

BIBLE STORY: THE KINGDOM PARABLES

Matthew 13:44-52

Central Thoughts

- The kingdom of heaven is a miracle of Christ's redeeming work which comes to us by the Holy Spirit through the Word of the Gospel.
- Jesus redeemed the whole world by His death upon the cross.
- Our value is determined by the price Jesus paid for our redemption.
- The price that Jesus paid for our redemption is His holy precious blood and His innocent suffering and death.
- God's grace in the redemption of the world in Christ is the key to understanding the Scriptures.

Discussion Questions

Where is the "kingdom of heaven" mentioned in the Small Catechism?

The Second Petition of the Lord's Prayer: "Thy kingdom come"

How does God's kingdom come?

"God's kingdom comes when our heavenly Father gives us His Holy Spirit, so that by His grace we believe His holy Word and lead godly lives here in time and there in eternity." (Catechism)

Who creates the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God?

The Lord creates God's kingdom. He is the one who acts, redeems, creates faith, and saves.

In the kingdom parables in Matthew 13, who is the one who plants the seed in the parables of the Sower and the Seed, the Tares and the Wheat, and the Mustard Seed?

Jesus sows the Seed of the Gospel by which the Holy Spirit calls to faith in Christ and creates the Holy Christian Church.

In the kingdom parables in Matthew 13, what is the seed, the good seed, the mustard seed, and the leaven?

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the means by which the Holy Spirit creates faith, spreads faith throughout the world, and establishes the Holy Christian Church for the benefit of the whole world.

In the kingdom parables in Matthew 13, what is the field?

The field is the world into which the Gospel is preached through which the Holy Spirit calls sinners to repentance and faith in Christ.

Because Scripture interprets Scripture, Jesus' explanations of the kingdom parables help us understand the Parable of the Treasure Hidden in the Field and the Parable of the Pearl of Great Price:

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for 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 beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.

Who is the man who "found" the treasure hidden in the field? Who is the merchant who found the pearl of great price?

The Lord Jesus is the one who found the treasure and the pearl.

What did He do to obtain the treasure and the pearl?

He sold all He had and bought the field to obtain the treasure; He sold all He had and bought the pearl of great price.

Who is the treasure and the pearl of great price?

We are the treasure and the pearl of great price for which Jesus died upon the cross. Our value is determined by the price that Jesus paid for our redemption.

How can we as sinners be called a “treasure” or a “pearl of great price”?

Our value is measured by the price that Jesus paid to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil.

What is the significance of the man buying the whole field?

Jesus redeemed the whole world through His suffering and death upon the cross, even though many will reject Him in impenitence and unbelief.

Based on these parables, how should we consider ourselves before Jesus?

We are His treasure, His pearl of great price.

What part of the catechism emphasizes the meaning of redemption?

The Second Article of the Creed explains that Jesus has “...redeemed me, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

What do the actions of the man and the merchant teach us about how we have been brought into the kingdom of heaven?

It is entirely God’s work. We did not choose Him; He chose us. Our redemption and call to faith in Christ are entirely a miracle of God’s grace.

What is the Parable of the Dragnet describing?

On the last day, the Lord will send forth His angels to gather all people together in the judgment. The “wicked” are those who have rejected Christ in impenitence and unbelief. The “just” are those sinners who have been declared “righteous” or “forgiven” through faith in Christ, who has redeemed them “with His holy precious blood, and with His innocent suffering and death.”

Why are the disciples called “scribes”?

They will be charged with writing the Holy Scriptures of the New Testament.

What must the disciples learn when they are instructed about the kingdom of heaven?

At the center of the kingdom of heaven is Christ’s redemption upon the cross. Only when they understand and believe in Jesus’ redemption upon the cross will they be able to be faithful householders, bringing forth the riches of God’s grace from the Old and New Testaments.

Meditation on the Bible Story

The twin parables of the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price are parables of redemption. In the Second Article of the Creed each of us confesses that Christ “has redeemed me a lost and condemned person, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death, that I may be His own.” Jesus is like the man who found a treasure hidden in a field who, for joy over it, sells all that he has and buys that field. Jesus redeemed the whole world by the price of His blood that He might obtain His treasure—the redeemed who believe in Him. Even though many reject Christ’s redemption, He still paid the full price to redeem the entire world. Jesus is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, when he finds one of great price, he sells all that he has and buys it. Again, Jesus set aside all that was His in order to redeem us—His pearl of great price. The redeemed of the Lord are a “treasure” or a “pearl of great price” because of the price that Jesus paid for our redemption.

Prayer on the Bible Story

O Lord Jesus, we give thanks and praise to You that You have redeemed us with Your holy precious blood and with Your innocent suffering and death that we might belong to you as your dearest treasure and as Your pearl of great price. Help us to believe that all of Scripture centers in your redeeming work for us upon the cross that we might be prepared for the final judgment. In Your name we pray. Amen.



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