



## TOO CLEVER BY HALF

(MATTHEW 11:25-30)

Stained glass in the Chapel of Notre-Dame-des-flots in Sainte Adresse, Le Havre, France, depicting Christ in the Temple of Jerusalem among the doctors (1857)

Jesus has been preaching throughout his home region of Galilee. He must have had high hopes that the Pharisees and the religious leaders would accept his message and recognise that it came from God.

After all, these are “the learned and the clever”, the experts on the Law who know it inside out. They, above all others, should be able to recognise God’s Son when he speaks to them.

But Jesus’ efforts haven’t succeeded. In fact, he faces mounting opposition. The Pharisees and the religious leaders reject him and his message. They see no evidence that he is the Son of God.

Jesus must have been terribly disappointed at his failure to win over “the learned and the clever” but he doesn’t lose heart. He knows that he is doing the Father’s will, and that’s all that counts.

And he realises too that his preaching has not been in vain. The ordinary people, those he describes as “mere children”, have grasped his message. The simple and ignorant, who have no education or training in the Law, recognise who he is – people like his disciples, and those who are sick, and sinners.

Jesus realises that this was God’s plan all along. He thanks God his Father for choosing to reveal his truth to the little ones, while hiding it from the self-important.

The lesson for us is that we must be open to God’s plan for us, as Jesus was, and actively trust that our heavenly Father knows best. ■

## REFLECT

There are times when we all experience life as difficult and painful. We can feel overburdened with problems or worries of one kind or another. The death of a loved one may have left our heart broken. A person close to us may be sick. Our bank balance may be deep in the red. Our business may be going under. We may have lost our job. There may be problems in the home or with an addiction. We may find ourselves stuck in a crucifying depression we can’t shake off.

Bring all of that to Jesus today. Lay your worries and anxieties on him, for he is gentle of heart. Ask him for the rest and peace that you seek. ■

## LEARN

A yoke was a bar laid across the shoulders of a slave for carrying a heavy burden. Many rabbis referred to the Law as a yoke placed on the shoulders of the people of Israel. By contrast, the yoke that Jesus invites his followers to take on is not a burden but something that is gentle and life-giving.

The Good News is for everyone.

## PRAY

There is so much trouble and anxiety in our world today, so many people caught up in civil conflict and violent unrest. Ask the Prince of Peace to ease people’s suffering and grant them the rest for their souls that he alone can give.

## DO

Look at how children relate to their parents. Observe them. Note how they trust their parents completely and instinctively, how they feel secure when they hold a parent’s hand, how utterly receptive and open they are to their parents. That is how we are called to relate to our God.



## SAY

“I thank you, Lord, for being so close to me. Strengthen my faith. Amen.”

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Your merciful love, O God,  
we have received in the midst of your temple.  
Your praise, O God, like your name,  
reaches the ends of the earth;  
your right hand is filled with saving justice.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

O God, who in the abasement of your Son  
have raised up a fallen world,  
fill your faithful with holy joy,  
for on those you have rescued from slavery  
to sin  
you bestow eternal gladness.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Zechariah 9:9-10

A reading from the prophet Zechariah.

The Lord says this:

“Rejoice heart and soul, daughter of Zion!  
Shout with gladness, daughter of  
Jerusalem!  
See now, your king comes to you;  
he is victorious, he is triumphant,  
humble and riding on a donkey,  
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.  
He will banish chariots from Ephraim  
and horses from Jerusalem;  
the bow of war will be banished.  
He will proclaim peace for the nations.  
His empire shall stretch from sea to sea,  
from the River to the ends of the earth.”

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 144

Response:

**I will bless your name for ever,  
O God my King.**

1. I will give you glory, O God my King,  
I will bless your name for ever.  
I will bless you day after day  
and praise your name for ever. (R.)

2. The Lord is kind and full of compassion,  
slow to anger, abounding in love.  
How good is the Lord to all,  
compassionate to all his creatures. (R.)
3. All your creatures shall thank you, O Lord,  
and your friends shall repeat their  
blessing.  
They shall speak of the glory of your reign  
and declare your might, O God. (R.)
4. The Lord is faithful in all his words  
and loving in all his deeds.  
The Lord supports all who fall  
and raises all who are bowed down. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Romans 8:9.11-13

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.

