

Manuscript: Treasured by God, Matthew 13

Friends, Matthew 13 is a chapter full of parables.

Jesus talks about farmers, seed, soil, weeds, wheat, mustard seeds, leaven, treasure, pearls, nets, fish, and a householder bringing out treasures new and old.

At first, it can feel like Jesus is giving us a handful of separate little stories.

But when you step back, there is one great movement running through them all.

Jesus is showing us what the kingdom of heaven is like.

And more than that, He is showing us what the Lord does with His people.

The Lord sows.

The Lord plants.

The Lord waits.

The Lord grows.

The Lord transforms.

The Lord treasures.

The Lord gathers.

The Lord separates.

The Lord trains His people to carry His truth.

And tonight, I want us to walk through these parables with one question in our hearts:

What if these parables are not only about what we are supposed to do for God?

What if they are first about what God is doing for us, in us, and with us?

And I want us to land on one central gospel truth.

I. The Lord Sows His Word

The first parable is the parable of the sower.

A sower goes out to sow seed. The seed falls in different places. Some falls beside the road, and the birds come and eat it. Some falls on rocky places, where it springs up quickly but has no root. Some falls among thorns, and the thorns choke it. Some falls on good soil, and it bears fruit.

Jesus explains this one. The seed is the word of the kingdom. The soils are different conditions of the heart.

Some hearts are hard.

Some hearts are shallow.

Some hearts are crowded.

Some hearts are open and fruitful.

But notice this first: the Lord is generous with the seed.

He does not sow only in perfect places. He does not sow only where everything already looks good. He scatters the word broadly.

That matters.

Because some of us know what it is to have a hard heart. Life has walked over us. Sin has hardened us. Disappointment has packed the soil down. We heard the word, but it did not go deep.

Some of us know what it is to have a shallow heart. We received something with joy, but when trouble came, we had no root.

Some of us know what it is to have a crowded heart. Worry, money, fear, survival, regret, anger, addiction, grief, and pressure grew like thorns. The word was there, but it got choked.

But Jesus does not tell this parable to make us despair.

He tells it because soil can be broken open. Soil can be cleared. Soil can be made ready.

The Lord sows His word because He wants fruit.

So the first movement is this:

The Lord plants His word in human hearts because He still believes fruit can grow there.

II. The Lord Preserves His People in a Mixed World

Then Jesus tells the parable of the wheat and the tares.

A man sows good seed in his field. But while people are sleeping, an enemy comes and sows tares, or weeds, among the wheat. When the plants grow, the servants notice the problem. They ask the master if they should pull the weeds up.

But the master says no. If they pull up the weeds too soon, they may damage the wheat. Let both grow together until the harvest.

Jesus explains this one too.

The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man.

The field is the world.

The good seed are the sons of the kingdom.

The tares are the sons of the evil one.

The enemy is the devil.

The harvest is the end of the age.

This parable tells us the world is mixed.

There is good and evil.

There is wheat and weed.

There is truth and deception.

There is mercy and cruelty.

There is holiness and sin.

And if we are honest, we do not only see that mixture out in the world. Sometimes we feel that mixture in ourselves.

There are places in us where we want God.

And there are places in us where we resist Him.

There are places where we long for healing.

And there are places where we keep reaching for what harms us.

But the good news is this: the Lord knows His wheat.

The presence of weeds does not mean the wheat is forgotten.

The Lord does not panic because the field is mixed. He knows what He planted. He knows how to preserve what belongs to Him. He knows when the harvest will come.

So the second movement is this:

The Lord plants His people in a mixed world and preserves them until the harvest.

You may be living in a mixed field.

You may be carrying a mixed story.

You may be surrounded by things that make it hard to grow.

But the Lord has not lost sight of what He planted.

III. The Lord Grows What Begins Small

Then Jesus gives the parable of the mustard seed.

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, small when it is planted, but when it grows, it becomes large enough for birds to nest in its branches.

The movement is simple.

Small beginning.

Unexpected growth.

Shelter for others.

That is often how the kingdom works. But it is not always how we want it:

We want God to start big.

