

**The HIDDEN TREASURE and The PEARL OF GREAT PRICE:
Matthew 13: 44-46**

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it. ESV

The narrative of a **parable** is self-contained, i.e., it has interest or meaning in and of itself, BUT, as a parable, it is intended for deeper understanding.

"A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning."

These two parables both illustrate one truth - the preciousness of the kingdom of heaven; the willingness of someone - who having his eyes opened, to sacrifice all that he has to keep what he found.

In the first parable, a man finds a **hidden treasure**, {there weren't many banks in those days and men commonly hid their treasure}, he makes sure of its value and goes to buy the field.

In the next parable, a traveling merchant, a dealer in pearls, recognizes one pearl beyond all others in value, sells everything he has to get that **one pearl of great value**.

In each case, the man finds something of great value and took steps to obtain it for himself. One came on it, not seeking for it, while the other found it as he pursued his course of life. The parables are somewhat different, yet alike in that both men took strong measures to secure for themselves what had been found. Jesus says both parables are comparable to the value of the kingdom of heaven.

Both of the parables represent salvation in Jesus Christ, but we know that nothing can "buy" salvation, so they can't mean that salvation can be bought or worked for.

Salvation is not confined to one place, except in Christ. E.g., the field is not the visible church. A man gets into the true church through Christ and not into Christ through the church. Jesus is the Door!

Some say the "field" is the Bible. As much as I regard the Bible as being fully inspired and without error, men were saved before the Bible was completed. I believe that Jesus Christ is the hidden treasure and the pearl.

The point is the willingness of both men to give all for Christ.

LESSONS:

Men find Christ in different ways. In one case, "I am found of them that sought me not," and in another instance, "those that seek me earnestly shall find me." Both statements are true.

The woman at the well in Samaria was not looking for Christ; but Nicodemus was seeking something.

Zacchaeus was curious - and climbed a sycamore-fig tree, while the Ethiopian treasurer was reading Isaiah when Philip was sent to teach him about Christ.

Paul was out to slaughter those who were "in the Way," while the Bereans searched the Scriptures.

There is no conflict. Those who honestly seek for truth will surely find it, and some who are under the gospel - they know not why - will be surprised by finding a treasure they never knew existed. People come to preaching and Bible study for all sorts of reasons - curiosity, to please a friend, whatever.

Salvation is a matter of individual appropriation. We are not saved in groups, families, or churches. If these parables teach anything it is that within the bounds of the visible church, there is both good and evil; saved and lost.

Jesus is the Bread of Life, but I must eat that Bread! Make Him my own.

Christ is worth all we have. Remember the rich young ruler went away sorrowful "because he had great possessions," and he would not give them up for Christ.

* * * * *

JUSTIFICATION WAITS ON FAITH

Jim Gunn
April 2, 2014

The Parable of the Growth of the Seed

Mark 4:26-29

²⁶ And he said, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. ²⁷ He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. ²⁸ The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. ²⁹ But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Mark only records four parables of Jesus. This parable of the Growth of the Seed is only found in Mark and is the only parable that only Mark records.

This parable is a supplement to the Parable of the Sower or the Four Kinds of Soil. This parable completes the history of growth of the seed that fell on good soil.

The "sower" teaches that the growth of the seed depends on the **nature** of the soil. We are told what happened to the seed that fell on the pathway, the thin soil over rock, and among the thorns. But the good soil is explained only in that it produces various degrees of fruit – 100, 60, 30 times.

Only here in Mark do we have the details of the growth of the seed that fell on good soil.

Some facts:

The parable presupposes good seed.
Both wheat and tares will germinate.
An evil word spoken will bear fruit.
Some will believe a false doctrine.

Here the "seed is the Word of God."

The seed was sown; weeds propagate themselves through the wind, bird droppings, etc. But beneficial grain must be cultivated.

Is it not true that children must be taught to behave correctly but they are naturally disobedient and selfish?

Some lessons:

What happens between sowing and harvesting?

Things happen according to certain laws and purpose, but we do not need to know how it is being accomplished, vs. 27.

The seed does grow.
Its growth is a mystery.
The growth is gradual.
It will mature.

Just as we cannot explain the growth of a seed we cannot understand how the Gospel takes root in a prepared heart.

The “wind blows where it wants to” John 3:8. We may know about a lot of things, e.g., the evidence of the new birth, but how regeneration occurs, no man can know because God the Holy Spirit is the Master of Regeneration.

We can and must prepare the field by teaching and preaching the word of God, i.e., sow the seed. But the preparation of the soil and the seed’s growth to maturity is God’s work.

We need not understand a truth in order to believe it.
So teach and preach and spread the Gospel.

This parable emphasizes the gradual growth of the seed. When we plant a garden do we see the blade break the ground? Even if you stayed awake and watched you probably would not see it because the growth is almost imperceptible.

When we see a man being changed by the Gospel we do not see a complete change overnight. His heart is new but he has to unlearn old ways and bad habits and learn new ways and good habits. His desire is to be like Christ but he must struggle against sin.

Stages:

First the blade, then the ear, and then the full grain in the ear.

Thus there are stages in a Christian's life: babes in Christ, young in the faith, and mature. No one "arrives" at perfection in this life.

Lessons:

All who engage in sowing the Word of God must do it prayerfully.
We can sow but we can't make it grow.

1 Corinthians 3:1-7

But I, brothers, could not address you as spiritual people, but as people of the flesh, as infants in Christ. ² I fed you with milk, not solid food, for you were not ready for it. And even now you are not yet ready, ³ for you are still of the flesh. For while there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not of the flesh and behaving only in a human way? ⁴ For when one says, "I follow Paul," and another, "I follow Apollos," are you not being merely human?

⁵ What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you believed, as the Lord assigned to each. ⁶ I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. ⁷ So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

Do not expect ripeness before it is due.

One morning a boy about 9 years old asked me if he could have a pear from my tree. I told him I would gladly give him a pear but that they were not ripe and would give him a stomachache if he ate one. Before he left that afternoon he came to me and asked, "Are they ripe yet?"

Do not expect ripeness before it is due.

Let's all look forward to the harvest. There will be a harvest!

Jim Gunn
April 2, 2014