Your interests are not in the unspiritual, but  
in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has  
made his home in you. In fact, unless you  
possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not  
belong to him, and if the Spirit of him who  
raised Jesus from the dead is living in you,  
then he who raised Jesus from the dead will  
give life to your own mortal bodies through  
his Spirit living in you.

So then, my brothers, there is no necessity  
for us to obey our unspiritual selves or to live  
unspiritual lives. If you do live in that way,  
you are doomed to die; but if by the Spirit  
you put an end to the misdeeds of the body  
you will live.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

**Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and  
earth,  
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to  
mere children.  
Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL** Matthew 11:25-30

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.

Jesus exclaimed, “I bless you, Father, Lord of  
heaven and of earth, for hiding these things  
from the learned and the clever and revealing  
them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that  
is what it pleased you to do. Everything has  
been entrusted to me by my Father; and no  
one knows the Son except the Father, just as  
no one knows the Father except the Son and  
those to whom the Son chooses to reveal  
him.

“Come to me, all you who labour and  
are overburdened, and I will give you rest.  
Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I  
am gentle and humble in heart, and you will  
find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy  
and my burden light.”

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

**I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,**

**born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;**

**through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,**

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

May this oblation dedicated to your name  
purify us, O Lord,  
and day by day bring our conduct  
closer to the life of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

**Come to me, all who labour and are  
burdened,  
and I will refresh you, says the Lord.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Grant, we pray, O Lord,  
that, having been replenished by such great  
gifts,  
we may gain the prize of salvation  
and never cease to praise you.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

“Unless we look at a person and see the  
beauty that is in them, we can contribute  
nothing to them. One does not help a person  
by discerning what is wrong, what is ugly,  
what is distorted. Christ looked at everyone  
he met, at the prostitute, at the thief, and  
saw the beauty hidden there. Perhaps it  
was distorted, perhaps damaged, but it was  
beauty none the less, and what he did was to  
call out this beauty.”

*Metropolitan Anthony Bloom*



## WHAT KIND OF SOIL ARE YOU?

(MATTHEW 13:1-23)

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells the parable of the sower and seed. He uses images that would have been familiar to people living in the fishing and agricultural economy of Galilee.

A sower goes out to sow seed. He scatters it generously. Some falls on the edge of the path and is eaten up immediately by birds. Other seeds fall on a rocky patch, where they spring up straight away, but quickly wither because there isn't enough soil for the roots to take hold. Some fall among thorns, which grow up and choke them. Others fall among rich soil and produce an abundant crop.

Jesus explains that the seed is the word of God, which he scatters generously. It is available for everyone to respond to. But whether God's word will take root and bear fruit depends on the condition of the ground. It depends on how open people are to receive it.

Jesus describes four types of hearers. The first are those who hear the word of God but they do not really understand it and are easily led astray by evil influences. The second are initially very enthusiastic but fall away as soon as trials and difficulties arise because God's word has never taken root in them. Third are those who hear the word but are distracted by the worries and cares and riches of this life. The final type are those who listen to God's word and take it to heart, and respond by applying it to themselves in an effort to lead a life like that of Jesus. They will yield a rich harvest.

God's word is still scattered generously today. The question is, how well do we respond to it? How firmly does it take root in us? Are we people like the fourth group of hearers, who listen to the word of God, take it to heart, make it their own and have it bear much fruit? ■

### DO

Think about it. What seeds are you sowing? What values, attitudes and qualities are you planting in your children, in your family, your friends and workmates? What kind of harvest are you producing?

### SAY

**“Lord, help me to receive your word with an open heart and let it bear fruit in my life. Amen.”**

### PRAY

Pray for all Christians that they might draw others to God by the kind of lives they lead.

### LEARN

The Christian is nourished by the breaking of bread and the breaking of the word.

The one who hears the word of God and lives it will produce good fruit.

By their fruits you shall know them.



## REFLECT

**W**e all would like to think that, when our time comes, we will have left a mark, a legacy, a sign that our lives were not in vain, that our impact on this earth was for the better. Some people have carved their names in history through the works of art or the inventions they created. Others have made their mark in the world of sports or politics or religion, or as great thinkers or explorers or leaders. Every generation

has produced individuals of renown, who used the talents they were given to yield a rich harvest. Think of the impact the seventeen-year-old Swedish campaigner Greta Thunberg is making in the area of climate activism.

