

# The Stories Jesus Told

## How Hard Would You Dig?

Matthew 13:44-46

January 09, 2021

**The Context – Matthew 13 – A series of stories pertaining to “The Kingdom of Heaven”:**

**The Sower {13:1-23}** = The Word of God is given to everyone, but growth rests 100% with the individual who receives it:

- **Path** - anyone hears the Word, but does not understand it. The evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart.
- **Rocky Place** – anyone who hears the Word and receives it with joy, but since he has no root, he quickly falls away when trouble or persecution comes.
- **Thorns** – anyone who hears the Word, but the worries of life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful.
- **Good Soil** – anyone who hears the Word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

**The Weeds {13:24-30}** = The Villain in our story pays special attention where ever the word of God takes root and begins to flourish. He works extra hard to plant his people among the People of God in order to distract, disrupt, discourage and other wise derail them. While the church has a responsibility to uphold the truths of Scripture and deal with persistent and open sin, it does not fall within its purview to uproot those who might not be as “Christian” as we’d like. That leads to such atrocities as the Spanish Inquisition. That job belongs exclusively to God, who judges each heart.

- **1 Samuel 16:7** - But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
- **1 Chronicles 28:9** - And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

**The Mustard Seed and Yeast {13:31-33}** = The kingdom Christ established had humble beginnings and His movement appeared to be a complete failure as He hung on the cross, yet the mighty truths committed to His followers possessed divine power. How rapid was its growth – from 120 in the upper room in 33 AD to over 2.3 billion in 2020 AD.

- **Isaiah 11:1-10** - A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse; from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. <sup>2</sup> The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him -- the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding, the Spirit of counsel and of power, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD -- <sup>3</sup> and he will delight in the fear of the LORD. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes, or decide by what he hears with his ears; <sup>4</sup> but with righteousness he will judge the needy, with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth. He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth; with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked. <sup>5</sup> Righteousness will be his belt and faithfulness the sash around his waist. <sup>6</sup> The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. <sup>7</sup> The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. <sup>8</sup> The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. <sup>9</sup> They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. <sup>10</sup> In that day the Root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples; the nations will rally to him, and his place of rest will be glorious.
- **Habakkuk 2:14** - For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.
- **Revelation 7:9-10** - After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup> And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

**The Parables:**

That brings us to the **Treasure in the Field** and the **Pearl of Great Price**

**Matthew 13:44-46** - **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.** <sup>45</sup> **"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.** <sup>46</sup> **When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.**

These men were all in in their pursuit and gave up everything to achieve the goal.

What comes to mind when you hear the term, *“Treasure Hunter”*? A swashbuckling **Indian Jones** type who travels the world fighting off natives and “baddies” in his quest for lost treasure?

Here are 2 real life **"Hidden Treasure"** Stories:

### **"Hidden Treasure Chest Filled with Gold and Gems is Found in Rocky Mountains" - adapted**

June 8, 2020 11:39 AM ET

After sitting undisturbed somewhere in the Rocky Mountains for more than 10 years, a treasure tucked away in an ornate, heavy Romanesque box filled with gold nuggets, gold coins and precious gems – estimated to be worth as much as \$2 million - has been found. The box was hidden by millionaire art dealer Forrest Fenn; his only clues.... a map and a poem.

"It was under a canopy of stars in the lush, forested vegetation of the Rocky Mountains and had not moved from the spot where I hid it more than 10 years ago," Fenn said. "I do not know the person who found it, but the find was confirmed by a photograph".



The search for Fenn's hidden treasure became a sensation, luring tens of thousands of people on what they hoped would be a life-altering hike in the wilderness. But for years after the first clues appeared in Fenn's self-published book, **"The Thrill of the Chase"**, no one could find the right spot.

For some, it became a dangerous obsession: In the process of looking for the trove at least 4 people have died...

Mr. Fenn believes that at least 250,000 people have looked for the stash. But noting the accidents that have occurred, he added, "The search is supposed to be fun."

