

## STUDY NINE | MATTHEW 13:44-58

### THE TREASURE, THE PEARL AND THE NET

#### OVERVIEW

Matthew concludes chapter 13 with a cluster of parables that continues to reveal the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE TREASURE AND THE PEARL (VV 44-46)

The two short parables of vv 44-46 speak to the immeasurable worth of membership in the Kingdom of God. The man and the merchant go to extraordinary lengths to secure that which is of extraordinary value. The distinctive in each parable identifies the man discovering the treasure by accident while the merchant appears to be seeking for the pearl. The emphasis however is not focused on the means of discovery as much as it is on the recognition of value.

What things would stand in the way of our service for the Kingdom? Possibly quite a few. We all live with the temptation to elevate the temporal at the expense of the eternal. These two parables are a correction for the disciple who will always be called to count the cost of Kingdom living.

#### THE PARABLE OF THE NET (VV 47-50)

The lesson of the wheat and the weeds (vv 36-43) is given a marine context. This penultimate parable of Jesus speaks once again to the closing of the end of the age. Judgment is on view as Jesus refers once again to separation that will take place at the return of Christ.

That said, we do well to remember that Jesus also called the disciples to be 'fishers of people' (Matt 4:19). Their primary task would be the extension of Jesus' call of Matt 4:17 to repent because the Kingdom has come near. As the fisherman sort their catch (v 48), the illustration is the call to take seriously the salvation and judgment which Jesus made the framework of his teaching (Matt 8:12; 25:46). We now begin to see why the Kingdom of Heaven is such a treasure, because its worth reaches into eternity.

Jesus will later go on to indict those who become a stumbling block to others entering into eternal life (Matt 18:9). Similarly he will warn of the danger of wealth in preventing the

## 'COME UNTO ME'

JANUARY 31

MATT 10:1-31 WORKERS FOR THE HARVEST

FEBRUARY 7

MATT 10:32-42 THE UNDIVIDED DISCIPLE

FEBRUARY 14

MATT 11:1-30 KNOWN & UNKNOWN

FEBRUARY 21

MATT 12:1-14 LORD OF THE SABBATH

FEBRUARY 28

MATT 12:15-37 THE TOUGH & TENDER SERVANT

MARCH 7

MATT 12:38-50 WHO ARE MY FAMILY?

MARCH 14

MATT 13:1-23 THE SOWER & THE SEEDS

MARCH 21

MATT 13:24-43 THE WEEDS, THE SEED & THE YEAST

MARCH 28

MATT 13:44-58 THE TREASURE, THE PEARL & THE NET

## RESOURCE

A GREAT LIGHT  
DAWNS

PETER BOLT

(READING THE BIBLE TODAY)

Kingdom's access (Matt 19:23-24). Ultimately it is only the cross of Christ that secures our entry (Matt 26:29).

### **THE PARABLE OF THE DISCIPLE OF THE KINGDOM (VV 51-52)**

Jesus concludes his teaching on the parables with the question for the disciples, and for all who would claim to be his followers (v 51). The perhaps surprising turn of phrase about the teacher of the law becoming a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is Jesus' explanation of what will take place for the twelve if they understand and accept 'these things' (v 11). The emphasis here is on instruction (literally 'to disciple'), to become a learner. The disciple is as the homeowner who brings out of the storeroom new treasures as well as old. Given Matthew's theme of fulfilment in the Gospel, these treasures (cf. v 44) capture the unfolding plan of the promises to Israel come true in Christ, yet speak to the surpassing blessings that come from Jesus' ministry that extend to the Gentiles. Old or new, they are treasures the disciple shares with those they in turn will disciple, as Jesus calls for in the Great Commission (Matt 28:18-20).

### **THE PROPHET WITHOUT HONOUR (VV 53-58)**

The chapter concludes with a perhaps surprising account of the hardheartedness of those from Jesus' hometown who fulfil the cliché 'Familiarity breeds contempt'. They are the antiphony of the learner who brings out treasures in v 52.

The ordinary response (offensive, v 57) from those who supposedly knew Jesus well is symptomatic of the gospel. Unless you experience a profound and life-changing transformation through the Son of Man who comes to bring life in all its fullness you will always be left assessing Jesus on human terms. Yet with the Kingdom of heaven there is no fence-sitting. Everyone must decide which Kingdom they will give allegiance to (Matt 13:38). The lack of miraculous activity by Jesus is not a comment about his ability to do so but an expression of his judgment upon his hometown for their lack of faith (v 58).

Chapter 13 of Matthew concludes with the question the entire biography raises: 'Who is Jesus?' It is the enquiry chapter 14 will take up, and to which we will return in 2022.

## GETTING STARTED

1. When you reflect on your faith over the past twelve months, would you say the promised return of Christ has made a difference?

## INTO THE TEXT

### READ VERSES 44-50

2. Reading the parables of the Treasure and the Pearl in vv 44 & 45, what do you believe are the secrets of the Kingdom they may be revealing?
3. Consider Matt 8:18-22. Why would people give up everything to follow Jesus?
4. The Parable of the Net (vv47-50) is the second time in the chapter Jesus speaks of the end of the age. In what way might this parable vary from that of the Wheat and the Weeds?
5. What role does the return of Christ play in the primary task of the disciple of Jesus explained in Matt 4:19 & 28:18-20?

### READ VERSES 51-58

6. What are the new and old treasures the disciple shares in the parable of the owner of the house (v 52)?
7. Do you think the mission of Jesus' disciples is different from our responsibility as disciple-making-disciples?
8. Jesus is rejected by his hometown in vv 53-58. Why do you think Matthew includes this account after the positive picture of the previous parable?
9. What breeds contempt for Jesus today?

## TAKEAWAY

10. What role did the return of Jesus to judge play in your own conversion?
11. What lessons have you learnt about living for Christ from Matthew 10-13?