All of us have been gifted and talented in one way or another. Hopefully, we are using those talents to the best of our ability, even if our names will never be

in the history books. As Christians, we have been tasked with something even more important – to cultivate the seed of faith that has been planted in us so that it bears wonderful fruit. We do that by letting God's word ground us and shape us. We do it by the example of our lives – the values we hold, the words we speak, the actions we take. We do it by witnessing to the Gospel, in every moment of every day. ■

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

As for me, in justice I shall behold your face;  
I shall be filled with the vision of your glory.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

O God, who show the light of your truth  
to those who go astray,  
so that they may return to the right path,  
give all who for the faith they profess  
are accounted Christians  
the grace to reject whatever is contrary to the  
name of Christ  
and to strive after all that does it honour.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Isaiah 55:10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.  
Thus says the Lord: "As the rain and the snow  
come down from the heavens and do not  
return without watering the earth, making it  
yield and giving growth to provide seed for  
the sower and bread for the eating, so the  
word that goes from my mouth does not  
return to me empty, without carrying out my  
will and succeeding in what it was sent to do."  
The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 64

Response:  
Some seed fell into rich soil,  
and produced its crop.

1. You care for the earth, give it water,  
you fill it with riches.  
Your river in heaven brims over  
to provide its grain. (R.)
2. And thus you provide for the earth;  
you drench its furrows,  
you level it, soften it with showers,  
you bless its growth. (R.)
3. You crown the year with your goodness.  
Abundance flows in your steps,  
in the pastures of the wilderness it flows.  
(R.)

4. The hills are girded with joy,  
the meadows covered with flocks,  
the valleys are decked with wheat.  
They shout for joy, yes, they sing. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Romans 8:18-23

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.  
I think that what we suffer in this life can  
never be compared to the glory, as yet  
unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The  
whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to  
reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on  
the part of creation that it was made unable  
to attain its purpose, it was made so by God;  
but creation still retains the hope of being  
freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence,  
to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the  
children of God. From the beginning till now  
the entire creation, as we know, has been  
groaning in one great act of giving birth; and  
not only creation, but all of us who possess  
the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan  
inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set  
free.  
The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
Speak, Lord, your servant is listening;  
you have the message of eternal life.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Matthew 13:1-9  
(longer form Matthew 13:1-23)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.  
Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside,  
but such crowds gathered round him that he  
got into a boat and sat there. The people all  
stood on the beach, and he told them many  
things in parables.  
He said, "Imagine a sower going out to  
sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell on the  
edge of the path, and the birds came and ate  
them up. Others fell on patches of rock where  
they found little soil and sprang up straight  
away, because there was no depth of earth;  
but as soon as the sun came up they were  
scorched and, not having any roots, they  
withered away. Others fell among thorns, and  
the thorns grew up and choked them. Others  
fell on rich soil and produced their crop,  
some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.  
Listen, anyone who has ears!"  
The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.  
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.  
For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.  
I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Look upon the offerings of the Church, O Lord,  
as she makes her prayer to you,  
and grant that, when consumed by those  
who believe,  
they may bring ever greater holiness.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

The sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for her young:  
by your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and  
my God.  
Blessed are they who dwell in your house,  
for ever singing your praise.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Having consumed these gifts, we pray, O Lord,  
that, by our participation in this mystery,  
its saving effects upon us may grow.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

"Truly a faithful friend is the medicine of life.  
Truly a faithful friend is a strong defence.  
For what will not a genuine friend perform?  
What pleasure will he not afford? What  
benefit? What security? Though you should  
name infinite treasures, none of them is  
comparable to a genuine friend."

St John Chrysostom



## IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS

(MATTHEW 13:24-43)



Their future doesn't look very promising. After all, Jesus and his followers are just a small group of people in a little corner of Palestine, with few friends among the religious leaders or those in authority, and with a message that doesn't seem to be reaching very far.

Jesus wants his disciples to imagine what the kingdom of God will look like. He uses images, little stories or parables, to paint a picture of the kingdom of God and its future growth.

He talks about the mustard seed. His listeners know that the mustard seed is tiny, yet Jesus tells them that from the smallest of seeds comes a tree large enough for birds to build their nests in it. The kingdom of God is like that mustard seed, he says.

A second image hammers home his point. The kingdom of God is like the yeast a woman mixes in with flour. A small amount of yeast has a huge effect – it has the power to produce bread for a lot of people. The kingdom of God is like yeast, Jesus tells them.

