

2020 07 26 – Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:13-33, 44-52

I want to start today by thanking Peggy Worrell and all our readers who so capably share the biblical texts with us each Sunday. Earlier this week I got an email from Peggy. She had a question about today's reading from the gospel of Matthew. She asked me how to pronounce the word "kindom." It was a really good question and it showed that Peggy was trying to understand how this word was being used in the text.

If you recall, as she was reading today's scripture, Peggy said the word "kindom" six times. Each time it was part of the phrase "the kindom of heaven." Many of you may have assumed that Peggy was pronouncing the word incorrectly, because the more traditional translation of this phrase is "the kingdom of heaven." But in the translation that Peggy read this morning, the word was actually "kindom," that is "kin" as in family.

Peggy was reading from the Inclusive Bible, a version of the scriptures that has tried to remove patriarchal language like kingdom, master and Lord from the scriptures. In this particular case the translators went so far as to create a new word. If you check your dictionary, either the one on your shelf or one on the Internet, you won't find the word "kindom." It is a made-up word, but I like the fact that using this new word shakes us up a little, it makes us stop and think about what we are saying when we talk about the kindom or kingdom of God. The word kindom probably better reflects the type of earthly society that Jesus

was describing – a society of equals who share what they have and who serve each other, a kingdom of peace and justice. <https://eewc.com/kingdom-kingdom-beyond/>

Jesus came to this earth to share the good news of God's unconditional love and to tell us about the kind of world that is possible, the kingdom that is possible when we all accept and share God's love. He often taught about the kingdom by using parables. In today's scripture reading there are actually six different parables, each one with its own unique description of the kingdom of heaven. Today we will be talking about two of those parables—the ones in the middle of the text—the ones that talk about hidden treasure.

In both parables someone discovers an item of great value, something that gives them great joy. So I invite you to think of a time in your life when you have made such a discovery, when you have found something that has given you incredible joy. I remember falling in love for the first time. I remember my first canoe trip in Northern Ontario. I remember finally answering my call to ministry. Some of us may remember discovering the joy of parenthood, or a special gift in sports or art or engineering. Some of us may have discovered the joy of gardening or hiking or singing or volunteering. Some of us may remember the first time we felt a connection to the sacred, the first time we heard and answered that still small voice calling us from within.

I invite you to remember the thrill of discovery and the sense of joy that it brought you. And then I want you to think about what you had to give up in order to keep that sense of joy, in order to own whatever it was that you discovered. For

instance, falling in love is wonderful, but there are lots of sacrifices that come with making a commitment to one person: we give up our single lives. our space, our routines, time with our friends and family of origin; we have to learn how to compromise; how to live together. I remember when I discovered my call to ministry how difficult it was to let go of my identity as an IBM'er and the financial security that it provided. I remember having to let go of fear and anxiety and all the voices inside of me that told me I wasn't worthy and I couldn't do it. I remember having to let go of my church family and my home in Toronto. Every time we find a hidden treasure within us and experience the joy that it brings us , we also have to let go of some of the parts of our current identity.

In both of today's parables the people have to let go of something in order to own the hidden treasure that they have found. The one who discovered the buried treasure in a field, went and sold all their possessions and bought the field. The merchant who, after searching, found the one pearl of great value, sold everything else and bought it.

It's interesting to note that what we need to let go of isn't always bad. The merchant had, no doubt, invested a lot of time and energy creating a collection of pearls. But now he has to let go of them in order to take up something more important, something of greater value. This is hard. It is not easy to discern what is good and what is better. Even good things can be distractions. We can spend our time doing good things for others and having interesting experiences, while the centre of our life remains curiously empty. The merchant, although he has

found many good pearls, remains thirsty for the one of great value, the pearl which constitutes the core of God's call for him.

What treasure is waiting to be found in side of you? What is God calling you to do or be in this moment? What parts of your life do you need to let go of? What things, good or bad, are holding you back from your true calling?

The good news is that when we search our hearts and find our own hidden treasure we also find joy, a joy that comes from the sacred, a joy which is authentic. When we find this joy, then our attachment to other things will be loosened, our priorities will be modified. And we will be ready to let our lives be turned upside down in ways we could not foresee, in ways we could not have managed simply by will-power.

In these parables Jesus is telling us that we can all live lives of true joy, that we can all do what is necessary to find and to keep our hidden treasures. When we live our lives from this place of truth and joy, then we are doing our part in creating God's kindom of heaven, God's reign of peace and justice on earth.