

Solid Joys and Lasting Treasures

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[0 : 00] Well, we're going to turn now to our Bible reading for this morning. We're back in Matthew's Gospel. We've been looking at these parables of Jesus in Matthew chapter 13. And we're going to read again this morning from that section at the beginning, verses 10 down to 17, and then over to these two little parables, verses 44 to 46.

So Matthew's Gospel, then, at chapter 13 and verse 10. Then the disciples came and said to him, Why do you speak to them in parables?

And Jesus answered them, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.

For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

And this is why I speak to them in parables. Because seeing, they do not see. And hearing, they do not hear, nor do they understand.

[1 : 16] Indeed, in their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says, You will indeed hear, but never understand. You will indeed see, but never perceive. For these people's hearts have grown dull.

And with their ears they can barely hear. Their eyes, they've closed. Lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn. And I would heal them.

But blessed are your eyes, for they see. And your ears, for they hear. Truly I say to you, many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see, and did not see it.

And to hear what you hear, and did not hear it. Turn over then to verse 44. The kingdom of heaven is like treasure, hidden in a field, which a man found, and covered up, and then in his joy, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

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

[2 : 45] Amen. And may God bless to us, this is his word. Well, do turn, if you would, with me, to Matthew, Matthew's Gospel, chapter 13.

And we're particularly looking this morning, at these couple of verses, verses 44 to 46. Solid joy, and lasting treasure, is what these verses are all about.

Donald and Mildred Odener, seemed a very unremarkable couple. He taught engineering, at a Brooklyn university, and she mostly did voluntary work, for various New York organizations, and they had no children.

But when they died, he died in 1995, she in 1998, it turned out, that they were very remarkable indeed. In their will, they left over \$340 million, to various cash-strapped, Brooklyn institutions.

And in total, it turned out, their estate was worth, more than \$750 million. And nobody who knew them, had a clue. But if you knew the couple's home town, it might have offered a clue.

[4 : 0 6] It was Omaha, Nebraska. And that, of course, is the home of one Warren Buffett, the world's greatest ever investor, and one of the world's richest ever men. And it so happened, that he was a friend, of Donald and Mildred.

And back in the 1960s, they had invested \$25,000 with him, as he was getting going, in his business. And in 1970, I think it was, they were given some shares, worth I think, about \$40 each.

shares in his new formed company, Berkshire Hathaway. And by the time they died, those shares, \$42 shares, were worth \$30,000 each.

Actually, today, they're worth more than 10 times that. They're worth nearly \$400,000 each. So if they were still alive today, they'd be worth \$10 billion. Absolutely extraordinary. What was Warren Buffett's secret?

Well, just two words, value investing. The ability to spot in the market, undervalued companies, and to buy them, when other people were ignoring them.

[5 : 1 4] And just hold onto them, until at last, that true value, became clear to all. And of course, the price, rockets big time. Warren Buffett, wouldn't invest in any company, and still wouldn't, unless he says, he can visualize, what the balance sheet will be like, in a decade or two.

Shockingly, long term view, especially when today, many fund managers, will only be thinking about, this year's figures, maybe even this month's figures. That kind of approach, would actually get many, many financial managers fired, for just not meeting, their short term targets.

But it's hard to question it, isn't it? And, Warren Buffett's record, over some 50 years, has been so absolutely remarkable. Here's a couple of quotes, from Warren Buffett, in case you're wanting some advice, for your 2021 ISA.

He says, our goal is to find, outstanding businesses, at a sensible price, not a mediocre business, at a bargain price. And he says, our favorite holding period, for a stock, forever.

Forever. That's Warren Buffett, the sage of Omaha, the world's most respected, the world's greatest ever investor, a value investor, for the long term. He buys things, that are worth holding, forever.

[6 : 3 5] When the rest of the world, may still be entirely blind, to the opportunity. And he won't buy, what he can see, will be of no ultimate value. Even if the whole world, and it's heard, is rushing after it.

And scorning him, for missing out on it. Just as the world, did scorn Warren Buffett, in 1999, when he was, absolutely unwilling, to get involved at all, in the dot com bubble.

