

**Matthew 13:44-46 ESV (Pg. 478)** “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. **45** “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, **46** who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

- I. I’ve talked to you about the generosity of God. First, I told you generosity is central to God’s loving nature (demonstrated by creation; proven by giving Christ to be the redeeming sacrifice for sin). Next, I said God often shows generosity in response to the trusting sacrifice of what we have (the woman with the jar of oil).
  - A. Now, I want to show you how the life of a genuine Christ follower mirrors God by being marked by generosity; generosity is inherent to true belief.
    1. I’ll show this by answering the questions “why” and “how” as they relate to our own motivation for, and execution of, a life marked by generosity.
    2. The goal isn’t for you to feel threatened or condemned, but that you’ll enjoy the freedom the Gospel provides from the powerful snares of the world.
  - B. Our text: Two of the short parables found in Matthew 13 that show us the contrast between the kingdom of this world, and the kingdom of heaven.
    1. Parables are short stories that make a huge point. Jesus used them often, taking everyday images to make other-worldly truths clear to his followers.
    2. **Matthew 13:10 ESV** Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” **11** And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. **12** For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. **13** This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.”
      - a) Using Isaiah’s words, Jesus says he used parables to reveal the deep truths to those who would believe; while hiding spiritual truths from those who refuse to submit to Christ through repentance and faith.
      - b) In churches where the gospel is clearly proclaimed, only a remnant of people who hear adjust their life through repentance. Why? Because they don’t really believe. Repentance is what proves true belief.
  - C. In these 2 short stories, Jesus shows important facts about God’s kingdom.
    1. “a treasure”, or “a pearl of great value”: The kingdom is priceless. The ones who find the kingdom, have nothing of more worth than on their own.
    2. Obtaining this prize means disposing of everything else. The kingdom represents all you could ever desire, so all else should seem like rubbish.
      - a) It may seem foolish that men will give up everything to have the kingdom. Friends and family will not understand the impulse to liquidate everything.
      - b) But these people aren’t squandering anything! They are wisely investing!  
**Matthew 6:19 ESV** “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, **20** but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. **21** For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Heavenly investments are secure; insured by the grace, holiness and honor of God himself.

3. In these parables, the men sold everything; they went “in joy” and sold it all. Because of the value of the kingdom, the cost didn’t matter. They had no impulse to cling to the comparatively little they once thought they had.
- II. This parable tells us **why** the reflex of a Christian is generosity. Christ followers have something so precious in him that it is worth the loss of everything else. They gladly empty their hands, letting go of time, relationships, dreams, rights, privileges, money and possessions to have Christ and participation in the kingdom of God.
- A. Christians empty their hands because they realize that to have Jesus is to have eternity, so who needs time? To have Jesus is to have a friend that sticks closer than a brother, and one who is the very lover of our souls; what if he costs me relationships? To have Jesus is to have every dream fulfilled, every right satisfied or superseded, and every privilege granted; why continue to Chas passing things? To have Jesus is to be freely given all things, both in this life, and also in the life to come. We see him as the source of all blessing forever!
    1. He is the true treasure hidden in the field, and the pearl of great price. Men and women daily go in joy, selling everything, clutching nothing, to gain him.
    2. Belief that transforms requires we view Christ this way. Jesus won’t be an accessory added to what you’ve got. We must be fully clothed with him.
  - B. **Matthew 6:24 ESV** “No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.
    1. This is Jesus’ demand. We’re the bride of Christ. He won’t tolerate divided affections, any more than you would in your spouse. **Luke 14:33b ESV** “any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”
    2. To divide our affections would be to violate the very definition of faith. Saving faith isn’t a contract we have with God. It is daily trust, dependence and reliance on his goodness for everything, knowing he’s our source of blessing.
      - a) Trusting in relationships, our reputation or status, intellect, wealth, possessions, health or superior morality is the antithesis of saving faith.
      - b) Faith says, **Psalms 73:25 ESV** Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. **26** My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever. It clings to Christ Jesus alone; not to a created or acquired safety net.
  - C. Generosity is the expression of the confidence that if we have Jesus, we have enough; and that we can trust him to provide every thing we need to live happy.
    1. He told us to pray for him to provide “daily bread”. The bread we receive today is the Father’s gracious promise that he will provide for us tomorrow.
    2. If you can’t trust him to provide your food and money to pay bills, how will you ever trust him to forgive your sins and secure a place for you in heaven?
  - D. How can a true Christian to hoard their stuff or live like a miser? Real faith enables us to freely give our resources if we understand that in Christ Jesus we have everything we will ever need (even if we have nothing else!); and that we’re promised that he will provide for our needs according to his riches in glory.
    1. Believing frees us to give. **2 Corinthians 9:6 ESV** The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will

also reap bountifully. **7** Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.

