

Puzzling Parables

The Hidden Pearl

Part 10 – November 27, 2016

Welcome to where we're learning how to find God's hidden treasure!

Have you ever discovered treasure?



When I was 13, my dad asked me to empty a wheelbarrow full of weeds for him, out by the slough. I obeyed. With a bad attitude. Until I dumped the weeds and saw a \$20 bill half in the ground. Wow! Did *my* attitude change! **\$20!**



Didn't earn it. Didn't deserve it. But, I knew to grab onto a good thing when I saw it. The Kingdom of God is like that. And, **today we're learning how to hunt for God's Treasure!**



Jesus is in Capernaum, presenting the crowd with five puzzling comparables, concerning the Way, the Truth, and the Life of His Kingdom: ***Sowing Seeds; Wheat and Weeds; Mysterious Growth; Miraculous Growth; and Hidden Yeast.***



Then, He retreats to His home office, where His disciples and some followers seek, knock, enter, and ask about His hidden meanings. (Mt 13:36; Mk 4:10)



So, He reveals to those who entered in: **The seed is God's Word.** (Lk 8:11; Mt 13:37) **Good hearts receive the Word and yield a crop.** (Mt 13:23; Mk 4:20; Lk 8:15) But, **His Word is concealed until it's carefully considered;** (Mt 13:10-15; Mk 4:11-12, 21-25; Lk 8:10, 16-18) **and, while His Word produces wheat, this world produces weeds.** (Mat 13:38)



This helped 'em to see what He'd said outside: **though we blindly scatter His Word, it grows by His unseen power;** (Mk 4:26-29) **and, it grows beyond expectation and limitation.** (Mt 13:31-32; Mk 4:30-32; Lk 13:18-19) **But: hypocrisy pollutes its purity.** (Mt 13:33; Lk 12:1; 13:21)



"The Hidden Yeast" had been Jesus' final public parable that day.



He told it in response to the hypocrisy of the religious leaders. (Lk 13:14-20)

But, He didn't explain it; and, His disciples didn't get it, but they *said* they got it. (Mt 13:51) So, days later, He tests them, by warning them about the *yeast* of the religious leaders.

They discussed this among themselves and said, “It is because we didn’t bring any bread.” ... [Jesus said] **“How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? [They’d heard His parable; but, hadn’t carefully considered it according to God’s Word]** But be on your guard against **the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”** *Then* they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the **teaching** [Luke adds, **“hypocrisy”** (Luke 12:1)] of the Pharisees and Sadducees. – Matthew 16:7-12 NIV



He then reminds ‘em of the Hidden Lamp lesson, that He’d told ‘em back at headquarters in Capernaum: **the concealed is meant to be disclosed, and the hidden made known.** (Luke 12:2)

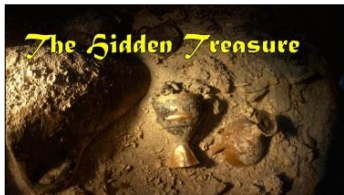


Back in Capernaum, in His home office, after revealing some of the hidden meanings in His parables, and challenging them with *The Hidden Lamp*, He now shares two more private parables.



In Jesus’ day, most people buried their stash. And, after generations of warfare, deaths, and failing memories, everybody knew *somebody* who had unexpectedly unearthed a treasure trove!

This is Nadine Ross, a first-time, one-month volunteer, at an amateur dig in a parking lot. Three weeks in, she found one of the greatest coin hoards *ever* discovered in Jerusalem!



The Hidden Treasure and, The Pearl Merchant. Why *two* stories to make one point? **How do they contrast?** Both found treasure. Both sold all they had. *But, the field guy hides his find.*

That’s an oddly specific detail to add.

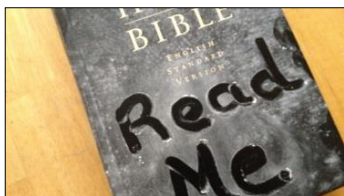


We assume the guy goes back for it, once he owns the field; but, *does he?* Doesn’t say. Are we supposed to decide that for ourselves?



