

Discipleship: Ministry to the Treasured

by Pastor Kurt Hoover

Pentecost Litany based on Psalm 8

Leader: When I look at your heavens,

All: the work of your fingers,

Leader: the moon and the stars,

All: which you have set in place,

Leader: what is man that you are mindful of him,

All: and the son of man that you care for him?

Leader: We worship you, Lord, In the name of the Father and The Son and The Holy Spirit.

Deuteronomy 26:16-19

¹⁶ The Lord your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. ¹⁷ You have declared this day that the Lord is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws—that you will listen to him. ¹⁸ And the Lord has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. ¹⁹ He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised.

Matthew 13:44-52 ⁴⁴ "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.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. ⁴⁸ 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. ⁴⁹ This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the blazing furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ "Have you understood all these things?" Jesus asked.

"Yes," they replied.

⁵² 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."

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." – Matthew 13:52

New treasures, as well as old. You got new surprising things to give as well as what you have known your whole life.

These three parables – The hidden treasure, the surprise pearl, and the parable of the net are unique to Matthew. The parable of the weeds from last week is also found only in Matthew.

The other disciples made sure to document the agricultural parables. Perhaps the two most famous the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the sower. You might argue

the parable of the prodigal son is the most famous. And I would agree. Interestingly enough, Luke is the only one to include the parable of the prodigal son.

It makes me ask more about each of the disciples. Which parables, or even which words Jesus used, that each man clung to. Luke, perhaps the most accomplished of all the disciples also is kind of telling us he had a father with high expectations... A father that did not run. So, Luke remembers just how treasured he felt to hear Jesus say that the father ran to his prodigal son. Also interesting for Luke is his use of the word possession. When Jesus said give up your possessions – that impacted Luke. Perhaps because he had more attachments to possessions to surrender.

For Luke there were words like possession. For Matthew it was the word treasure. Luke also used the word treasure a lot but in reference to possessions again. And they are the two disciples that record Jesus amazing one liner – *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* (Matthew 6:21, Luke 12:34)

The other disciples made sure to document the agricultural parables. But then Matthew gets really excited about this other metaphor that Jesus used alongside these agricultural pictures of the Kingdom.

The Kingdom of heaven is like a great treasure. And then Matthew gives us this golden nugget.

***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.*” – Matthew 13:52**

And when Jesus speaks these words to us it has the same impact as it first did on Matthew. It changes the way we think about ourselves.

What are the treasures stored up in me that I have to give the people in my life... my children, my spouse, my teammate or friend?

You, just like the rabbis of old, already know how to teach the law. It is in our nature to fix each other. We come by counseling and coaching naturally.

Walking out of a travel baseball tournament it never fails - You hear the dads telling their sons what they can improve on. And it also never fails that the son is rolling their eyes as they hear it.

Eli is lucky. Molly and I never played baseball or softball in high school. He already knew way more than us in middle school. In fact both Myka and Eli chose sports we know little about. So, we just keep our mouths shut, we don't have any advice to give. But that doesn't stop the temptation... the thoughts are still going through my head. What I would like for them to improve on.

Let me ask you – does a child being coached by their parent make them feel treasured? Maybe 1 time out of 10. I have seen a grandfather visiting from out of town, his face shining as he describes his glory days and skillfully gives some needed advice. And the grandson is just soaking in the attention. But that is the exception to the rule.

Does the necessary lecture about chores, or bedtime, or the expectations of the household make a child feel treasured? Rarely.

Matthew remembers Jesus saying that there is a greater treasure to give and it happens in us teachers of the law when we become disciples in the kingdom of heaven... When we go past trying to fix each other to this spiritual place of presence. Our words carry a different weight, a different authority when they move past correction to affirmation.

Let me ask you this. What makes you feel treasured? What words from a parent or grandparent in the past made you feel like you had all that you needed? When has someone spoken a word and you felt like you were enough?

What makes you feel treasured? (pause)

Those are the Word's of God.

This is your ministry. And you have been doing it your whole life. The difference between a teacher of the law and a disciple stood out to Matthew. A disciple is always learning, trying new things, open to surprises and discovering what was once hidden ... in themselves and in others. A disciple walks with others. A disciple is present. And a disciple in the kingdom of heaven... literally brings the presence of Christ!!

A teacher can teach you about Jesus. A disciple literally brings you into the presence of God.

This is your ministry. You learned it from your church family and elders as you were growing up.

***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.* – Matthew 13:52**

When grandma or the Sunday school teacher told you how much you were worth... to God. You internalized it and were inspired to do the same for others.

This is your ministry. Not the improvement of the human race, but helping the person across from you know how valued they are.

Each of us has a treasure inside of us that we lose sight of. Our worth to God. It is not conditional, it is unconditional self-worth. There is not a person in your life that doesn't benefit from this stone being turned over and their worth revealed to them again and again and again.

Jesus tells the parable of a weary traveler, far from home. He stumbles across something someone had lost long ago. A treasure seemingly hidden in a field inches below the soil. It had been there the whole time just waiting to be found. But the man did not just take the treasure, he joyfully gave over his birthright, all that he had to purchase not the treasure, but the field in which it was buried waiting to be found.

This actually happened. When Jesus tells a parable he is not telling us what we must do. He is describing to you what He has done for His creation, for you. He has won for you a Faith more valuable than anything in the world. He is also making you that treasure. He has found your worth and is returning it to you.

That weary traveler was Jesus Christ who has traveled from heaven to earth taking on the limited, mortality of man to reveal a treasure you lost long ago. A treasure seemingly hidden in

your soul by countless years of trying to prove your worth. Just inches below the surface lays a treasure more valuable than any bauble of this world. It has been there just waiting to be found. And Jesus didn't take this treasure for himself, He joyfully gave up His birthright, all that He had, His very blood to purchase not the treasure but the field of your heart where it has been buried just waiting to be found. At great cost to himself he has regained your faith for you.

Jesus joyfully gave up everything he had to tell you this day just how treasured you are to him.

**The hidden
treasure, the
surprise pearl, the
treasure of God's
heart... you!**

**You are treasured
by God!**



*Sir John Everett Millais British Engraver Engraved and printed by Dalziel Brothers British 1864