But they weren't laughing, a few months later, when the market, crashed catastrophically. And billions, were lost, in the stock market. Seeing the truth, that other people, will not see.

Seeing the reality, about the future, and acting on that, in the present, despite what everybody else, may be saying. and holding true value, for the ultra long term.

That's the secret, of the true value investor. And that, says, the Lord Jesus Christ, is supremely, the secret, of my kingdom.

[7 : 4 2] That's the way, and that's the only way, to solid joy, and lasting treasure, for all eternity. Now, we've seen already, that this whole chapter, in Matthew's gospel, is about Jesus teaching, about his kingdom, about its true nature, its true growth, its true future, and its value.

And about seeing, all of that, now, despite the fact, that it remains hidden, for so many, in the world, today. Like those, in the investment herd, who will not see, what's really so plain, to those who have eyes, to really see, and ears to really hear, the down to earth truth.

And see the froth, about all the bubbles, of this world's, flights of fancy, and fantasies. And Jesus, you see, he says, he speaks in parables, in order to separate out, those who will listen, and who want to listen, and who want to see the truth, and understand, God's long term, eternal view of life, from those, who won't listen, and don't want to know, and don't want to understand.

And so, Jesus words, are always in that sense, divisive. Look back at, look back at verse 12, there that we read. To the one who has, he says, more, will be given, so that he'll have an abundance.

But the one who has not, even what he has, will be taken, away. And verse 13, that's why I speak to them, in parables, because, seeing, they do not see, and hearing, they do not hear, understand, because of their willing, blindness, to the truth.

[9 : 23] So, if you won't hear the truth, if you insist, on blinding yourself, in folly, well, so be it, says Jesus.

Then you won't be able to, hear, anymore. But if you will listen, look at verse 16, your eyes will see, and your ears will hear, and you will understand, wonderful things, of real, lasting, eternal value.

And all through this chapter, you see, to those who will listen, Jesus explains, clearly, these realities, about his everlasting kingdom. As it's begun, as it's growing, here, on the earth, and all over the earth.

And the parables, you see, are giving answers, to the many questions, real questions, that the disciples had then, and that many of us, still have about Christ, and his kingdom. If it's true, that the kingdom of Jesus, the kingdom of God, has really come, well, why don't we yet see, everything that we might, expect to see?

The disciples were expecting, the day of the Lord, the day of judgment, on all wrongs, the day of vindication, on all the oppressed, the day of the justification, of all the righteous, victims, of evil in this world.

[10 : 42] And we too, find that hard, don't we? If the gospel's true, why is the world, still so full, of so much evil, so much suffering, so much sickness, why does wickedness, still flourish, if Christ really is king?

And why, if Jesus is the Messiah, why is there such, opposition to his message? Why did Jesus himself, face such mixed, responses? Just as we wonder today, don't we?

If this is true, and so obvious, as it is to us, how can, how can so many people, reject the gospel? Where's the power, of the kingdom of God? We don't seem to see it.

Where's the impact? It still seems so varied. Where's the glory? So often, it just seems so feeble, doesn't it, that the church of Jesus Christ, is lacking, in real value.

People turn up their noses, at it. Well, Jesus has answered, all these questions, hasn't he? In the parable of the sower, and in the parable of the weeds, and the fishing net. He teaches realism, to counter any sort of, false triumphalism, in the church.

[11 : 51] He says, there's going to be battles, there's going to be heartbreaks, there's going to be, fierce opposition, right to the very end. But, the end will surely come.

And there will be, a great judgment, that will reveal, everything that is true, but still seems so hidden, to so many today. So, there can be absolutely, no false security, for the world either.

No false triumphalism, for the church, but certainly, no false security, for this world, because that day, is coming. But on the other hand, remember he tells us, there mustn't be any, false pessimism, in the church either.

The parables of the mustard seed, and the yeast, they speak of real growth, extensive growth, of Christ's kingdom. Now, it's spreading, all throughout the world. However tiny, however hidden it might seem, like a tiny, tiny seed of mustard, or like a hidden, bit of yeast, no, that growth is, is irrepressible, that growth is inevitable.

So, we're never to lose heart. However small, the seed of the gospel, might seem, when we're sowing it, however inconspicuous, our own witness, might seem to be, don't lose heart.