When I found the Lord, **I bought a Bible with great intentions of mining its many treasures.** But, it mostly remained closed and concealed. **I settled for owning something that held hidden treasure.**

But, Proverbs 2:10 says that wisdom will enter your heart *if ...*



... ***if you receive*** my words, and **treasure** my commands within you, so that you **incline your ear** to wisdom, and **apply your heart** to understanding; yes, ***if you cry out*** for discernment, and **lift up your voice** for understanding, ***if you seek her*** as silver, and **search for her as for hidden treasures**; ***Then*** you will **understand the fear of the Lord**, and **find the knowledge of God.** – Proverbs 2:1-5 NKJ

And, if you don’t you won’t.

It'll stay buried in your Bible.

By the way, **Wisdom's definition of "the fear of the Lord" is hidden in Proverbs 8:13**, just waiting to be found by the one seeking to understanding and learning how to hunt.

Maybe we're missing the contrast. Jesus *just finished* telling 'em that that the wisdom of God is hidden, but meant to be *disclosed*, and *made known*, and *brought into the open*. (Mk 4:22; Lk 8:17)

[And then, He immediately says that] **The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field.** [He also *just* told 'em that "*the field is the world*," and it's His (Mat 13:27, 38, 41)] **When a man found it, he hid it again.** [Well, *that's* not good. That's the *opposite* of *disclosing, making known, and bringing out into the open*. Sounds like the parable of the wicked servant who hid his master's money in the ground! (Mat 25:24-25)] **and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.** – Matthew 13:44 NIV

Is his excitement and delight misdirected?

Is he satisfied owning a field that *holds* hidden treasure?

Does he *ever* dig up the treasure that's his for the taking?

Do you?

What good will it be for a man if he gains the *whole world*, [*"the field is the world"* (Mat 13:27, 38, 41)] yet forfeits his soul? Or **what can a man give in exchange for his soul?** – Matthew 16:25b-26 NIV

Damnation, like salvation, will cost you everything.

But, **with salvation, you gain infinitely more than you give up;** whereas, **with damnation, you give up infinitely more than you could ever gain.**



[Jesus' brother, James said] Your gold and silver are corroded. Their corrosion will testify against you and eat your flesh like fire. You have **hoarded wealth** in the last days. – James 5:3 NIV

Jesus is like one of those *patient counselors* on a hoarder show.



"Can we let the old newspapers go? No? What about the ones from the bird cage? No? Do they add to your joy? *No?* Do they add to your grief? *Yes?* So, do you think we could maybe just throw out some of the wet ones for now?"

What can a man give in exchange for his soul? *Wet cage liner!*

Fortunately for us, God gladly trades His treasure for our trash.

Like the four types of soil, and the wheat and the weeds, Jesus could be contrasting the two responses to His Kingdom.



Again, [*palin: furthermore; on the other hand*] the kingdom of heaven is like a **merchant** [who, unlike the guy in the field, is] **looking** [*zēteō: seeking out; seeking after; seeking by thinking, meditating, reasoning, or enquiring into*] for fine **pearls**. [*margaritēs: pearl; proverb; words of great value (thus: pearls of wisdom)*] When he found one of **great value**, [*polytimos: great price (the emphasis being on the cost)*] he went away and sold everything he **had** [*echo: held; possessed; clung to*] and bought it. – Matthew 13:45-46 NIV

In that same parking lot, Nadine’s group found this 2000-year-old pearl earring. **Pearl. Proverb. Same word.**

And, Proverbs (3:15; 8:11) says **wisdom is more precious than pearls**. If we want to enter Jesus’ Kingdom, the New *Jerusalem* (lit. *teaching of peace*), we need to stick some pearls in our ears.

... each **gate** [into the Kingdom, is] made of a **single pearl**. [Thus, the proverbial “Pearly Gates”] – Revelation 21:21b NIV

That is a *big pearl ... or a small gate*. Jesus does say, “Small is the gate ... that leads to life, and few be those who find it.” (Mt 7:14)

Know why?

People settle.

And, it requires *ongoing* seeking, digging, and surrendering.

That’s how you hunt for God’s rich treasure of Truth and Life.



I was oh-so satisfied with my \$20 ... until about a month later, when the next guy who found a \$20 in the very same spot ... *dug*.



When I found out that there was much, much more, I wasn’t so satisfied with the \$20 I had settled for. *There were bundles*.

Had to call the police. Nobody claimed it. Dug got to keep it. I asked myself over and over why I didn’t even think to dig.

The answer: **I was just too satisfied with too little till too late.**

Are you willing to dig?

How deep?

Don’t settle.