



## The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like...

Matt 13: 52

“Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”

July 23, 2017

## Thought for the Week

Scripture: Matt 13:31-33,44-52; Matt 10:35; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23

What is your favorite sport? What is the highest award given in that sport? If you love tennis, you could say it's the Rosewater Dish – the plate given to the winner of the Wimbledon Women's Singles competition. If it's football, it could be the Lombardi Trophy, given to the winner of the Super Bowl. NASCAR has the Sprint Cup, and Golf has four majors, but perhaps the green jacket given to a Masters Champion would be the ultimate. How did Trevor Immelman, Jimmie Johnson, the New York Giants, Venus Williams and all the other champions in their respective sports attain their most recent victories? By recognizing the great value in their lives of the thing they were after, and then selling all they had and getting this valuable thing.

No, I don't mean that they bought their championships. And I don't mean to be so flippant as to compare the Kingdom of heaven to winning the finals at Wimbledon, but in essence, that's what Jesus has done. Venus Williams has dedicated her life to being the best tennis player she can be, and to being good enough to defeat the others in the world who are called great. The same is true for any champion. And isn't that exactly what the landowner and the jeweler do in Jesus' parables? They give up everything they have to gain the one thing they want the most.

That is what Jesus asks of us through these parables – to see what is of the greatest value in the world and to then give up everything to get it. He wants us to see the ultimate value of the Kingdom of heaven and to be willing to give up everything to get that one thing of great value.

Are we? Are we willing to give up everything to gain the Kingdom of heaven? In all of the synoptic Gospels, Jesus says that we should be ready to take up our cross and follow Him (Matt 10:35; Mark 8:34; Luke 9:23), so He must have meant this challenge to be ours.

Have you ever wanted something so bad that you would give up *anything* for it? That's how bad Jesus wants us to want the Kingdom of heaven.

So ... maybe, if we *really* want the Kingdom of heaven; bad enough to give up whatever we have to get it, maybe then whatever we have of value we will give to God – the one who owns the Kingdom – and what we have given God will be folded into all of the other valuable things given to God by others because they too want the Kingdom. When God folds all of our valuable gifts together, the leaven in them will begin to work and these little, small gifts we have will grow – like the tiny mustard seed grows – until what we have given *becomes* the Kingdom of heaven, that most valuable of things to obtain.

*Hmm, maybe there's something to these parables after all.*

## The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like...

### The Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast

<sup>31</sup> He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. <sup>32</sup> Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

<sup>33</sup> He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds<sup>[a]</sup> of flour until it worked all through the dough."

### The Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

<sup>44</sup> "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.

### The Parable of the Net

<sup>47</sup> "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. <sup>48</sup> When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. <sup>49</sup> This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous <sup>50</sup> and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

<sup>51</sup> "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they replied.

<sup>52</sup> He said to them, "Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old."

### So what does this all mean?

1. The Net of Fish parable warns of the threat of punishment for the "evil," but its main point of emphasis is to provide assurance to the "righteous" that God's will is accomplished in the end.
2. The Mustard Seed and Leaven parables highlight the dominion of God becoming present in an unexpected and, by worldly standards, scandalous way, in the way of the cross.
3. The Treasure and Pearl parables can emphasize both the cost of discipleship needed from us and the cost of redemption that Jesus paid.

Jesus' closing statement about scribes bringing out new and old from their treasure describes the preacher's task here. This treasure of old, yet always new, words must become new again in our lives. We can talk about the costs involved in the dominion of God, but ultimately the good news we preach is priceless.