[13 : 05] The gospel has power, to propagate, the kingdom of Christ, and God's people, have power, to penetrate this world, for Christ, and his kingdom.

The growth of the kingdom, might be presently hidden, but for those, with eyes to see, it's real, and it is truly wonderful. But finally now, in these last, two little parables, about the treasure, hidden in the field, and about the pearl, of great price, Jesus is turning, to speak, of the extreme value, of his kingdom.

It's presently hidden, to this whole world's, herd, the investment herd, if you like, but it is real, it's priceless, it's wonderful, nevertheless. And one day, it will be seen, in all of its glorious splendor, by everybody.

But that can be found, and it can be possessed now, by those, who will see the truth, and who will act on the truth, so as to seize hold of it, to us possessing now, what will be, shown to be, of everlasting value.

To possess it now, and to hold it, forever. So let's look at, these two little powers, they've got the same message, but let me think about them, under three headings, I think that will help us, focus, what Jesus is teaching here.

[14 : 27] First, he wants us to see clearly, the prize, of finding, Jesus, and his kingdom. That's undoubtedly, the overwhelming focus, of these parables.

And the message is, that what you have, in Christ, and in his kingdom, however, undervalued, however scorned, however ignored, it may be, in this world, it is of greater value, than everything, that this whole world, has to offer.

It supersedes, even the world's, greatest treasures. I'd rather have Jesus, than everything, that this world, affords. and so it's not, it's not, those who follow Jesus Christ, who are the fools.

It's those, who won't see that, and who won't follow him, who are so terribly mistaken. Now those, those whose eyes, are open to the wealth, of the treasure, their joy, drives them to, well the only realistic, insane action, which is to do, anything and everything, not to lose, that treasure, that you found.

Now that's Jesus' message here, it's so clear. These stories would be, very familiar, to Jesus here, as in those days, there were really, only two ways, to keep, your possession self, safe, to keep your wealth safe, and that was either, to hide it in a jar, and bury it in the ground, or it was to keep it, on your person, in the form of jewels.

[16 : 03] Here's what one, Victorian scholar says, in those old times, he said, government meant oppression, and it was dangerous, to seem to have any riches, and one's property, must be portable, or else concealed.

Well you may think, that increasingly our times, are actually not so different, are they? And there are whole industries, aren't there? To help people, shelter their wealth, from government, more and more people, are turning to gold, and jewelry, and cryptocurrencies, and all sorts of things, to hide their wealth.

But at any rate, it's very easy for us, to see and understand, these pictures, just as it was, for Jesus first hearers. It's all about treasure, it's all about something, of very great value. And remember, by the way, Jesus is telling these parables, directly to his disciples, to his followers.

Just look at verse 36, remember? He left the crowds, behind, and now he's directly, teaching his disciples, those who are already, following him.

So first and foremost, this is a word of encouragement, this is a word of great comfort, to those who are already, followers of Jesus. Because they might be tempted, to be taken in again, by this world's, false valuations, especially as, as they relate to Jesus, and his kingdom.

[17 : 22] Jesus knows, that we are frail flesh, and blood. Jesus is a realist. And, his teaching, is that life is hard.

That there are always enemies. That enemies of the gospel, will be at work, right till the very end. There will be a real mess, in this world, even in the church, right until the very end.

And he knows, that as followers of his, we will become discouraged. And he knows, that there will be time, where we'll wonder, perhaps if we've been fools, to invest so much in Jesus.

To give so much, to his kingdom. And he knows, that the world, will often scoff at us, and say, yes, you have been a fool. You're an idiot. When your work colleagues, are scornful about your faith, and your love for Jesus.

And they tell you, it'd be far more, wise, and, and clever, to put more time, and effort, into earning more money. Or into getting on, in your career, or whatever it might be.

[18 : 26] Instead of wasting, so much time, in all that stuff, you do at church. Wasting, several, several leavings a week. Serving in, in, in, what's that thing you call it? Christianity explored.

Or growth groups, or all that nonsense. Or your youth club. Why are you wasting, your time with that? Or when your student friends, see your commitment to church, see your commitment, to the Christian union, at university.

