

The Buried Treasure



I want to continue a series I started a while ago in Cornerstone based on a series of parables found in Matthew 13, where Jesus compares the kingdom of God to various things His listeners were familiar with.

- **Matthew 13:1-9** is a parable where Gods kingdom is compared to seed sown in various types of soil.
- **Matthew 13:24-30** compares the kingdom of God to a field where weeds have infiltrated the wheat crop.

How God deals with seeds He knows will become weeds.

- **Matthew 13:31-32** compares Gods kingdom to a mustard seed.

A tree can't be grown unless the seed is sown.

The last edition of this series was when I preached on Fathers Day.

- **Matthew 13:33** compares Gods kingdom to leaven rolled inside some dough.

Once the leaven is in there it can't get out. A process takes place that can't be reversed.

When the Lord comes into your life, a process starts that if allowed to finish, changes you into someone totally different and much better than before.

If you want the notes, please let me know.

Maybe I should record them and put them on GIs Youtube channel.

If we are now citizens in the kingdom of God, **we need to know how the kingdom works.**

That's why in this chapter, Jesus regularly says, *"The kingdom of God is like..."*

He says this so we will know what to expect and operate accordingly.

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which when a man has found it, he hides it, and for the joy of it goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.*

I'd like to give a bit of background to this verse, because **most people in Australia don't bury treasure in their back yard.**

Some might stuff it in their mattress, but on the whole, if we have any money, we put it in the bank.

However back in Jesus time there were no banks for the common people.

Only wealthy people had access to banks, which in those days were not very safe places to keep your money anyway.

There was another reason why people buried their treasure in a field.

Israel in Jesus time was a place of frequent warfare.

So, it made sense to bury your valuables as **this was a way to protect them against any enemies** who might raid your home and try to steal everything.

Remember the parable of the talents? Jesus told a story about a master who gave some talents to his servants.

A talent was a measure of money. The first servant was given five talents, and the second was given two talents. They invested those amounts and multiplied their master's money.

But the third servant was worried. He didn't want anything to happen to that money. He wanted to keep it safe, so what did he do? **He buried it in the ground.**

So what Jesus was implying here, **was a concept many people were familiar with.**

There is something else about buried treasure in those days which is also interesting.

If you were ploughing or digging in a field and accidentally come across a treasure **it was yours to keep.**

In Jesus day, Jewish rabbinic law said that **"If a man finds scattered fruit or money, it belongs to the finder."**

If you found a treasure in a field, it was yours. **You didn't have to buy the field to get the benefit of the treasure.**

So why did Jesus compare His kingdom to someone buying a field to get the valuables when Jewish law at the time says he didn't have to?

Some people interpret this parable in the following way.

- **The field is the world.**
- **Jesus is the one who purchased the field.**
- **The treasure is you and me.**

Jesus didn't have to purchase us, His treasure, but He did.

There's plenty of merit in that interpretation. A preacher from America called Chuck Smith wrote a commentary with that interpretation.

But today I want to come at it from the angle, that **the buyer is someone who has discovered the kingdom as a treasure,** and even though they know they can purchase it for free.

Salvation is free!

Ephesians 2:8 *For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,*

For all of us that is the case.

But life walking with God is more than getting saved.

If all there was to life as a believer was salvation, you might as well go straight to heaven the moment you choose to believe Jesus is God.

The treasure Jesus I think is talking about isn't so much salvation, life from God.

The treasure I think is life with God!

Many people who aren't believers **see life as a Christian as something not all that special.**

- Going to church **doesn't look all that appealing.**
- Coming to a prayer meeting **doesn't look all that appealing.**
- **Taking time to read the Bible** doesn't look all that appealing.
- **Giving to Gods work as part of our lifestyle** definitely doesn't look that attractive.

The Kingdom of God to an outsider looks just like a normal field that they wouldn't pay money to buy.

But when someone like you or me comes along.

They know the field contains something so special, so valuable, you are willing to sell what you have in order to purchase that.

There's an example of that in the Book of Ruth.

Boaz had fallen in love with Ruth and visa versa.

They wanted to get married but in order to do that, according to law at the time, **Boaz had to buy a field** that previously had been owned by Ruths father in law, Elimelech.

Elimelech was Naomi's husband, who had moved away to Moab where he'd died, along with his two sons.

Boaz was a distant relative who had the right to purchase the field owned by Elimelech.

But there was another relative who was closer to Elimelech than Boaz was, so this relative had first choice whether to buy the field or not.

But whoever bought the field owned by Elimelech also had to marry Ruth as well, as she was his daughter in law.