Jesus's message is clear: the kingdom of God may have small, unimpressive beginnings, but like the mustard seed and the yeast, it will grow into something big and wonderful, and have an effect out of proportion to its humble birth. ■

### SAY

**“Lord, help me to hasten the flowering of God’s kingdom of justice, peace and love by being a seed, a leaven, in the life of my church and my community. Amen.”**

### DO

Many feel excluded from or hurt by the Church. How can you be a grain of yeast in their lives that comforts, heals and builds up? The little things we do can make an enormous difference for God.

### PRAY

Pray for yourself and for people everywhere that they will nurture the good that is in themselves and in others.

### REFLECT

These are challenging times for the Church in Europe and in the West. Secularism is on the rise, fallout from the abuse scandals continues, many have given up the practice of the faith, while others who remain feel angry, confused and demoralised.

It can seem like the mustard seed is desiccating; that the yeast has lost its power. It can seem that the promise Jesus made to his disciples is turning to ashes, and that, far from expanding, the kingdom of God is contracting and even dying.

That is why it's important to hold fast to the promise Jesus made to his disciples and to us. Jesus tells us that the kingdom of God will flourish because it is God's will that it will flourish. And we are called to trust Jesus. We trust him by putting our faith in small things and in God's grace.

Lots of things are happening that are helping the kingdom to grow. Pope Francis talks of a Church that is on the streets, open, compassionate, inclusive. He is showing the way. Many Catholics are looking seriously at what it means to be the Church. They are realising that it isn't made up just of clergy and religious but of all the baptised. They are thinking about what needs to be changed in the Church and how they can be a seed or a leaven bringing new life to their parish. Just as the kingdom of God grew out of small things, they know that the little things we do can grow into something wonderful.

Think about those who have been a seed, a leaven in your life, those family members or others who shaped and inspired you in the faith. How can you be a seed, a leaven, in the lives of others? ■

### LEARN

Even though there is a lot of evil in the world, God will have the last word.

Every good deed builds up the kingdom of God.

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

See, I have God for my help.  
The Lord sustains my soul.  
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart,  
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Show favour, O Lord, to your servants  
and mercifully increase the gifts of your grace,  
that, made fervent in hope, faith and charity,  
they may be ever watchful in keeping your  
commands.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Wisdom 12:13.16-19

A reading from the book of Wisdom.

There is no god, other than you, who cares  
for everything,  
to whom you might have to prove that you  
never judged unjustly.

Your justice has its source in strength,  
your sovereignty over all makes you lenient  
to all.

You show your strength when your sovereign  
power is questioned  
and you expose the insolence of those who  
know it;

but, disposing of such strength, you are mild  
in judgement,  
you govern us with great lenience,  
for you have only to will, and your power is  
there.

By acting thus you have taught a lesson to  
your people  
how the virtuous man must be kindly to his  
fellow men,  
and you have given your sons the good hope  
that after sin you will grant repentance.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**PSALM** Psalm 85

Response:

**O Lord, you are good and forgiving.**

1. O Lord, you are good and forgiving,  
full of love to all who call.

2. Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer  
and attend to the sound of my voice. (R.)

All the nations shall come to adore you  
and glorify your name, O Lord:  
for you are great and do marvellous  
deeds,  
you who alone are God. (R.)

3. But you, God of mercy and compassion,  
slow to anger, O Lord,  
abounding in love and truth,  
turn and take pity on me. (R.)

**SECOND READING** Romans 8:26-27

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.

The Spirit comes to help us in our weakness. For  
when we cannot choose words in order to pray  
properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea  
in a way that could never be put into words, and  
God who knows everything in our hearts knows  
perfectly well what he means, and that the  
pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are  
according to the mind of God.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ  
enlighten the eyes of our mind,  
so that we can see what hope his call holds  
for us.

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** Matthew 13:24-43

(For Shorter Form Mt 13:24-30, read between  
> <)

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.

>Jesus put a parable before the crowds, "The  
kingdom of heaven may be compared to a  
man who sowed good seed in his field. While  
everybody was asleep his enemy came, sowed  
darnel all among the wheat, and made off.

