

# Matthew 13:44-46

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/matt/matt-13/matthew-1344-46/>

*Jesus tells two short parables about the kingdom of heaven. In each He shows the immeasurable value and worth of finding the kingdom.*

These parables are unparalleled in the other gospel accounts.

Following His private explanation of the parable about the wheat and the tares, Jesus tells his disciples a pair of short parables about *the kingdom of heaven*. Jesus is still in the house, speaking privately with His disciples (Matthew 13:36, 53).

Both parables follow a similar pattern. Each parable begins with an everyday object of enormous wealth, but its full *value* is unseen or unrecognized. Then someone discovers its true worth. Finally, that person trades in *all that he has* to purchase the vast wealth unrecognized by others.

Likewise, both parables have a similar meaning. Each parable shows how *the kingdom of heaven* has enormous *value*; and how it is readily available for any who would fully commit their lives to invest in its riches. Many, however, either balk at the price or fail to suspect the incredible opportunity to gain eternal wealth. Jesus seems to be changing the subject from a parable He told the crowds, inviting them to be sons of the kingdom rather than sons of the wicked one. It might be that Jesus is saying “The parable of the wheat and tares wasn’t really meant to challenge you, here are some parables that will challenge you.”

In the first parable Jesus says *the kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field*. The Jews and their Roman authorities followed a system of property rights. Property rights for *a field* was among the most significant and expensive types of wealth *a man* could own in Jesus’s day. This is because who ever owned the *field* had the right to determine how it would be used and to sell whatever it produced. In an agricultural society, such as Judea, fields were a source of revenue and riches.

But *the field* in Jesus’s parable is extra-special because it has *a valuable treasure hidden* within it. Because the *treasure* is *hidden*, no one knows about it, or suspects the increased worth it adds to *the field*. But somehow *a man found this hidden treasure*. *He* doesn’t tell anyone about it, and *he* re-hides the *treasure again*. *He* then returns home bursting with his secret excitement. Jesus says that *from joy over the hidden treasure in that field*, the *man* liquidates all his possessions so he can purchase it. The reason *he joyfully goes and sells all that he has and buys that field*, is that the *man* understands its true *value*. *He* understands that even though *he* is selling everything to *buy that field* he is becoming exponentially richer because of the unseen *treasure* that will belong to whomever owns *the field*.

This man’s reaction would be similar to someone who saw a business opportunity to buy a piece of property priced at \$2 million dollars and was certain that it would yield him \$2 billion dollars in return. Most people do not have \$2 million dollars to spend. But if any of us were 100% sure

of this volume of return we'd gladly sell everything we owned including our house, and do whatever was necessary to acquire the funds to meet the asking price.

This *hidden treasure* is what *the kingdom of heaven is like*. *The field* is not cheap. It will cost us everything we hold dear to buy it. But the everlasting return is immeasurably worth the investment. That is why we too can be like this *man* and part with our treasures with *joy*. What we receive in return is of so much greater *value* than what we are giving away that we cannot wait to part with it so that we may gain *the kingdom*. But it takes trust in Jesus and faith to see the true *value of the kingdom hidden in the* everyday fields of life. This is what Jesus urges for His disciples. He is teaching them that the rewards of *the kingdom* are worth giving up everything to follow Him. With the exception of Judas, that will eventually be the choice of them all, according to church tradition.

In many respects the second parable is similar to the first. Jesus introduces it with *Again*, as if to say, "said another way." *The kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls*. Merchants are middlemen in the economic system. In the ancient world, merchants *bought* and acquired goods either directly from producers or from caravans that transported materials from afar, and then *sold* those goods at a higher price at the market. The *merchant* in this parable is apparently a seller of jewelry or precious stones because *he is seeking fine pearls*.

One day as *he* is looking over the wares of his sellers, the *merchant* discovers *one pearl of great value*. This *pearl* is very costly, but apparently is ridiculously undervalued. If he wishes to buy it, the *merchant* will have to quickly sell *all that he* has to buy it. But the *merchant* recognizes that as expensive as this *one pearl* is, its full value is still considerably underestimated. And so, *he* shrewdly cashes in his entire inventory so that *he* can buy this *pearl of immense value*. Despite selling *all he had* the merchant comes away far richer for having *bought* this remarkable *pearl*, for *he* was the first to see and act upon its true *value*. Again, Jesus makes the point to his disciples that giving up everything for the sake of the Kingdom is an exceedingly great bargain.

In these parables, Jesus shows at least five things about *the kingdom of heaven*.

First, *the kingdom of heaven* is available to everyone (who believes in Jesus). Just as anyone could have bought the field with hidden treasure or the pearl of great value so too can anyone acquire the kingdom's treasures.

Second, *the kingdom of heaven* is of incomparable worth. Whoever possesses the field with hidden treasure, or the pearl of great value is exceedingly rich. So too is the *man* who has riches in the God's *kingdom*. In each case, it is worth giving up everything to acquire.

Third, *the kingdom of heaven's* treasures are costly to acquire. Just as the *man* and the *merchant* must sell *all* they have in order to meet the asking price for *the field* and the *one pearl*, so must anyone sell their treasures away in order to "buy" *the kingdom's* treasures. Acquiring *the kingdom's* treasures requires that we "sell" everything else for its sake.

Fourth, many people fail to recognize the superior value of *the kingdom of heaven*. No one but the *man* who discovered the *hidden treasure*, knew the real *value of the field*. Everyone balked at

the steep price of the *one pearl of great value* but the shrewd *merchant*, who rightly perceived its true worth. *He* alone who was willing to make the bargain. It takes keen, spiritual eyes to see and perceive the true value of *the kingdom of God*. It requires faith.

Fifth and finally, we must choose between our earthly treasures and the treasures of *the kingdom*. It would have been impossible for the *man* or the *merchant* to both keep their goods and gain what they desired. They had to choose which treasure they would possess. So must everyone make their own choice between the mortal treasures of earthly kingdoms (its honors, its pleasures, its approval, etc.) and the eternal treasures of *the kingdom of heaven*.

The thrust of these twin parables is to encourage the disciples to choose the kingdom.

This message is consistently taught in the New Testament. Throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught His disciples to seek the greater reward to be found within *the kingdom of heaven*.

“Take care not to practice your righteousness in the sight of people, to be noticed by them; otherwise you have no reward with your Father who is in heaven.”  
(Matthew 6:1)

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal.”  
(Matthew 6:19-20)

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided to you.”  
(Matthew 6:33)

The Apostle Paul went through an experience like the *man* and the *merchant* in these parables and came to a realization that life is not about acquiring riches or status among men, but pleasing God by faith. Paul wrote this in his letter to the church he founded in Philippi:

“But whatever things were gain to me, these things I have counted as loss because of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them mere rubbish, so that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him...”  
(Philippians 3:7-9a)

Those who exchange their earthly treasures for the *kingdom of heaven* are *like* the man who *bought the field with hidden treasure* and *like* this *merchant* who *bought the pearl of great value*. Both sold *all* they had to acquire these goods. And both recognized and acted upon the fabulous deal when he saw it. The question that Jesus raises to His disciples (and Matthew to his readers) is “Do you have the faith to see and act upon the daily opportunities to invest in God’s *kingdom*?” It will cost you your life, but you will gain it and so much more in return.

## **Biblical Text**

**The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.**