

Week 8 – Parables of Jesus – Hidden Treasure – Bible Study Helps

Title: The Hidden Treasure: Valuing Christ Above All

Sermon Summary: This sermon explores the parable of the hidden treasure in Matthew 13:44, emphasizing the supreme value of the kingdom of heaven and, by extension, Jesus Christ. The sermon discusses the importance of prioritizing our relationship with God above worldly pursuits and possessions. It challenges listeners to consider whether they truly value Christ as their greatest treasure and live accordingly.

Key Points:

- The kingdom of heaven is of immeasurable worth
- We must personally discover and embrace the treasure of Christ
- Following Christ requires total surrender and sacrifice
- Many Christians struggle with competing priorities between worldly desires and spiritual devotion
- We should seek Christ daily and treat time with Him as precious
- Joy should accompany our sacrifices for Christ, as we recognize His supreme value

Scripture Reference:

- Matthew 13:44 (The Parable of the Hidden Treasure)

Stories:

- Moses choosing to suffer with God's people rather than enjoy Egyptian riches
- The Apostle Paul counting all his worldly accomplishments as loss for Christ
- Jim Elliot giving his life as a missionary in Ecuador
- C.T. Studd giving up his cricket career and wealth for missions
- Two Moravian missionaries selling themselves into slavery to reach slaves with the gospel
- Hezekiah showing his treasures to foreign visitors, illustrating misplaced pride in worldly possessions

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Discipleship and Small Group Guide: The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

Opening Prayer

Key Takeaways:

1. The kingdom of heaven is of great value, worth more than anything in this world.
2. We must personally discover and prioritize our relationship with Jesus Christ.
3. True discipleship requires total surrender and valuing Christ above all else.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the parable of the hidden treasure teach us about the value of God's kingdom? How does this compare to what our culture typically values?
2. The sermon mentioned examples like Moses, Paul, Jim Elliot, and C.T. Studd. How did these individuals demonstrate valuing God's kingdom above worldly pursuits? What challenges you about their examples?
3. How do you struggle with balancing worldly responsibilities and prioritizing your relationship with Christ? What competing values do you find most difficult to surrender?
4. The sermon mentioned that we often know the right priorities intellectually but struggle to live them out. Why do you think this disconnect exists in our lives as Christians?
5. How might our perspective and actions change if we truly viewed time with God and in His Word as "precious time with a treasure"?
6. The sermon highlighted the joy of the man who sold everything to buy the field. How can we cultivate joy in sacrificing for Christ rather than feeling burdened or resentful?

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Practical Applications:

1. Daily Treasure Hunt: Spend 5-10 minutes each day this week intentionally "seeking" God's presence. Journal about how this impacts your perspective.
2. Value Assessment: Make a list of how you spend your time and resources. Prayerfully consider if these align with valuing God's kingdom above all else. What one change can you make this week?
3. Joy in Surrender: Identify something you need to surrender to God. Instead of viewing it as a loss, pray for God to give you joy in the process of letting go and gaining more of Him.
4. Kingdom Investments: Look for one practical way to "invest" in God's kingdom this week (e.g., serving others, sharing your faith, giving generously).

Closing Prayer:

Thank God for the immeasurable treasure we have in Christ. Ask for His help in truly valuing Him above all else and living with joyful surrender.

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Discipleship Questions

How does the parable of the hidden treasure challenge our understanding of what we truly value in life, and in what ways might we be holding onto worldly treasures at the expense of spiritual ones?

Reflecting on the examples of Moses, Paul, Jim Elliot, and C.T. Studd, what would it look like for us to 'sell all' for the sake of following Christ in our current context?

How can we reconcile the idea of the 'kingdom of heaven' being both a present reality within believers and a future physical kingdom, and how should this impact our daily lives?

In what ways might we be acting like 'spoiled, rotten kids' in our spiritual lives, and how can we cultivate a greater appreciation for the blessings we have in Christ?

How can we practically prioritize seeking Jesus and His wisdom daily in a world full of distractions and competing priorities?

Considering the Ethiopian eunuch's story, how can we be more intentional about searching for spiritual truth and helping others understand the gospel?

What areas of our lives might God be calling us to surrender more fully to Him, and what fears or attachments might be holding us back?

How can we cultivate a joyful attitude when making sacrifices for Christ, rather than feeling miserable or resentful?

In what ways might we be treating Jesus as a 'self-centered friend,' and how can we develop a more balanced and genuine relationship with Him?

How should the reality of our eternal future with Christ in His kingdom impact our perspective on current trials, persecutions, or worldly pursuits?

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A 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide

Day 1: The Treasure of God's Kingdom

Reading: Matthew 13:44-46

Devotional: Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a treasure hidden in a field and a pearl of great price. Just as the men in these parables sold everything they had to obtain these precious items, we too should recognize the immeasurable worth of God's kingdom. Reflect on what you value most in your life. Are there worldly treasures or pursuits that compete with your devotion to God? Consider what it means to "sell all" for the sake of Christ. Ask God to help you prioritize His kingdom above all else, finding joy in surrender rather than reluctance in sacrifice.

Day 2: Counting All as Loss for Christ

Reading: Philippians 3:7-11

Devotional: Paul, once a respected religious leader, came to view his accomplishments and status as worthless compared to knowing Christ. His perspective radically shifted upon encountering Jesus. Think about your own life journey. What things did you once value that now pale in comparison to your relationship with Christ? Are there still areas where you're clinging to worldly values or achievements? Pray for God to deepen your understanding of Christ's surpassing worth, enabling you to joyfully consider everything else as loss in light of knowing Him.

Day 3: Seeking God with All Your Heart

Reading: Jeremiah 29:11-13

Devotional: God promises that when we seek Him wholeheartedly, we will find Him. This echoes the man in the parable who, upon finding the treasure, sells all he has with joy. Seeking God isn't a half-hearted endeavor but requires our full devotion. Examine your own pursuit of God. Are you seeking Him with your whole heart, or are you holding back in some areas? Consider practical ways you can more earnestly seek God in your daily life – through prayer, Bible study, worship, or service. Ask God to kindle a deeper hunger for His presence in your heart.

Week 8 – Parables of Jesus – Hidden Treasure – Bible Study Helps

Day 4: The Eternal Value of the Soul

Reading: Mark 8:34-38

Devotional: Jesus poses a profound question: "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This challenges us to evaluate our priorities and what we truly value. The world offers many enticing treasures, but none compare to the worth of our eternal souls. Reflect on areas where you might be tempted to compromise your faith for worldly gain. How can you cultivate an eternal perspective in your daily decisions? Pray for wisdom to consistently choose what has lasting value over temporary pleasures or achievements.

Day 5: Finding Joy in Surrender

Reading: Luke 14:25-33

Devotional: Jesus speaks of the cost of discipleship, emphasizing that following Him requires giving up everything. Yet, as we've seen in the parable of the hidden treasure, this surrender is meant to be joyful, not begrudging. The man sold all he had with joy because he recognized the superior value of what he was gaining. Consider your own journey of faith. Are there areas where you're reluctant to fully surrender to God? Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the incomparable worth of Christ to you in a fresh way. Pray for a heart that finds genuine joy in giving up lesser things for the surpassing greatness of knowing and following Jesus.