Ruth's husband, Elimelech's son was dead, **so to carry on the name of the family, the person who bought Elimelech's field had to marry Ruth as well.**

Ruth 4:5 *And Boaz said, In the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must buy also from the hand of Ruth of Moab, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.*

This unnamed relative chose not to buy the field because **he wasn't willing to pay the price of marrying Ruth.** But Boaz had noticed Ruth and knew that **if he was willing to buy the field, he would get a treasure included with the purchase**, the hand of Ruth in marriage.

He bought the field because of the treasure that came with that field.

In the same way, those who want to not just get saved, **but want to follow the Lord are also willing to pay the price for the field.**

To others the field may not seem so appealing, but we know **there's treasure that comes with the field and that's why we're willing to pay the price.**

I saw another example of that principle in a Christian movie called **All Saints.**

It was based on a true story of an Episcopalian pastor called **Michael Spurlock** who had a small church in a place called Smyrna, Tennessee.

The church had become too small to sustain its costs and the denomination's hierarchy ordered Michael to close the church down.

But the pastor believed **there was one more possibility to save the church.**

The church was surrounded by a large field.

Some Burmese refugees had started attending the church and Michael Spurlock finds out they were farmers back in Burma.

He has what he believes is a **"God idea"** and believes there is potential to use the field as a farm.

They can grow some crops, sell them, and save the church.

God honoured his faith and the faith of those church members who chose to believe in the vision.

The point of the story is that **this pastor saw treasure where others only saw an empty field.**

Maybe you know people who see you living the life of a Christian and **they might compare your life to an empty field.**

They just don't appreciate it because they don't see the value in what you've purchased with your time and even your money.

But you know there is treasure that comes with the field, and you are willing to pay the purchase price because you know its worth it.

- **Boaz bought the field** because he knew he was going to obtain a treasure in Ruth, his new wife.
- **Michael Spurlock invested into the field** surrounding his empty church building because he knew there might be a possibility, he might obtain a treasure from that field via a good crop that would save his church financially.

We see the kingdom of God in the same way.

It might look like a normal field to others, but to us we see our walk with God as something so valuable, we're willing to purchase it, **even if initially it doesn't look all that attractive.**

But once we realise what that treasure actually is, **we're willing to pay the price to get the most out of it.**

Mosab Hassan Yousef is a former Muslim who converted to Christianity.

Some of you know him via the book he wrote called *"Son of Hamas."*

His father was one of the co-founders of Hamas, but he renounced Islam because he found Christianity so much better.

He paid a price for becoming a follower of Jesus.

His father and family disowned him, which was probably a source of great sadness for him.

They probably saw Christianity as something not worth following because to most Muslims, Jesus is just a prophet, but He isn't God.

They only see the field, not the treasure that comes with the field.

But Mosan discovered the treasure that is the kingdom of God, and he was willing to make that extreme sacrifice to get that.

Mosan was a young guy when he saw the kingdom of God as a treasure worth purchasing.

But there was another young man in scripture who wanted to have the treasure, the kingdom of God, eternal life, **but wasn't willing to purchase the field to get it.**

Mark 10:17 *And when He had gone out into the way, one came running up and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?*

He wanted to be part of the kingdom, he wanted eternal life, but the story has a sad ending.

Jesus knew what was happening in this man's heart.

There was a tug of war going on between keeping what he had, or letting go to obtain what God wanted him to have.

In the end, he chose not to swap his own treasure for the treasure God had for him.

Mark 10:22 *And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved, for he had great possessions.*

He couldn't see how great God's treasure was in comparison to his own, and he missed out.

He only saw the field and not what was buried underneath.

How many people we know are like that.

Non-Christians are given the opportunity to give their lives to the Lord, but the field doesn't look so attractive, and **they won't "make the purchase."**

Nominal Christians like this rich young man are given the opportunity to "dig deeper" and strengthen their connection to the Lord, **but they won't "make the purchase."**

They only see the kingdom of God as an unattractive field and they're not willing to invest any more into it because they can't see the point, because they can't see the treasure.

I don't know about you, but **I want to be the kind of Christian who sees the kingdom of God as a field worth purchasing** because there's treasure that comes with it!

Life with God here on earth at times doesn't seem all that worthwhile.

1. There are times when **living as a Christian isn't popular.**
2. **There are times when you're ostracized** from people because they don't like what you believe.
3. **You might even be persecuted** for making a stand for the Lord.

There are times when being a member of God's kingdom seems like you've only purchased an unattractive field, not a buried treasure.

