

Sermon for July 19, 2026 – The 8th Sunday after Pentecost

Matthew 13:44-52 EHV

Theme: The Kingdom of Heaven...

- 1) Is a hidden treasure.
- 2) Is the end of your search.
- 3) Catches all kinds, but only keeps the righteous by faith.
- 4) Offers old and new blessings to address your needs.

⁴⁴“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid again. In his joy, he goes away and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls. ⁴⁶When he found one very valuable pearl, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸When the net was filled, they pulled it onto the shore. They sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw the bad ones away. ⁴⁹That is how it will be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous who are among them. ⁵⁰And they will throw the wicked into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ⁵¹Jesus said to them, “Did you understand all these things?”

They answered him, “Yes.”

⁵²He said to them, “Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained as a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure both new things and old things.”

All people are searching for something that will bring peace, meaning, and happiness to their lives. Some look for it in material wealth. Others try to find it through volunteering, charity, or fighting for social justice. Every religion claims to offer these blessings, but there is only one who can truly grant them: the LORD Himself!

With Jesus as our guide, let us learn four truths about His kingdom and how He wants us to receive it, under the theme: **The Kingdom of Heaven...**

- 1) Is a hidden treasure.
- 2) Is the end of your search.
- 3) Catches all kinds but only keeps the righteous by faith.
- 4) Offers old and new blessings to address your needs.

Part One: The Kingdom of Heaven is a hidden treasure.

Before we proceed with our text, we should define what the kingdom of heaven actually is. To do that, let me ask another question: What is Canada? Is it merely a geographical landmass stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific? Or would you define Canada more broadly by its history, cultural diversity, government, and way of life? The concept of Canada is really a combination of all those things. In a similar way, the kingdom of heaven is more than just the place where God lives; it is also His ruling activity in the hearts of believers.

To belong to His kingdom is to live in a state of forgiveness and reconciliation with God through faith in Jesus. It means that God considers you a citizen of heaven for Jesus' sake, granting you all the rights, privileges, responsibilities, and protections that citizenship includes. Members of Christ's kingdom think differently from the world around them. Instead of seeking our own interests and pleasures, we seek to glorify Jesus, who rescued us from our empty way of life and from the hell we deserved for our sins. He did this not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood, giving His life in exchange for ours on the cross.ⁱ

The kingdom of heaven is therefore a remarkable treasure, purchased for us by Jesus Himself. It is a restored relationship with God that not only gives us hope for the future but also purpose, peace, and protection now, as we live as foreigners in this world and wait for Christ to bring us home.

Because of all these blessings, Jesus says:

⁴⁴ *“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid again. In his joy, he goes away and sells all that he has and buys that field.”*

Picture the scene: a treasure lies in the field for anyone to take, but people pass it by unknowingly. Such is the kingdom of heaven. God's Word is within everyone's reach. Christ's forgiving love is openly proclaimed, but people pass it by. Why? Consumed with their own thoughts about life, they either don't notice the treasure standing before them or don't understand its worth.

Thankfully, the LORD does not allow His treasure to remain hidden. Using the conscience, God moves people to feel the burden of guilt and shame so that they begin to desire relief. More importantly, He sends His Spirit to open our eyes so that we see the treasure of His Gospel waiting there for us to have.

When that happens, we no longer want to let it go. Like the man in the parable who joyfully sold everything to obtain the field, newly converted Christians cling to Christ above all else. They willingly give up everything that tempts them away from the great treasure they found in Jesus.

Notice the man's attitude as he sells everything to purchase the field. There is no hesitation or regret, only joy. Why? Because he knows the value of the treasure.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: do you have that same joy in Christ's kingdom? Do you understand Jesus' value? Are you willing to give up everything for Him – not out of compulsion, but joyfully – confessing with the Apostle Paul:

*“I consider everything to be a loss because of what is worth far more: knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake, I have lost all things and consider them rubbish, so that I may gain Christ ⁹and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own, which comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God by faith”?*ⁱⁱ

We all have failed in this regard, haven't we? We often fall for the devil's lies as he tempts us to seek happiness, purpose, and peace in worldly things apart from Christ. In doing so, we become fools who willingly give up a golden goblet for a plastic cup, or diamonds for glass.

So how do we avoid acting so foolishly? By keeping our eyes fixed on the treasure itself. Keep looking to Jesus in repentance and faith, believing He has forgiven all your sins. Dig into the treasure of the Gospel. The more you do, the more you will rejoice in it, because you will know your search is over.

Part Two: The Kingdom of Heaven is the end of your search.