When the new wheat sprouted and ripened, the  
darnel appeared as well. The owner's servants  
went to him and said, 'Sir, was it not good seed  
that you sowed in your field? If so, where does  
the darnel come from?' 'Some enemy has done  
this,' he answered. And the servants said, 'Do  
you want us to go and weed it out?' But he said,  
'No, because when you weed out the darnel you  
might pull up the wheat with it. Let them both  
grow till the harvest; and at harvest time I shall  
say to the reapers: First collect the darnel and tie  
it in bundles to be burnt, then gather the wheat  
into my barn.'" <

He put another parable before them, "The  
kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed which  
a man took and sowed in his field. It is the  
smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown  
it is the biggest shrub of all and becomes a tree  
so that the birds of the air come and shelter in  
its branches."

He told them another parable, "The kingdom  
of heaven is like the yeast a woman took and  
mixed in with three measures of flour till it was  
leavened all through."

In all this Jesus spoke to the crowds in  
parables; indeed, he would never speak to  
them except in parables. This was to fulfil the  
prophecy:

I will speak to you in parables  
and expound things hidden since the  
foundation of the world.

Then, leaving the crowds, he went to the house;  
and his disciples came to him and said, "Explain  
the parable about the darnel in the field to us."

He said in reply, "The sower of the good seed  
is the Son of Man. The field is the world; the  
good seed is the subjects of the kingdom; the  
darnel, the subjects of the evil one; the enemy  
who sowed them, the devil; the harvest is the  
end of the world; the reapers are the angels.  
Well then, just as the darnel is gathered up and  
burnt in the fire, so it will be at the end of time.  
The Son of Man will send his angels and they  
will gather out of his kingdom all things that

provoke offences and all who do evil, and throw  
them into the blazing furnace, where there will  
be weeping and grinding of teeth. Then the  
virtuous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of  
their Father. Listen, anyone who has ears!"

>The Gospel of the Lord.<

Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.  
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under

Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,

and rose again on the third day

in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead

and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,

the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is adored and

glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and

apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness

of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the

dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

O God, who in the one perfect sacrifice  
brought to completion varied offerings of the

law,

accept, we pray, this sacrifice from your

faithful servants

and make it holy, as you blessed the gifts of

Abel,

so that what each has offered to the honour

of your majesty

may benefit the salvation of all.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

The Lord, the gracious, the merciful,  
has made a memorial of his wonders;  
he gives food to those who fear him.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Graciously be present to your people, we

pray, O Lord,

and lead those you have imbued with

heavenly mysteries

to pass from former ways to newness of life.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

# Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 1



## TREASURE HUNTERS (MATTHEW 13:44-52)

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges us to think about what we value most. He uses two parables to get his message across. In the first, a farm labourer discovers a treasure hidden in a field. He realises that it is a valuable find, that it will make him a wealthy man. He buries it again, and sells everything he owns in order to buy the field.

In the second, another man discovers a great treasure. But unlike the farm labourer, this man does not discover the treasure by accident. He has been searching for it. He is a merchant who deals in fine pearls. He knows exactly what he is looking for, and when he finds the most valuable pearl he has ever set eyes on, he is in no doubt what to do – he sells everything he owns so he can have that pearl. Pearls in the time of Jesus were the most valuable of all goods. Now that the merchant has that pearl of great value, he doesn't need to search any more.

Both the farm labourer and the merchant appreciate the value of what they have discovered. They are prepared to risk everything, to spend every penny they possess, in order to have it. Both know it's worth the risk, that it would be foolish to let the opportunity pass them by.

In these parables Jesus is asking if we perceive the kingdom of heaven in the same way. Do we see it as a treasure that is worth more than everything else we value in life? Are we prepared to give up everything, to risk everything, in order to have it? Jesus did. He gave up everything he valued – his family, his home – to do his Father's will and to preach the Good News. For Jesus, there was no treasure greater than doing his Father's will. He was even prepared to give up his life to hold onto it. As Christians, God and God's kingdom must be our greatest treasure. It must mean more to us than anyone or anything else. ■

### REFLECT

People have always taken risks in order to find treasure. Think of the 200,000 who took part in the great California Gold Rush of 1849. Or those who spend all they have on "get rich quick" schemes or other ventures in the hope of striking it lucky. Think of an investor who gambles early on the success of a new company and who makes millions when the company is floated on the stock exchange.

Both the farm labourer and the merchant in today's Gospel know the value of what they've discovered. They are prepared to risk everything to have it because they know it's worth the risk.