But this parable promises us that when we **"buy into"** the kingdom of God, **we're going to get a treasure.**

What kind of treasure do we receive when we choose to “buy that field?”

What kind of treasure will we find when we open up that treasure chest?

1. Treasure will be found in the company we can keep.

The rich young man went away sad because he didn't want to pay the price he needed to pay to be set free from his love of money.

In Mark 10: 23 Jesus said, “... *How hardly those having riches will enter into the kingdom of God!*”

It isn't impossible for rich people to follow the Lord, but they do have to value their relationship with God more than their love of money.

Peter made the comment afterwards that both he and the other disciples present had made the sacrifice to follow Jesus.

Mark 10:28 *Then Peter began to say to Him, Lo, we have left all and have followed You.*

I don't know if he was looking for extra praise from the Lord.

If he was, he didn't get it.

Instead, Jesus gave Peter a promise.

Mark 10:29 *And Jesus answered and said, Truly I say to you, There is no man that has left house or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands for my sake and the gospel's sake,*

Mark 10:30 *but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands with persecutions, and in the world to come, eternal life.*

Mark 10:31 *But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.*

I really believe that these verses contain the promise of a certain kind of treasure we'll receive as believers.

The treasure of the ability to keep company with more people than we could have before.

I don't know about you, but there are some people I naturally gravitate to either because of culture, or other things I might have in common with them.

But there is one thing I've been able to do as someone who has invested into God's kingdom, and that is have a greater ability to keep company with those I never thought I could before.

I was at a conference hosted by a large church in London that had relationships with churches all over Europe and Africa.

I saw one of my Estonian colleagues meet with someone from Burkina Faso in Africa praying for each other and creating a genuine bond and interest in each other.

At the same conference I saw a French and German pastor smiling, crying and praying with each other and afterwards swapping business cards.

When assisting Elissa over there in Belgium, I have been able to write to a French pastor who I've never met, but he's been willing to assist us by looking out for Elissa over there when we can't.

As believers' part of our treasure is having access to networks, potential colleagues and even friends because the same Spirit of God that's in us, is in them as well.

That's a treasure worth buying a field over.

Once when I got kicked out of Estonia due to visa restrictions, I had to go to Finland where I had nowhere to stay.

I stayed in some hotels for about 5 nights but that was eating into the budget.

There was no way I could enter Estonia for another three months, so I booked a ticket back to Australia but I couldn't leave for another few days.

With finances getting low, I really needed somewhere to stay.

I rang the Bible School I was working for in Estonia because they were worried about me, and they wanted to know how I was doing.

The director said she knew a believer over there who might be able to help me with some accommodation.

That resulted in a Finnish man I didn't know well calling me up that same afternoon and promising to meet me in a location we both knew.

Sure enough he picked me up and we drove back to his house.

The thing was, this man's house was about 150 km away from Helsinki where I'd been staying.

While driving there, I had to ask the question, "What made this man who really didn't know me want to leave what he was doing and drive 300 km just to help me out?"

I had to conclude it was the Spirit of God that told him to do that.

That's part of the treasure we obtain when we buy the field.

There is a well of people we will have access to because the Spirit of God will arrange for us people, we'll have an affinity with all over the globe because we consider Jesus to be our treasure just like they do.

Acts 18:1 *And after these things Paul departed from Athens and came to Corinth.*

Acts 18:2 *And finding a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome) Paul came to them.*

Acts 18:3 *And because he was of the same trade, he stayed and worked with them; for they were tentmakers by occupation.*

A relationship was formed between Paul, and this married couple but not just because they shared the same trade.

A bond was created and scripture tells us they followed him to Ephesus when Paul planted a church there.

1Corinthians 16:19 *The churches of Asia greet you. Aquila and Priscilla greet you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.*

A relationship was formed between these Christians because they chose to follow the Lord, buy the field, and get access to the treasure.

Good company can be one of the treasures of life.

Good company orchestrated by the Lord because we're doing His will is even better.

It's part of the treasure.

Treasure will be found in the company we can keep.

2. Treasure will be found in the comparison we can make.

Paul wrote the following about his life following the Lord.

Philippians 3:5 *I was circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews. As regards the Law, I was a Pharisee;*

Philippians 3:6 *concerning zeal, persecuting the church; regarding the righteousness in the Law, blameless.*

Philippians 3:7 *But whatever things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.*

Philippians 3:8 *But no, rather, I also count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them to be dung, so that I may win Christ.*

Paul was making a comparison here.

All he had BC (Before Christ) was nothing compared to what he had AHC (after his conversion)

He even went as far to say, "I count them to be dung so that I may win Christ."