⁴⁵ *“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls.”*

As I mentioned at the beginning of this sermon, all people are searching for something that will bring purpose and peace into their lives. Their consciences testify that their lives are more than just a series of chemical reactions. Everyone is searching, but not knowing what they are looking for, their search becomes aimless, and they settle for things that offer no lasting value.

However, the person whom the Holy Spirit has awakened to repentance is like a wise merchant. He knows what he is looking for: the One who brings true happiness to his life.

⁴⁶ *When he found one very valuable pearl, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.*

The kingdom of heaven is the end of our search. Nothing has greater value or worth! Only Jesus' forgiveness can soothe our guilt-ridden souls and reconcile us to the Father. Our

searching ends with Jesus. Don't fall for the fake plastic pearls offered by the devil and his allies. To possess Jesus through faith is to possess life itself, as St. John says:

The one who has the Son has life. The one who does not have the Son of God does not have life.ⁱⁱⁱ

That is why the wise merchant and the man in the field were willing to give up everything to possess Jesus, our soul's precious pearl and priceless treasure.

Part Three: The Kingdom of Heaven catches all kinds, but only keeps the righteous by faith.

Now that we understand the tremendous value of God's kingdom, we may ask what kind of people belong to it. Jesus tells us:

⁴⁷*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind.*

As fish don't willingly swim into nets but are caught by them, so people don't naturally enter Christ's kingdom on their own. They are caught with His Gospel. What kind of people does His Gospel catch? All kinds.

The Bible does not discriminate based on ethnicity, age, gender, or physical or mental infirmity. The kingdom of heaven is for all, and therefore it catches all types of people. And because it does not discriminate against anyone, you can take comfort that it does not discriminate against you.

But Jesus also speaks of a necessary sorting that will take place at the end of time:

⁴⁸*When the net was filled, they pulled it onto the shore. They sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw the bad ones away. ⁴⁹That is how it will be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous who are among them. ⁵⁰And they will throw the wicked into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”*

Note that the fish are not sorted by type, but by whether they are good or bad. The term translated as “bad” literally means decaying or rotting. In other words, God's kingdom does not discriminate based on who a person is but only based on whether the person is spiritually alive or dead.

That raises the important question: who are the rotting fish? They are the hypocrites – people who outwardly claim to love Christ but have no genuine faith. Only God knows

who these people are, because only He can see into the heart. But Jesus wants all of us to take warning. If we neglect His Word and fail to treasure our salvation, our faith can die. We would become like the rotting fish caught in the net: present, but not alive, and destined to be discarded with every worthless and corrupt thing.

Thankfully, unlike a real fishing net, the Gospel that caught us is also the means through which God keeps us alive. So we pray, “Lord, please feed my faith through Your Word, until the day You bring me home.”

Part Four: The Kingdom of Heaven offers old and new blessings to address your needs.

After speaking these parables, Jesus asked His disciples:

“Did you understand all these things?” They answered him, “Yes.” ⁵²He said to them, “Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained as a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure both new things and old things.”

The old and new treasures are God’s Old Testament promises and their fulfillment in Christ.

Jesus wants us to use the whole treasury of His Word, not just the parts we already like. Why? Because every prophecy, command, teaching, and promise of Scripture exists for a purpose: to lead, encourage, or strengthen our faith in Christ for life in this world.

Let me explain with an example. Most children would like to avoid vegetables as much as possible, yet the vitamins and minerals they contain are essential for good health. In the same way, there are teachings in the Bible that we might not like as much as others because they are difficult to accept or hard to understand. But God still has a purpose for them. Even if we do not understand them now, He uses them to give us what we need to bless both us and others through us. Sometimes those blessings are not immediately clear, but only later, when some experience makes what we studied suddenly “click.”

As we enter the treasury of the kingdom by studying God’s Word, we find far more to love. We see that the kingdom not only gives us hope for the future, but helps us here and now.

Brothers and sisters in Christ: rejoice that God has graciously made you a disciple in His kingdom. Pursue Christ as your great hidden treasure. Understand that He is the end of your search for peace, purpose, and joy. Remember that even though Christ’s kingdom welcomes and catches all kinds of people, it only keeps those who are alive in faith. Therefore, prayerfully dig into His Word with joy, taking in the old and new blessings He gives you through it to sustain and strengthen your faith until He returns on the Last Day. Amen.

ⁱ Cf. 1 Peter 1:18-21

ⁱⁱ Philippians 3:7b-9 EHV

ⁱⁱⁱ 1 John 5:12 EHV