

# Sunday Message

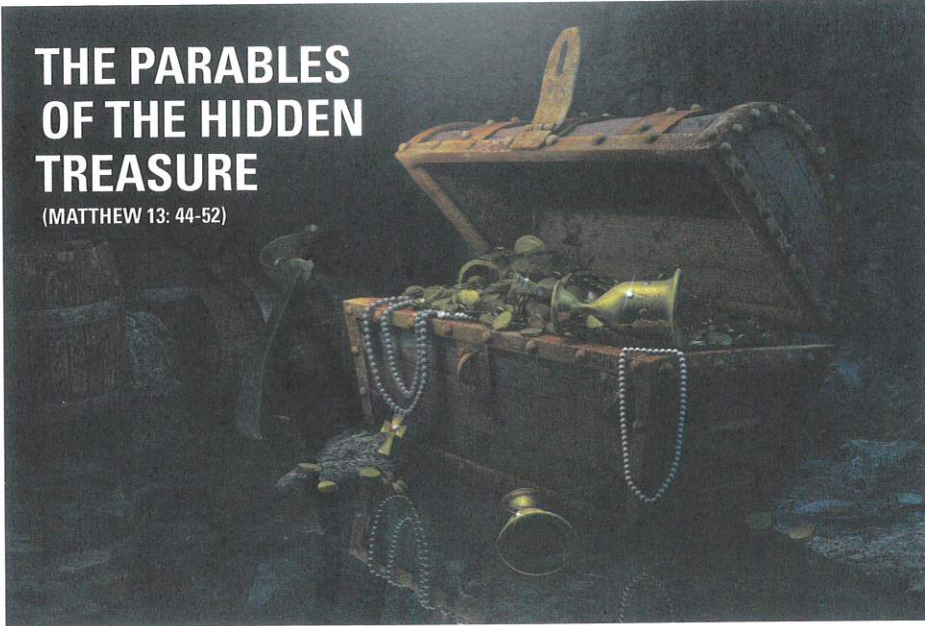
17TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR

THE WORD

Year A • 30 July 2023 • Psalter Week 1

## THE PARABLES OF THE HIDDEN TREASURE

(MATTHEW 13: 44-52)



You might have noticed over the past few weeks, that the teachings of Jesus have revolved around explaining what exactly the kingdom of heaven really is.

We heard last week of how the kingdom will be challenged by negative forces in the world, forces of evil and destruction. Therefore, the kingdom as defined by Jesus, needs to be protected by us believers. The importance of the presence of God on earth is reflected in today's gospel as it is likened to treasure buried in a field. On finding the treasure, the farmer hides it again and buys the field to care for it. The kingdom is like a fine pearl or a catch of quality fish. All deserve our protection and respect.

As you can see, parables are used in abundance today. Writer and former priest Michael Harding says that 'a story is the most beautiful way of bearing witness to the world.'

You can see from the three parables used last week and the three used today, that Jesus beautifully presents us with the importance of the kingdom of heaven in our world and our lives. The parables reassert the significant relationship between God and his people. God shows us his love and tenderness. We respond by honouring the treasure that is the kingdom of heaven. We do so through our prayers and actions. ■

## REFLECT

A man walked into a department store in London to buy a romantic gift for his wife, as her birthday was approaching. He walked up to the Chanel perfume counter and asked to see the range of perfume on offer. The sales assistant showed him the first bottle, priced £70. "No, that's too expensive, do you have anything else?" said the man. The polite assistant produced a smaller bottle priced £45. "You'll have to go again, it's still out of my price range," said the man. Indeed the sales assistant duly obliged and reached down to the bottom shelf where she produced

a £20 bottle of perfume that probably wouldn't be the best quality. The man replied, "Listen, I need you to show me something really cheap." So the assistant reached under the counter and showed him a mirror.

It's important to identify who or what your treasure is in life. For some it's their children or spouse. For others, it's their work and I think in particular of doctors, nurses, social workers and carers who treasure their patients and clients. In identifying your treasure in life, you can then go forward and reward that treasure with your love and care and generosity.

## SAY

'Where your pleasure is, there is your treasure: where your treasure is, there is your heart; where your heart is, there is your happiness.' (St. Augustine)

## LEARN

'The whole Church is apostolic, in that she remains, through the successors of St. Peter and the other apostles, in communion of faith and life with her origin: and in that she is sent out into the whole world. All members of the Church share in this mission, though in various ways. The Christian vocation is, of its nature, a vocation to the apostolate as well..... to spread the Kingdom of Christ over all the earth.'

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 863)

## DO

Identify the treasures in your life, the people you hold dear to your heart. How much time and energy do you give to them in terms of your love and generosity?



The kind of treasure being referred to in today's gospel is the treasure that is the kingdom of heaven. So how do we respond to this unique gift in our lives? Are we reluctant to invest time and energy in fostering a relationship with God? Do we talk to our children about the importance of prayer and belief in God during moments of difficulty and thanksgiving in their lives? When Jesus speaks to the disciples today, he wants them to acknowledge this wonderful treasure given to them freely by God. In embracing the kingdom of heaven, we show a generous and loving heart to the world. ■



**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,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

A reading from the first book of 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 as. 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 118:57,72,76-77,127-130. R v97

Response:

Lord, how I love your law!

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord,  
Is to obey you 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 co-operates with all those who  
love him, with all those he 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

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 owes 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 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 eternal gladness.  
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.