He wasn't referring to real dung. It was an expression used by people to describe food you'd give to dogs. It wasn't worth anything else except to give it to the dog.

That's a pretty extreme thing to say, because Paul had lived a pretty significant life.

But because he'd bought the field and obtained the treasure, the Spirit of the Lord inside him was able to properly ascertain what was the real value of things.

In comparison to the new life he had in Christ, the old life just didn't compare any more.

In the natural the ability to truly know the true value of things, **is a handy thing to have.**

I have a friend who is a plumber.

He told me the story of how a friend of his paid \$5000 to get a toilet installed.

He got badly ripped off because he didn't know what to pay.

How many people are ripped off because they really don't know how to ascertain the value of a tradesman's service or something else they wanted to purchase.

How many people have saved themselves a heap of money because they did know the true worth of something and knew to go elsewhere because they knew the seller was taking advantage of them.

That's part of the treasure we receive when we buy the field.

Through the Spirit of God, we learn to understand what is truly important and what is truly valuable because we see things through the eyes of the kingdom.

Jesus once performed a miracle where 5000 men were fed by 5 loaves and two fishes that were multiplied miraculously.

John 6 tells us that after that miracle, Jesus said some controversial things about if people didn't eat His flesh and drink His blood then you couldn't be part of Him.

No one understood him and he lost a few disciples.

He turns to Peter and the other 12 who somehow were still there.

Jesus asked them, "Do you want to go as well?" (V67)

Peter's response shows they'd made a comparison.

John 6:68 *Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the Words of eternal life.*

Lord we've looked at what we had before we met you. We look at what we have now and there's no comparison.

What you're offering us is way better!

I know that as a disciple of Jesus I'm in a position to make the comparison. I can properly ascertain what is truly valuable in life.

Not because I'm wise, but because the kingdom of God inside me, enables me to make true comparisons and like Paul, I can truly say the following.

What I had before was dung, but what I have now is truly valuable **because the Lord has enabled me to compare** and evaluate according to His values, not mine.

Of course

3. Treasure will be found in the city we'll call our eternal home.

Our treasure isn't just found in the quality of life we have here on earth as believers, keeping good company and making true comparisons.

We don't just have a good present.

Because we've bought the field and obtained the treasure, **what is also revealed to us is where we're going.**

John 14:1 *Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me.*

John 14:2 *In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

There is a place for us, Pilgrims Progress calls it “the Celestial city” that is being made ready for us even as we speak.

We have an eternal destination, the city of our God, a place that we can't really compare because really, **we have no idea what it will be like up there.**

All we know is that we'll have undiluted access to the presence of God and that will be our treasure!

I don't know what it will be like in heaven.

Allan, Timmy and I had a conversation about this before I put them to bed one night.

I had no idea what to tell them.

Afterwards I thought it might be a good idea to see what the Bible says about the new city we will call home for eternity.

Revelation 21:2 *And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her Husband.*

Revelation 21:3 *And I heard a great voice out of Heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God.*

Revelation 21:4 *And God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. And there will be no more death, nor mourning, nor crying out, nor will there be any more pain; for the first things passed away.*

Revelation 21:5 *And He sitting on the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said to me, Write, for these words are true and faithful.*

This gives some idea of what it will be like in our new city.

We don't talk a lot about heaven in church.

Perhaps we should because we need to be prepared to go there if we believe it's a real place.

But here's my point.

Part of the treasure that comes with the field is an inclination toward that place.

We don't just live for the present.

We have the revelation inside us that tells us this life isn't the end, it's a preparation for what is to come.

When we have that “treasure” inside us, it really enables us to live life better down here before we go “up there.”

I read of an American missionary once who served for decades with his wife and family in Central America.

But it finally came time to move back to America, him and his wife caught a ship back home again.

They happened to travel on the same ship as the American president and they happened to get off at the same stop as the president did.

When the president and his wife exited the ship there was a great crowd of people waiting to greet him and his wife.

There was a brass band playing “Hail to the chief.”

The president and his wife were escorted to a private car that took them to their next appointment.

- In comparison the missionary and his wife had no one to meet them.
- There was no band playing music for them.
- It seemed it didn't matter whether they were there or not.

In his natural mind, the missionary started making a comparison between the welcome the President got and the non-welcome he and his wife received.

They'd spent years doing God's work in a country much worse off than theirs and they'd sacrificed much for the Lord.

Where was their reward?

Where was their grand homecoming?

Surely after all they'd been through, surely God could have arranged a better homecoming than this?

That's when God spoke to Him.

Maybe God spoke to him through his wife. that happens sometimes.