Today's Gospel isn't about keeping a sharp eye out for hidden treasure or taking up a career as a venture capitalist. It is about values, priorities, knowing what's important, what our real treasure is. And for Christians the answer is clear: our treasure is the kingdom of God. Our treasure is Jesus. If we follow him, imitate him, live his way, then we will find what we are looking for, the most valuable treasure of all. The gift of salvation is a treasure far more valuable than all the pearls in the sea. ■

### DO

Think of the most valuable thing you own, possibly your house. Now think of the words of Jesus in today's Gospel. Even your house, even everything you own lumped together, counts for nothing compared to God and God's kingdom.



### LEARN

For Christians the only treasure that matters is the kingdom of God.

Wisdom is a gift of God.

### SAY

**"Lord, give me the grace to recognise the treasure in my life and the strength not to sacrifice it for things that are worthless. Amen."**

### PRAY

We live in a materialistic world, which defines happiness in terms of the size of one's bank account and the extent of one's possessions. Pray for yourself and others that you will have the wisdom to know what is truly important.

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

God is in his holy place,  
God who unites those who dwell in his house;  
he himself gives might and strength to his  
people.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

O God, protector of those who hope in you,  
without whom nothing has firm foundation,  
nothing is holy,  
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us  
and grant that, with you as our ruler and  
guide,  
we may use the good things that pass  
in such a way as to hold fast even now  
to those that ever endure.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

1 Kings 3:5:7-12

A reading from the first book of the Kings.  
The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream  
and said, "Ask what you would like me to  
give you." Solomon replied, "Lord, my  
God, you have made your servant king in  
succession to David my father. But I am a  
very young man, unskilled in leadership.  
Your servant finds himself in the midst of  
this people of yours that you have chosen,  
a people so many its numbers cannot be  
counted or reckoned. Give your servant a  
heart to understand how to discern between  
good and evil, for who could govern this  
people of yours that is so great?" It pleased  
the Lord that Solomon should have asked for  
this. "Since you have asked for this" the Lord  
said, "and not asked for long life for yourself  
or riches or the lives of your enemies, but  
have asked for a discerning judgement for  
yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I  
give you a heart wise and shrewd as none  
before you has had and none will have after  
you."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 118

Response:  
Lord, how I love your law!

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord,  
is to obey your word.  
The law from your mouth means more to  
me  
than silver and gold. (R.)
2. Let your love be ready to console me  
by your promise to your servant.  
Let your love come to me and I shall live  
for your law is my delight. (R.)
3. That is why I love your commands  
more than finest gold.  
That is why I rule my life by your precepts:  
I hate false ways. (R.)
4. Your will is wonderful indeed;  
therefore I obey it.  
The unfolding of your word gives light  
and teaches the simple. (R.)

**SECOND READING**

Romans 8:28-30

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.

We know that by turning everything to their  
good God cooperates with all those who  
love him, with all those that he has called  
according to his purpose. They are the ones  
he chose specially long ago and intended to  
become true images of his Son, so that his  
Son might be the eldest of many brothers.  
He called those he intended for this; those he  
called he justified, and with those he justified  
he shared his glory.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
I call you friends, says the Lord,  
because I have made known to you  
everything I have learnt from my Father.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Matthew 13:44-52

(For shorter form Mt 13:44-46, read between  
> <).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.

>Jesus said to the crowds, "The kingdom of  
heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which  
someone has found; he hides it again, goes  
off happy, sells everything he owns and buys  
the field.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a  
merchant looking for fine pearls; when he  
finds one of great value he goes and sells  
everything he owns and buys it. <

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a  
dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul  
of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen  
haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect  
the good ones in a basket and throw away  
those that are no use. This is how it will be at  
the end of time: the angels will appear and  
separate the wicked from the just to throw  
them into the blazing furnace where there  
will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

"Have you understood all this?" They  
said, "Yes." And he said to them, "Well then,  
every scribe who becomes a disciple of the

kingdom of heaven is like a householder who  
brings out from his storeroom things both  
new and old."

>The Gospel of the Lord.<  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings  
which we bring from the abundance of your  
gifts,  
that through the powerful working of your  
grace  
these most sacred mysteries may sanctify  
our present way of life  
and lead us to eternal gladness.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and never forget all his benefits.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine  
Sacrament,  
the perpetual memorial of the Passion of  
your Son;  
grant, we pray, that this gift,  
which he himself gave us with love beyond  
all telling,  
may profit us for salvation.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.