And they say, well you're missing out, on so many things, that you, you could be doing, and you could be having. So many things, that are much more valuable, and will be more valuable, to your life, and all that Jesus. And so on, and on.

We know what it's like. Evaluations of this world, are very strong, aren't they? It can be very determined. And it can be very easy, for us to begin to believe that, to begin to doubt ourselves.

Jesus says, no. That's all wrong. It's you. It's my disciples. It's you, who can see things truly. It's you, who have found the treasure.

[19 : 26] The really priceless jewel, above everything else in life. This world values, my kingdom, as absolutely nothing. And you yourselves, yes, you'll be prone to doubts.

But no, it is you, who are like this man, who discovered riches, beyond imagining. And I've done the only, sane thing, that there is to do, which is to secure it, and never to let it go.

You're like the merchant, who's seen, among all the others, the one pearl, to die for. To give everything, just for the sheer joy, of possessing, that one piece, of beauty, and of value.

It's you, Christians, who have seen, the true value, of the prize. They haven't. They're blind. And you have it.

It's yours. It's in your hand. Don't doubt it. Your joy is not misplaced. And one day, the whole world, will see, what you've seen all along.

[20 : 34] Don't give up. Don't doubt that, for one moment. Both the men, you see in this parable, they were utterly convinced, weren't they? They had found something, of such value, that absolutely, nothing must get in the way, of them possessing, that thing.

That's Jesus' point. Why on earth, lose your life savings, everything you possess, just to buy a field, that field? Oh, it's a field fad, my friends, going through.

I'm really hoping, you'll grow out of it. Why give up, all your business interests, everything that you've worked for, for that one pearl? It looks just like, all the others.

What's so unique, about your pearl? Why are you so, exclusivist? That's what the investment world, thought of Warren Buffett, by the way, when he bought, Coca-Cola shares, back in 1988, when they were absolutely, in a rut, and people had abandoned them, thought they were finished.

But the sage of Omaha, saw the future. He saw how much, my two girls, were going to drink, of Coca-Cola. I think that's enough, to make the share price, go up ten times, on its own. Goodness knows, how much I've contributed, to Warren Buffett's fortune, over the years, in Coca-Cola alone.

[21 : 48] But these two men, they saw the future, didn't they? They saw the prize. Nothing, was going to stop them, getting that prize. Like an expert, gem dealer.

You and I, just look at these things, and we just see, a bunch of stones. But a gem dealer, can look at them, and see, that there are gems in there.

The real expert, of course, will see the one, that is the stone, the piece of beauty, the one, that's worth, absolutely everything.

And that's what you have, in me, and in my kingdoms, as Jesus Christ. You've seen that, and you have that, in your hand. Because your eyes, and your ears, have been opened, to the truth, of the everlasting value, of the kingdom of God.

Look back, at verse 11 and 12 again. You see, because you're, because you're, following me, because you're, heeding me, because you're, desiring more, it's been given, to you, to know, the secrets, of the kingdom of heaven.

[23 : 00] To see the prize, to know, it's truly, infinite value. Don't, don't distrust, that joy, that you've already, experienced, in me.

It's real. It is the, true valuation. Don't listen, to the world's, valuations. They're so, so wrong. They're wildly out. Because their, fundamentals, are absolutely wrong.

They're blind, to the truth. Maybe some of us, this morning, need to hear that, very especially. Because you've been, being bombarded of late, with the world's, valuations.

And you've been, tempted to believe them. You've been, tempted to doubt, that what you have, is the prize, of truly, infinite value, in Jesus, and his kingdom.

Don't doubt. Don't believe, the world's, valuations. They're wrong. And they will be shown, to be catastrophically wrong. If that is it, you need to do two things.

[24 : 03] You need to look again, at the treasure, at Jesus. And listen, to his promise, of grace, of glory. You need to see, that future, with him. That you know, is true.

Because you know, that Jesus Christ, speaks only the truth. And, it helps you, I think, to look around, at others also, who have found, that treasure.

And see their trust, and see their joy, in the Lord Jesus. When you, when you look at, fellow believers, and when you see, what they have, that the world doesn't have, doesn't that encourage you? It encourages me, all the time.

