdom = so valuable

C. Definition of Kingdom

1. Jesus, Paul, Luther
2. Read definition

D. What is kingdom worth to you?

1. Worth more than relationships with people
2. Worth spending your money
3. Worth investing your time in studying Word

II. Do you let down the nets?

A. Net

1. Type of net
2. Jesus gives meaning
3. HS's activity gathers earthly groups

B. God's Purpose

- 1. Wants people to be saved
 - 2. Wants people to believe Law & Gospel
 - C. Are we letting down the nets?
 - 1. Individually
 - 2. As a congregation
 - III. Are you bringing out old and new?
 - A. Jesus' comment
 - 1. Disciples understood
 - 2. Given responsibility
 - B. We understand
 - 1. Blessed with the Word
 - 2. You are teachers
 - C. Old and New
 - 1. Law & Gospel are old
 - 2. Applications are new
- Conc. Valuable, let down, bring out

IA1 Where were the banks in Jesus' day? The fields. In the parable the treasure was buried in the field by someone who had died without informing anyone that it was there.

2 Jesus' point in the parable is this. The joy that one has from being part of the kingdom is so valuable that it makes sense to give up everything you have to be a part of it.

B1 In the second paragraph why would the man sell everything and buy one pearl? If he could sell a unique pearl, he would make more money than selling a whole bunch of ordinary pearls.

2 Jesus' point is the same as in the first parable. Being part of the kingdom is so valuable that it makes sense to give up everything you have to be a part of it.

C1 Before we go on, we need to set up a definition of the kingdom. Jesus taught that the kingdom is within us. St. Paul taught that the kingdom is righteousness joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. Luther wrote that the kingdom comes when our Heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead a godly life here on earth and hereafter in eternity.

2 The kingdom then is the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of people intended to bring them to faith in Jesus the Savior or keep them in faith in Jesus the Savior through the Bible & the Sacraments.

D1 What is the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of people worth to you? Is it worth as much to you as the field with the buried treasure was to the man who sold everything to buy it? Is it worth as much to you as the one pearl was to the man who sold everything to buy it? Is the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of people worth so much to you that you openly acknowledge that you are a Christian and you live that way even though you know that means you will be selling off the good relationships you have with some of the people in your life? Is the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of people worth so much to you that you belong to a congregation which publicly confesses that Jesus is the only way to eternal life even though that view brands you as intolerant by so many people in our community and world?

2 Is the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of people worth so much to you that you are willing to spend 10% or more of your income to make sure the activity of calling sinners to faith in Jesus the Savior and keeping them in faith in Jesus the Savior continues to be carried out by your congregation and your Synod? Is the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of your children worth so much to you that you are willing to spend the extra money and effort to have them study the Word of the Lord every Sunday in Sunday School and every week at Catechism class?

3 Is the Holy Spirit's activity in your heart worth so much to you that you are willing to spend some of the time you could be spending on recreation on devotions or personal Bible reading or study? Is the Holy Spirit's activity in your heart worth so much to you that you are willing to spend some of the time you could be spending at work or improving your home on participating in congregational Bible study which the Holy Spirit through the Word uses to equip you to apply God's Word in your life?

You are citizens of the kingdom. What is it worth to you?

IIA1 The kingdom is like a net according to the third paragraph. Not a dip net. A huge net suspended from floats in a circle and dragged to shore. When the bottom of the net is closed off by the lake bottom close to shore, smaller scoop nets scoop everything out. Only the good fish are kept. Everything else is thrown away.

2 Jesus gives us the meaning here. {49} "This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous {50} and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

3 Remember the kingdom is the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of people intended to bring them to faith in Jesus the Savior or keep them in faith in Jesus the Savior through the Bible & the Sacraments. In this parable Jesus reminds us that the Holy Spirit's activity of calling people to faith and salvation through Word and sacrament gathers people into earthly groups. Not everyone in those earthly groups is a believer. The Lord will sort them out on the last day.

B1 What does God want for people? He wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. He wants people to become a part of His family. He wants people to spend eternity with Him. In order for that to happen people must have contact with the Law and the Gospel.

2 People must be led by the Holy Spirit to believe that they are sinners. People must be led to believe that because they don't perfectly love the Lord with all their hearts, souls, and minds, and because they don't perfectly love their neighbors as themselves, they are guilty in God's sight and deserve death and hell. People must be led to believe that they have been redeemed by Jesus. He took their guilt. He suffered their death and hell. He lived the perfect life which God demanded of them. He rose for the dead. Because of Him we have forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life. God the Holy Spirit convinces people of sin through the Law. He calls sinners to faith in Jesus and salvation through the Gospel.

C1 Where do you fit in here? God uses people to let down the nets. God uses people to present Law and Gospel so that the Holy Spirit can be active bringing people to faith in Jesus the Savior. Are you

looking for people who don't know Jesus so you can let down the net? Do you put a spiritual spin on conversations so you can let down the net? Do you say what you believe about Jesus when asked and by doing so let down the net?

2 Where do we fit in as a congregation? God uses people to let down the net. When is a congregation a success? When we meet our budget? When our facilities are in good repair? When we are getting bigger? When our attendance is good? Those are all the wrong standards of judgment. When is a congregation a success? When we are trying to constantly get people into contact with the Word of God so the Holy Spirit can carry out His activity of bringing people to faith in Jesus the Savior and of keeping them in faith in Jesus the Savior. So the right standard to use to judge whether we are a success or not is: Are we letting down the nets?

IIIA1 "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked. "Yes", they replied. They understood that the Holy Spirit's activity in the hearts of people is the most valuable thing there is. They understood they were to let down the nets.

2 Jesus then gave them a responsibility. They were to dispense Jesus' blessings from the storeroom to those who needed them.

B1 Do you understand that the Holy Spirit's activity in people's lives is the most valuable thing there is? Do you understand that you are to let down the nets? Yes. What a blessing it is that you understand these things. How did it happen that you understand these things? Some of you had Christian parents who instructed you in the Word. Some were instructed in the Word at Sunday School, or Lutheran elementary school, or Lutheran High School, or Christian college. You have studied the Word in your homes, in your worship and in congregational Bible study. What a blessing.

2 Jesus says to you, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has been instructed about the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old." If you are instructed about the kingdom, you are a teacher. Yes, you. If you are a parent, you are a teacher. If anyone ever asks you questions about God, you are a teacher.

C1 According to Jesus you are to bring out of the storeroom treasures new as well as old. Some people would just as soon you didn't bring out the old. They want everything new and different. Jesus says to bring out the old. The message of the Scripture is not new. It is as old as the Lord Himself. You are to bring out the Law when it is necessary to point out sin and call people to repentance. The Law is not new. You are to bring out the good news about Jesus to comfort the repentant sinner, the terminally ill, the one who has lost a loved one, the one who has lost anything else that is important in his life. The Gospel is not new. Every time you talk to somebody about their souls, you should somehow fit in that Jesus lived and died and rose so they might have forgiveness, righteousness, and eternal life.

2 According to Jesus you are also to bring out of the storeroom new treasures. The more you study the Scriptures the more new insights you have into it. The more you study the Scriptures the better you are able to apply the Word of God to your life and the lives of the people around you. What you have to say from the Scriptures today might sound new to the people around you. It might even sound new to you. It is not new. It just hasn't been brought out of the storeroom for you or for them in

that circumstance in life in that way before. For many of the people around you the Word of God which you bring **is** new. Nobody has ever brought anything to them from the storeroom before.

Conc. Lord Jesus, please lead us to consider the kingdom to be so valuable that we let down the nets, and bring out of the storeroom new treasures as well as old.