We want transformation to be immediate.

We want healing to happen all at once.

We want the whole tree by morning.

But Jesus says the kingdom may begin like a seed.

A prayer.

A tear.

A confession.

A little honesty.

A small act of obedience.

A quiet yes to God.

The Lord knows what to do with small beginnings.

A person may look at your life and say, "That is not much."

But the Lord may look and say, "That is a seed."

A mustard seed does not look like shelter yet.

But in the hands of God, small things grow.

So the third movement is this:

The Lord plants small, but He does not think small.

What begins as a small yes to God can become a place where life grows again.

IV. The Lord Transforms from Within

Then Jesus gives the parable of the leaven.

The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman works into flour until the whole batch is leavened.

This is quiet. Hidden. Ordinary.

The leaven disappears into the dough, but it does not stop working. It spreads through the whole thing.

That is what the Lord does in His people.

He does not merely put religion on the surface.

He does not merely decorate the outside.

He does not merely teach us how to look better in public.

Christ works from within.

He enters the heart.

He touches the conscience.

He changes desires.

He heals what is wounded.

He convicts what is false.

He strengthens what is weak.

He forms holiness in hidden places.

Sometimes you cannot see what God is doing right away.

But hidden does not mean absent.

The leaven works even when you cannot watch it work.

So the fourth movement is this:

The Lord works hidden grace until the whole life begins to rise.

That is sanctification.

That is holiness.

That is the Spirit of God working through the whole person.

V. The Lord Sees Hidden Treasure

Then Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field.

A man finds it, hides it again, and from joy goes and sells all he has and buys that field.

Now, many times this parable is preached like this: the kingdom is the treasure, and we are the ones who must give everything to gain it.

That is a good and faithful reading. The kingdom is worth everything.

But tonight, I want us to also hear this parable through the Gospel of God.

What if the Lord is the man who finds the treasure?

What if the field is the world?

What if the treasure is the people God sees, loves, and claims?

That reading fits the heart of Scripture.

In Exodus 19, God tells His people that they will be His own possession among all the peoples.

In Isaiah 43, the Lord says, “You are precious in My sight.”

In Titus 2, Paul says Christ gave Himself to redeem and purify a people for His own possession.

In Acts 20, Paul says the church was purchased with God’s own blood.

In 1 Peter 2, believers are called a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession.

So yes, the kingdom is treasure.

But the gospel also says this: God has treasured His people.

The man in the parable sees treasure hidden in a field.

Other people may have walked across that field and seen nothing but dirt.

But he saw treasure.

That is what Christ does.

People may look at a person and see only the dirt.

They may see the record.

They may see the addiction.

They may see the failure.

They may see the anger.

They may see the shame.

They may see the worst chapter.

They may see the outside.

But the Lord sees deeper.

The Lord sees what He created.

The Lord sees the image of God.

The Lord sees the person beneath the burial.

The Lord sees what grace can redeem.

The Lord sees treasure.

And notice the emotion in the parable.

The man sells everything “from joy.”

This is not reluctant love.

Christ does not redeem His people while sighing with disgust.

He does not save sinners as though He cannot stand to touch them.

He does not claim the buried treasure with resentment.

For the joy set before Him, Christ endured the cross.

The cross is the price of the field.

Jesus gave all to claim what He loves.

So hear this clearly:

You are not trash in the field.

You are not forgotten dirt.

You are not only the worst thing you have done.

You are not beyond the sight of God.

Christ sees treasure where sin has buried us, and He gives all to make us His own.

That is the Gospel of God.

VI. The Lord Seeks the Pearl

Then Jesus says the kingdom is like a merchant seeking fine pearls.

When he finds one pearl of great value, he sells all he has and buys it.

Again, we can read this as a call for us to value the kingdom above everything else. That is true.

But through the gospel lens, we can also see the Lord as the seeker.

He is not wandering by accident.

He is looking.

He is seeking what is precious.

Jesus said the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

The merchant finds one pearl of great value.

And when he sees it, he gives everything.

That is redemption.