It's funny, this week, I was, I was thinking, I was thinking, several times, about, about dear Ruth Hodgson, who died, in December.

We miss her so much. But I was thinking, of her smile. I was thinking, of her joy. I was thinking, of her love, which was just so obvious. Even in the last year, when she was weak, and she was sick, and she was struggling, with health, and her hands, were so sore, and twisted, and swollen, it was painful, even for her to play, her beloved piano.

[25 : 11] And yet, I could see, that she held, in those hands, the pearl, of great price. the prize, of knowing Jesus.

And so, even in her decline, she was, she was so radiant. And I can't think of Ruth, and I can't think of many others, I can't think of, many, many of you, without having to say, yes, I can see.

They know, the real treasure in life. They know. They won't give it up. And neither will I. the real prize, of finding Jesus, and his kingdom.

It is priceless. And yet, secondly, and Jesus is also, very plain about this, there is, a price.

There is a price, of finding Jesus, and his kingdom. And in these two stories, Jesus, I think, shows us two very different ways, of finding the prize. But only one way, of gaining it.

[26 : 18] You see, in both of these stories, it costs, everything. Verse 44, the first man, in his joy, goes and sells, all that he has, to buy that field.

And verse 46, the second man, the merchant, sold all that he had, and bought that pearl. You can't have this treasure, without giving up, all other treasures, that you have.

Every other investment, that you have, in this world. That's the price. Of course, Jesus is not saying, you can buy, the prize of Christ's kingdom.

Of course not. But he is saying, there is a cost. You can only receive it, in empty hands, rid of all these other, fleeting, earthly investments.

He is saying, to receive the prize, of the kingdom of heaven, you have to reject, wholesale, all, all the valuations, of this world.

[27 : 19] Not only by valuing, the prize of Christ, above all other things, but also, by valuing, all other, earthly treasures, as absolutely nothing. By rejecting, all of the rest, for that one pearl, for that one treasure.

You have to turn your back, on the world's way, to the future. And turn your face, solidly, to Christ's way, the only way, to a lasting future.

Cost you everything. It will cost you, your very life, in that sense. But notice, what Jesus is saying, to do that, is not a sacrifice.

It's not a loss. To think that, it's to totally, to totally misunderstand, what Jesus is offering here. It's all gain. These men did not lose out, on that exchange, did they? They're not crushed, by the burden, of the sacrifice, the loss.

No, no, no. Look at the joy. Joyfully, the first man goes off, and loses everything, that he has, to gain the far greater joy, of Jesus.

[28 : 27] The sheer joy, of knowing Jesus Christ, of being found in him, and his kingdom. And that totally, totally overshadows, anything, that is left behind. And that joy, of course, is utterly baffling, to the person, who's not a Christian believer.

They just, don't understand it. They can't, they can't grasp it. To them, it looks like, the most enormous sacrifice. Giving up so much, it looks like loss, it looks like constriction, of your life.

And who says Jesus, it's a great gain. It is the greatest, the greatest bargain ever. So in that sense, actually, it's wrong to talk about, the cost of discipleship.

Yes, it does cost everything. It costs our whole life. That must be, given up to Jesus. But look at the return. It totally, overshadows, everything else.

It puts the greatest, treasure, in this whole world, utterly, in the shade. The world, of course, can't see that. And many Christians, often, seem to struggle, to see that too.

[29 : 36] It astonishes me sometimes. You know, I still get, Christian people, who'll say to me, things like, oh gosh, what a sacrifice, it must have been for you, to give up your medical career, to become a minister.

Sacrifice? No, no, no, no. To gain the sheer privilege, have been paid, to proclaim, the unsearchable, riches of Jesus Christ.

Of course, there's cost, in some ways. There's plenty of cost, most of which, people have no idea, about at all anyway. But the gain, the return, it's utterly, beyond any, computation.

And yet, sometimes, isn't it true, that as Christians, we can foster, in ourselves, a sort of, a sort of, debtor mentality. As if to say, perhaps we would never, quite put it in words.

I've given up, so much for you God. Lord Jesus, I've given up, so much for you. Surely, you owe me, for my life, to be going better, than it is. Surely, I deserve, something more from you.

