

treasure is? Jesus says in Luke 12:34, “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” meaning there your life will be focused and revolved around. Is your life, your heart, counting the treasure of the gospel the greatest treasure of all? Or could it be your heart’s focus and priorities in life reflects other treasures? Are worldly treasures maybe more significant and more precious and real to you than the treasure of the kingdom of heaven? If being rich toward God is not your highest treasure, these two parables are meant to bring you to your senses and to call you to seek first the kingdom of God and its righteousness, and all the other needs of life will be added unto you. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul is a question Jesus would always have us keep in mind.

We are still on the first point about the supreme worth of the gospel treasure. It is striking that these parables are especially told only to the disciples, according to verse 36. No doubt Jesus would make so clear to them the riches of the gospel as a necessary detail also of truly being witnesses of the gospel. What so often hinders confessing Christians and keeps them from testifying of the gospel as we might and should? Is it not that we are not enough persuaded or aware of, or personally conscious of the inexpressible, incomparable, incredible, everlasting quality and quantity of the riches of God in Christ Jesus? Can you be content with small supplies of the riches of God for us? How is it we can have so little attention for the surpassing gospel riches, while it seems we have unending attention for this world’s fleeting and even often sinful riches? Is the problem in the Christian church perhaps not here in part? We say we know the riches of God in Christ Jesus but we participate in and enjoy them so little, being so distracted by so much earthly and worldly things instead. Are you convicted by this? We surely can learn from these two parables Jesus gives us here in our text, how much, and how much more and more we should view highly the riches of the kingdom of heaven.

I think here of words from Octavius Winslow: “Behold the strength of Immanuel’s love. Come, fall prostrate, adore, and worship Him. Oh, what love was His! Oh, the depth! Content not [yourself] with standing upon the shore of this ocean. Enter into it, drink largely from it.... Be not satisfied with small supplies. The larger the demand, the larger the supply. The more needy, the more welcome. The more vile, the more fit.” Do you so taste and know the Lord’s richness and goodness that you so testify of Christ to others in your homes and church and community? Do we, you and I, so know and promote the Saviour and His kingdom? Amen.

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**BANNER OF TRUTH RADIO BROADCAST**  
*Radio Ministry of the FREE REFORMED CHURCHES of North America*

*Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)*



### ADVERTISING THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN [1]

Advertising is a multi-billion dollar business by itself in our times. We hear and see advertisements all the time from all different companies and concerning all kinds of products. Every advertisement wants to tell and convince us what they have to offer is the very best for you and for me. Lots of advertisements are such exaggerations too....and generally, you are wise not to believe the half that is told you from them.

But with the message for today, as well as next week, I may point you to two similar parables of Jesus where He, as it were, advertises the kingdom of heaven, telling of it’s inestimable worth, showing how important it is, and what it means to be a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. With many advertisements of this world, especially on television, people have a habit of changing channels when they come on, but I would urge you with all my heart to stay tuned to this station here and now as we listen to Jesus, the Son of God, proclaim the infinite worth of that kingdom and its gospel!

Only Matthew records for us these two parables, the one about the treasure found in the field, and the other about this pearl of great price that was found. Let me just read these two parables given in Matthew 13:44-46. There Jesus says, “*Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man has found, he hides [it], and for the joy thereof goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly [beautiful and precious] pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.*”

There is, as one put it, “a tingling excitement” with both these parables as both are about finding great riches and treasures of priceless worth. Who doesn’t dream of finding such treasure, and who doesn’t enjoy reading books about great treasure hunts? Jesus, even teaching about the kingdom of heaven by the treasure and pearl parables, seeks to gain our attention, and calls us to listen for sure! Jesus is not speaking of earthly treasures but using the pictures He does, as Master Advertiser He would awaken us to hear Him and make plain what He was and is about as Saviour of sinners. Jesus is not out to gain from proclaiming and promoting what He has to offer, but He would have us truly gain from what He has to offer and promote. In all His promotion, Jesus doesn’t exaggerate in any way with all that He says but only always speaks the truth, the pure and absolute gospel.

I like what John Calvin writes in explanation of these parables. "These parables are intended to instruct believers", writes this old time reformer, "to prefer the kingdom of heaven to the whole world, and therefore to deny ourselves all the desires of the flesh and this world that may prevent us from obtaining so valuable a possession. We are greatly in need of such warning, for we are so captivated by the allurements of the world, that eternal life fades from our view; and in consequence of our carnality, the spiritual graces of God are far from being held by us in the estimation which they deserve. Justly, therefore, does Christ speak in such lofty terms of the excellence of eternal life, that we ought not to feel uneasiness at relinquishing or giving up, on account of it, whatever we reckon or consider in other respects to be valuable."