The Lord does not treat His people as disposable.

He does not say, "That one is too far gone."

He does not say, "That one is not worth the cost."

He does not say, "That one has too much damage."

He sees the pearl.

And He pays the price.

The blood of Christ is not cheap.

The mercy of God is not shallow.

The love of Jesus is not sentimental.

It is costly love.

Christ gave Himself for us.

The pearl is purchased by the self-giving of the Lord.

So if you hear nothing else tonight, hear this:

You are treasured by God.

Not excused in your sin.
Not left unchanged.
Not told that holiness does not matter.

But treasured.

Treasured enough for Christ to come.
Treasured enough for Christ to seek.
Treasured enough for Christ to give Himself.
Treasured enough for Christ to redeem.
Treasured enough for Christ to cleanse.
Treasured enough for Christ to make you His own.

That is not flattery.

That is gospel.

VII. The Lord Gathers and Reveals

Then Jesus gives the parable of the dragnet.

The kingdom is like a net cast into the sea. It gathers fish of every kind. When the net is full, they draw it to shore. Then the good are gathered, and the bad are thrown away.

Jesus says this points to the end of the age.

This parable reminds us that grace is wide, but it is not careless.

The Lord gathers broadly.
The invitation goes out widely.
The net is cast into the sea.

But there will be a day of truth.

There will be a shore.
There will be a sorting.
There will be a revealing.

That means being treasured by God is not permission to stay buried.

The Lord treasures us in order to redeem us.

He claims us in order to cleanse us.

He buys the treasure, but He does not leave it in the dirt.

He purchases the pearl, but He does not throw it back into the sea.

The love of God is not a love that leaves us unchanged.

So yes, you are treasured.

But because you are treasured, your life matters.

Your choices matter.
Your repentance matters.
Your healing matters.
Your surrender matters.

Your future matters.

Your holiness matters.

Grace gathers us, but holiness reveals the work of God in us.

So the seventh movement is this:

The Lord gathers widely, and He will reveal truly.

VIII. The Lord Trains His People to Carry Treasure

At the end, Jesus says every scribe trained for the kingdom is like a head of a household who brings out treasures new and old.

This is what happens to treasured people.

The Lord does not only rescue us.

He trains us.

He teaches us how to live.

He teaches us how to speak truth.

He teaches us how to love.

He teaches us how to forgive.

He teaches us how to carry Scripture.

He teaches us how to become witnesses.

Those who are treasured become stewards of treasure.

God does not redeem you so your story ends in shame.

He redeems you so your life can become a witness.

Maybe your witness begins small.

Maybe it begins with confession.

Maybe it begins with prayer.

Maybe it begins with making one thing right.

Maybe it begins with asking God to soften the soil of your heart.

But the Lord knows how to make treasured people into kingdom witnesses.

Conclusion

So let us gather the whole movement.

The Lord sows His word because He wants fruit.

The Lord plants His people and preserves them in a mixed world.

The Lord grows what begins small.

The Lord works hidden grace until the whole life begins to rise.

The Lord sees treasure buried in the field.

The Lord seeks the pearl of great value.

The Lord gives all to redeem what He loves.

The Lord gathers widely and will reveal truly.

The Lord trains His people to carry treasure to others.

And the center is this:

You are treasured by God.

You may feel buried.

You may feel overlooked.

You may feel like others only see the dirt.

You may feel like your story is already decided.

But Christ sees treasure.

The world may name you by your failure.

Jesus names you by His mercy.

The world may see what buried you.

Jesus sees what He came to redeem.

The world may say, "Not worth it."

The cross says, "Purchased with love."

So come to Him.

Let the Sower break open the soil.

Let the Master preserve you in the mixed field.

Let the mustard seed begin again.

Let the leaven of grace work deep within.

Let Christ lift the treasure from the dirt.

Let the Redeemer claim the pearl.

Let the Lord gather you into His mercy.

Let Him train your life to carry treasure.

Because the Gospel of God is this:

Christ sees treasure where sin has buried us, and He gives all to make us His own.

You are treasured by God.

Amen.