[30 : 44] Look at all, I've done for you. See, friends, when we think like that, it's telling us, that we haven't yet, really seen, have we, the treasure, that is in Jesus Christ.

We haven't yet, seen the beauty, no wonder, of that pearl, of great, ultimate price, that's worth, everything else, and more. It's like the rich young man, that we come across later, in Matthew chapter 19.

Remember, Jesus says to him, so go and sell, all that you have, and come, follow me. Just like these parables. But he went away, sorrowful, because, he had great possessions.

And he was possessed, by what he had. And he wouldn't lose. He wasn't possessed, by what Jesus was offering. And by what he would gain, forever.

But when you've really, seen that prize, you know, it's priceless value. And you know that, any price that's asked of you, in this life, is worth it a thousand times, a million times.

[31 : 56] Do you see, do you see the confidence, that that should give us, as Christians? We have a priceless treasure, to offer to this world. We've no need, we've no right, to be apologetic, in our message.

We've no right, to sort of hope, oh well maybe, perhaps, perhaps just, sometimes, somebody might, just respond to the gospel, if we plead with them enough. No.

J.C. Ryle says, these parables, are meant to teach us, that men, really convinced, of the importance, of salvation, will, give up, everything, to win Christ, an eternal life.

Of course they will, they'd be a lunatic, to do anything else. The work of the gospel, is not, us, feebly pleading, for decisions, from people.

The work of the gospel, is the confident, proclamation, of the true riches, the great pearl, of great price, that can be found, in Christ, and his kingdom, and found there alone, nowhere else.

[33 : 05] We focus on, proclaiming him, he is the prize, and we proclaim, the future, we proclaim a message, that shouts to everyone, above all the madness, above all the blindness, in this world, in its marketplace, for all of its treasures.

Whether they're religious, or whether they're, apparently, irreligious, but of course, there are multitudes, of secular people, who really are just religious, for the things of this world. But we shout, the message of the Lord, Jesus Christ, who says, I am the way, and the truth, and the life, I'm the prize, I'm the only, lasting treasure, that this whole world, can ever afford.

You must see it, or else, you're being, willingly blind. And friends, when people do see it, when their eyes are open, to see the solid joy, the lasting treasure, that there is, in Jesus Christ, and his kingdom, they will, joyfully, give up, everything, to possess that.

Whether it's, earthly wealth, or power, or influence, or whether it's, it's possessions, of all sorts of other kinds, whether it's a relationship, that has to be forfeited, for the prize, or a career path, that must change, or all sorts of other pursuits, that are now, now closed to them.

Just like these two men, they will joyfully, give up, all that they have, to possess, the treasure, the pearl of great price. By the way, notice that these two men, were very probably, from quite different backgrounds.

[34 : 47] First man, most likely, was a hard laborer, working in somebody else's field. Probably quite a poor man. Second one, obviously wasn't, he was a merchant, a businessman, probably a very wealthy man.

But the price, of the prize, was exactly the same, wasn't it, for each of them. It cost them everything. Each of them, had to let go, of everything else, in order to have that prize.

But also notice, each of them, was able to pay. It wasn't beyond, the reach of either of them, was it? The prize, of the kingdom of heaven, can be, obtained by anyone, no matter what their circumstances, no matter who they are.

if they're willing, to put everything else, behind them, and seize, that prize. The only condition, is wholehearted, eagerness, to possess the prize.

And that brings us, to the final point, which is the promise, of finding Jesus, and his kingdom. The treasure, the pearl of great price, the joy, of knowing Jesus, and his kingdom, finding his salvation.

[35 : 56] It's real. It's present. And it is, being found. And it will go on, being found, by all kinds of people, in all different, kinds of ways, until Jesus returns.

That is the promise, Jesus is making, in these parables. However, the truth of the gospel, might seem hidden, to people. However blind, the world, seems to be, so much of the time, God has promised, that there will be, multitudes of people, from every walk of life, from every tribe, and language, and nation, who will find, the joy, of that eternal treasure, now, in this life.

And that means, friends, that we can have, we must have, great expectations, as we go on, proclaiming Christ, and his kingdom. It's a world, that often seems blind, and deaf, and disinterested, to the truth.