With this introduction, will you listen carefully now to these two parables of Jesus under the theme, 'Owning the inestimable worth of the gospel'. These parables are about not only the riches of the gospel, but realizing this for yourself. Consider now with me the supreme worth of the gospel treasure, the openness of that treasure to all, and the sure sign of receiving and keeping this treasure.

Taking both parables together for now [later I will explain some differences in them], can you tell in what various ways the message that the kingdom of heaven and belonging to it has to be just the greatest blessing in all the world comes out? The main purpose of both stories is to tell the surpassing worth of the kingdom of God, and every detail of each parable serves to underscore this point. Think of this man who found a treasure in a field. Isn't it true that the ecstatic joy of the man finding hidden wealth underscores the worth of the treasure? Further, his fear lest his new found secret could not be kept, and therefore his hiding the treasure underscores again the inestimable worth of the treasure he found! And then, the man's eagerness to purchase the field, regardless of the cost, and being willing to sell all that he had to buy that field and claim that treasure as his own all tells that this must have been some treasure! We are left with the impression also that the man never regretted buying the field and so obtaining the treasure. The message Jesus gives is that the man made the wisest move you could ever make!

Likewise, with the second parable, the persistent search of this pearl-collector for the one all-time pearl tells what a treasure the kingdom of heaven and its gospel message truly is! This merchant's passion for that one pearl regardless of all the other beautiful pearls he had seen and sold, and his willingness to part with everything for the sake of that one pearl, called also *the pearl of great price*, all serves to show the preciousness of the riches of the kingdom of heaven. Again too, Jesus leaves us with the impression that what this merchant did here was not some foolish thing, but the best and wisest thing of all, and something he never lived to regret! You

see, the kingdom of heaven and belonging to it is the ultimate blessing, the glory and worth of which makes all other riches of no worth, as it were. This is what Jesus makes so clear in these two simple parables.

Now you may say to me, 'Why don't you tell us something new, tell us something we don't know.' Who doesn't know that nothing can compare to being a Christian, an adopted child of our dear heavenly Father, a child of the King of kings and citizen of His kingdom, a living member of His Church, His body, and His family? Even if you know it so well, is there anyone who will say that you can't use a reminder of this gospel truth? And who doesn't know, while *you* by God's grace may realize this gospel truth that nothing can compare to being a Christian and that the poorest saint is infinitely richer by far than the wealthiest sinner, yet how many don't know this truth and fail yet to realize it altogether, and need still to have their eyes and heart opened to the riches of the gospel of Jesus Christ?

Could you explain further what the riches of the gospel of Christ are? Why is finding and belonging to the kingdom of heaven so grand and of priceless, immeasurable worth? What do we find in and with the kingdom of heaven and its message that you can obtain nowhere else, and that all the money in all the world can never buy, even for one single person? Well, the gospel of the kingdom of heaven is about the remedy from sin and evil that God has accomplished for lost sinners, in and through His Son, Jesus Christ, the Saviour of sinners. As one put it, "The treasure [in the field] and pearl of great price, both represent salvation through Jesus Christ", which, rightly estimated, is "*more to be desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold*" as we read also in Psalm 19. The gospel brings to us durable riches, lasting riches that money cannot buy, namely, the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God through Jesus' Person and Work as the once crucified and now ever living Saviour, renewal of life through His Spirit and Word and everlasting righteousness before God, and the gift of eternal life hereafter, along with the promise of a most fulfilling and fruitful life here and now. The gospel grants to us what nothing and no one can give us, namely, holiness of life, happiness of heart, and hopefulness for the present and eternal future. The gospel gives no temporary fleeting treasure, but a treasure which moth cannot corrupt, and no thief can steal. It tells of a treasure that is God-approved, and God-given, and God-blessed, and that treasure of the kingdom of heaven, Peter says in I Peter 1:4, promises an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fades not away, never, for all God's people, the true citizens of His kingdom, the true believers in Jesus Christ and followers of Him and His Word.

Are these the treasures you want most of all in life, the treasures you are pursuing above all in life, and the treasures you desire most of all for other people to find in life? Isn't it good and necessary that we stop and ask ourselves these questions and honestly examine ourselves as to where our