In recent news, a man faces up to 12 years in prison for digging up graves in Yellowstone in his quest to find Mr. Fenn's gold.

They call it **"Gold Fever"** and it makes people do crazy things.

### **The Pearl**

In 2006, a Filipino fisherman made an amazing discovery in the sea off the coast of the Palawan Islands, Philippines: a 2-foot-long pearl inside a giant clam. He took it home and hid it under his bed – keeping it as a good luck charm. When his house burned down the pearl survived. Officials in the Philippines have verified that the pearl is 26 inches long, 12 inches wide and weighs nearly 75 pounds. It is valued at \$100 million.



## The Lessons

Worldly treasures can be anything we place a high value on – something we cherish and adore. That’s where the problems begin. Even though the word **“adore”** can mean to love, respect and admire, it can also mean to worship, idolize and glorify - words that should only ever be used when speaking of God.

Scripture warns us that idolizing things or people is never going to end well:

- **1 Kings 11:1-4** - King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter-- Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. <sup>2</sup> They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. <sup>3</sup> He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. <sup>4</sup> As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.
- **Matthew 6:19-21** - Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. <sup>20</sup> But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup> For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Spiritual Treasure does not offer much from a worldly point of view –

- It’s not something you need a bank account or safety-deposit box for.
- It’s not something you need bodyguards or gates or alarm systems to protect it.
- It’s not the latest “bling” you post on Instagram as proof that you’re doing well.

A treasure can be worth a lot of money today and be worthless tomorrow. Even a sentimental treasure can be lost, stolen, broken or eaten by moths.

Spiritual Treasure is infinitely better because it has eternal value.

Jesus left the glory of heaven to come to earth. He left his throne where he was worshipped by angels to come here and be ridiculed, despised, hated, betrayed, beaten, tortured and crucified.

- **Ellen White {DA 22.4}** - This was a voluntary sacrifice. Jesus might have remained at the Father's side. He might have retained the glory of heaven, and the homage of the angels. But He chose to give back the scepter into the Father's hands, and to step down from the throne of the universe, that He might bring light to the benighted, and life to the perishing.

Jesus willingly sacrificed his life so that through relationship with Him we could be declared righteous. People pay a lot of money to buy earthly treasures, but what higher price could be paid for you and me than the life of Jesus? That's how valuable we are to God.....

- **“For God SO LOVED!”** {John 3:16}
- **1 John 4:9-10** - This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. <sup>10</sup> This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

From Heavens point of view, you were worth the sacrifice because you are God’s treasure – the apple of His eye, but the question is...is He your treasure?

Do you pursue God with as much passion as a man would pursue a hidden treasure? Would you risk death for an eternal heavenly treasure just as those who risked their lives to find Mr. Fenn’s hidden treasure of heavenly construction material?

- **Revelation 21:15-21** - The angel who talked with me had **a measuring rod of gold to measure the city**, its gates and its walls. <sup>16</sup> The city was laid out like a square, as long as it was wide. He measured the city with the rod and found it to be 12,000 stadia in length, and as wide and high as it is long. <sup>17</sup> He measured its wall and it was 144 cubits thick, by man's measurement, which the angel was using. <sup>18</sup> The wall was made of jasper, **and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass.** <sup>19</sup> The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, <sup>20</sup> the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysope, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst. <sup>21</sup> The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. **The great street of the city was of pure gold, like transparent glass.**

Would God still be worth pursuing even if there were no streets of gold? If Jesus was the only thing at the end of the road, would the journey still be worth taking?

For Jesus this issue is a matter of the heart. When we search for the things of God with passion and singular focus, we are in effect telling Him that He is **AS VALUABLE** to **US** and we **ARE** to **HIM**.

Search for the Kingdom of Heaven with the same passion as a man who digs for buried treasure or sacrifices for a pearl of great price – **BE ALL IN!**

More to the point, search for the Kingdom of Heaven with the same passion Jesus had when He went in search of you.

Paul understood this:

- **Philippians 3:7-9** - But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.