The treasure, will be found. It is being found. And it will go on, being found, in all kinds, of different ways. Sometimes it will be, people who have been, carefully searching, for the truth, like the merchant, deliberately looking, for fine pearls, seeking the truth, in philosophy, in religion, whatever, until at last, they find it, with joy, in the person, of Jesus Christ.

The one pearl, of wisdom. The one treasure, of truth, that dwarfs, every other. And we see that, don't we, in the gospels, you see it with, the opening of Luke's gospel, Simeon and Anna, and those who are waiting, waiting for the coming, of the Messiah.

[37 : 37] And at last, they find him, in the person of Jesus Christ, and welcome him. See it in the acts, of the apostles. The soldier, Cornelius, searching, the Ethiopian eunuch, searching, the scriptures, for the truth, and finding it, at last, in the gospel, of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And there are folk, like that today. Sometimes it's people, who have been around, churches, all of their lives, and yet suddenly, at last, they truly hear the message, and the light dawns, and they find, Jesus Christ.

And Jesus promises, doesn't he, all who seek, truly, will find. All who ask, and seek, and knock, the door will be open, to them. If you're here today, seeking like that, then that's true for you.

Keep on, and you will find. But sometimes, it's very different, isn't it? It's like the man in the field, just doing his ordinary business, suddenly, discovering, totally to his, surprise and consternation, in a totally unlikely place, something so valuable, it totally changes his life.

because sometimes, people are not so much, seeking Christ, but he, is seeking them. Sometimes, just wandering into church, maybe somebody this morning, has wandered in, maybe you've just turned on, on YouTube, and you're watching us, don't know why, but you find treasure, suddenly, the message of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[39 : 03] Because even if we are not seeking him, Jesus says, he is, seeking, and saving the lost. He is calling them, to find, everlasting life, in his kingdom.

Treasure, everlasting. And that might be, the truth about somebody here, this morning. Maybe you've got no background, at all in the Christian faith.

Perhaps you're never expecting, to be here, never expecting, to be watching this morning, but here you are. And you're confronted, with the glory of Jesus Christ, the King of Kings, the glory of eternity.

Well friend, he is saying to you, open your eyes, see, see what those, who are willingly blind, just won't see, and come follow me, follow me. And I will share with you, treasure everlasting.

Jesus' promise, in these wonderful, little parables, is that where, we proclaim, the message of the kingdom, and where we show forth, Jesus Christ, in all his glory, as the great savior, the savior of men and women, the savior of the world.

[40 : 11] Where we do that, people will find, that treasure. And they will keep on finding it. Even in the most unlikely places. Because whenever we proclaim, Christ and his kingdom, there will be those, who don't have that treasure.

And who will see, what they don't have. And they'll see, they need it. And they'll see, they want it. And they will give up, everything, in order to have it.

And at the same time, followers of Jesus, those of us, who are his disciples, we will see afresh, what we do have. And we'll rejoice, all the more in it, won't we? With renewed joy. And all the struggles, that we face in life, the hardship, the pain, the sadness.

It'll be put back, more into perspective, won't it? Swallowed up, in the sheer privilege, in the sheer joy, that we realize again, and afresh, that we have, in the pearl of great price.

The solid joy, the lasting treasure, that only, only the children, of the kingdom, of our Lord Jesus Christ, can know. And when we as Christians, understand that afresh, we can say with the Apostle Paul, what he says in Philippians chapter 3, whatever gain I have, I count it as loss, for the sake of Christ.

[41 : 36] Indeed, I count everything as loss, because of the surpassing worth, of knowing, Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake, I've suffered the loss, of all things.

I count them as rubbish. In order that I, might gain Christ, and be found, in him. Find that.

Secure that. Christ and his kingdom. Hold it forever. And that will be the only investment, you ever need.

The only treasure, that you will ever, want. Well, let's pray together. Then, in his joy, he goes and sells, all that he has, and buys that field.

O God, who has prepared, for them, that love thee, such good things, as pass, man's understanding. Pour into our hearts, such love toward thee, that we, loving thee, above all things, may obtain, thy promises, which exceed, all that we, can desire.

[43 : 07] through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.