But this is what God said.

"You're not home yet."

Any disappointment he might have been feeling at that moment was washed away when God reminded him his home wasn't the city in America he and his wife went back to.

His home was in heaven. Knowing that in your heart is part of the treasure you obtain when you buy the field.

The field may not look like much at first.

Life as a Christians doesn't seem all that attractive sometimes.

But the more you dig into it, the more treasure you're going find, because the kingdom of God...

Matthew 13:44 *Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which when a man has found it, he hides it, and for the joy of it goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.*

The treasure is there and even though it isn't evident to others, its definitely evident to you who bought the land where the treasure is buried.

1. The treasure is found in the company we can now keep.
2. The treasure is found in the comparisons we can now make.
3. The treasure is found in the city we'll call our eternal home.

Amen!!!

All I know is that getting there is a quest worth pursuing.

It's a destination worth getting to, even if really, I don't know what really awaits me there.

All I know is that it will be wonderful!

Here's my point.

I spoke before of the story of Boaz and Ruth.

Boaz wanted to marry Ruth and Ruth wanted to marry Boaz. There was a mutual attraction there, but for them to be able to be together fully, Boaz had to buy a field that once belonged to Ruths father-in-law Elimelech.

According to Israeli law at the time, if Boaz was willing to purchase that field, he be able to marry Ruth and they could be together as husband and wife.

They couldn't have full access before they were married

The treasure is clean

The treasure brings clarity

The treasure is beyond compare

He compared this field to what he already had.

But when Jesus was comparing His kingdom to someone buying a field.

It wasn't uncommon at all for a person who was. So, Jesus' parable described a very feasible situation.

Rabbinic law dau

Some of you might be thinking that this man who found a treasure in a field wasn't very honest, because he found something that didn't belong to him and simply hid it.

Q: Has anyone here ever been in a situation where you have found something that didn't belong to you and simply kept it for yourself?

Q: Do you think this man was dishonest because instead of trying to find the owner of the land, he kept it for himself?

Most of us would agree that he was. In our society if you find something you are encouraged to hand it in to the police.

So the people listening to the parable would not have perceived the man's actions as unethical. In fact, the man had a right to what he found.

If a man came across money or valuables that were obviously lost and whose owner was dead or unknown, the finder had a right to keep what was found -- even if was found on someone else's property!

That was the law of the day back then.

We can deduct a couple of things about this parable that Jesus said.

1. The man who found the treasure didn't own the land it was buried in
2. The man who owned the land with the buried treasure it didn't know it was there, otherwise he would have dug up the treasure before he sold the piece of ground.
3. The person who actually owned the treasure must have been a previous owner, who had probably died in battle or by accident, which prevented him from recovering it.

Q: Did the man who found the treasure have to buy the land?

A: No he didn't. He could have taken it without paying a cent.

So when the man who found the treasure offered to buy the field, he was being extremely honest. According to the law of the day, he didn't have to buy the field in order to obtain the treasure. He could have just taken it. But he doesn't.

He buys the field. In fact, he didn't even use the treasure to provide him enough money to make the purchase. Instead, he liquidated everything he owned to come up with the money. So the man didn't do anything unethical.

So when Jesus said the finder actually decided to sell all he had to buy the land, I guess Jesus listeners would have been pretty surprised that he went to all that bother.

He was so excited about finding the treasure that he was willing to do whatever he had to do in order to purchase it.

This brings us to the following point.

There are some things around some may consider to be treasure that others consider to be trash.

Q: What are examples of food that some people may love, but others may dislike?

Q: Ask some students, what their favourite TV programme is.

Q: What are examples of TV programmes that some people may love, but others may dislike?

Q: Ask some students of movies that some people may love, but others dislike?

There are plenty of examples of things that may seem valuable to some but seem to be rubbish to others.

That was the story with these two men, the finder of the treasure and the owner of the land.

The man who found the treasure went and sold all that he had so he could buy the land where the treasure was. He knew what the land was really worth.

The owner of the land probably thought the guy was crazy. All he saw was a piece of ground, the finder of the treasure saw something else.

It's the same with people who find God and start to follow Him.

Some people think they're mad for doing that as they give up so much to do it.

- Eg: Perhaps get someone in to share their testimony of what they gained through choosing to be a part of the kingdom of God.

There is a treasure to be had when we choose to follow the Lord. It may cost us everything we have but there is a treasure to be obtained that we otherwise wouldn't be able to get our hands on.

That's what this parable is saying. A relationship with God is like a treasure that is so valuable we should be willing to give up other things in order to obtain it.