- a) Fear cause us to give sparingly, separated from any real faith (if at all). Faith enables us to give generously, cheerfully, even hilariously! The Greek word for cheerful (hilaros) means hilarious!
  - b) This is applies to money, and everything else we think is ours! Time, energy, trust, compassion, and yes, money and possessions! God loves when we hilariously give. Why? Because that's how he gives to us. Cheerfully. Not keeping records; never in fear; just always giving gifts.
2. Reluctance to give should be a major concern for us. It can show we're walking in fear, not faith; a fear God won't provide what we need, or we're not safe with in his care. For this reason, Jesus talked about money a lot!
- a) On the warning side he said: **Luke 12:15b ESV** "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."
  - b) As a promise: **Luke 6:38 ESV** "Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."
3. This teaching about money and things was echoed by the NT apostles:
- a) **Hebrews 13:5 ESV** Keep your life free from love of money, and be content with what you have, for he has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."
  - b) **1 Timothy 6:17 ESV** As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. **18** They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, **19** thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life.
4. In the US, we are all rich. Riches can make us proud, but they are uncertain. We should hope in God who gives us "everything to enjoy" - not just survive!
- a) We who have been blessed must be generous and ready to share.
  - b) In doing so, we will gain imperishable treasure in heaven, and experience here and now, life in the truest sense. ("this is the life!" -false statement!)
- III. We've discovered many reasons **why** we should give. Let me close by giving you biblical counsel on **how** we should give in three final points.
- A. First, we should give understanding we are owners of nothing; just stewards (managers) of everything we have. We will give an accounting to God for every minute, relationship, and penny we've been given.
1. The question of tithing often comes up here. Some are either shocked or offended when I tell them we don't teach tithing. They say, "Haven't you ever read Malachi?" Or "How do you expect to pay the bills?"
    - a) But Tithing is an Old Covenant principle of giving 10% God instituted to fund the temple work. Failure to comply involves a curse. Galatians says Jesus became a curse for us so that we wouldn't be under any curse.

- b) But the New Testament doesn't earmark 10% for God, but Christ's Lordship demands we relinquish 100% of what we have and who we are.
    - 2. We shouldn't think we obligate God to bless us by tossing 10% at him! By his own accounting, we're 90% short! Does that mean that we empty our accounts every week to the church and various other charitable enterprises?
      - a) No! Remember that God is not **taxing** us; he is **entrusting** us with his money to be a faithful manager. We must give to his work, take care of our families, save for our futures, be responsible citizens, etc.
      - b) If you're tithing faithfully, you do well. Should a New Covenant believer give less than a faithful Old Testament Jew? The question isn't "are you giving 10%"; but does your giving reflect the way you've been blessed?
      - c) How are you managing God's money? Would your bank statements be a testimony of faithfulness, or an evidence of your embezzling from God?
  - B. Second, once you realize you're managing for God, you must place a high priority on his work; whether through the church where you are spiritually fed, or other faithful ministries and missions; or, hopefully, all of the above.
    - 1. How amazing is it that God could do everything with no help from us, yet he has ordained that his work on earth would be accomplished when his people sacrificially invest their time and money in it?
      - a) This means his work is fueled by love, sacrifice, and faith for the outcome; resulting in God alone receiving glory for what's accomplished.
      - b) Where there is no faith or trust in God, people won't give, and the work of God won't be done. He will raise up another people to do the work, bring him glory and reaping the eternal benefits promised to faithful laborers.
  - C. Lastly, never wait to give until it makes sense, until you have "enough" money, or until you feel faith to do it. Anyone who's ever become a generous giver began by simple obedience, never by parting clouds and lightning bolts falling.
    - 1. Sometimes we give with trembling, but when we do it in faith, it always brings joy and blessing. God loves to show that you can count on him. That doesn't mean you can be irresponsible in every other area and expect God's financial blessing. But if you'll start giving in faith, he won't forsake you.
    - 2. This isn't some spiritual "get-rich-quick" scheme! Sometimes God will let you experience momentary lack so you'll press into him, clinging to faith.
  - D. **Philippians 4:12 ESV** I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. **13** I can do all things through him who strengthens me.
- IV. Missions Offering
- V. **Benediction: 2 Corinthians 8:9 ESV** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.