



## river west church

### Parables Part 1:

Searching for the Treasure of the Gospel

Matthew 13:44-46

Pastor Adam McMurray

7.11.2010

### **Summer Series: The Parables of Jesus**

Our series in Galatians has been very rich and has encouraged many of us to grow in our understanding and application of the Gospel. It has been a great reminder for many not to assume that we have mastered Gospel truth, nor to see the Gospel as “baby food” or the ABC’s of the Christian faith. If there is one thing we have learned, it’s that you never move beyond the Gospel to something deeper.

That’s why I’m so excited for our summer series! In many ways it will be a continuation of the themes of the book of Galatians, with one exception...we are going to hear these themes from the teaching of Jesus himself! During His earthly ministry, the Bible tells us that Jesus often instructed the people by speaking to them in parables (Matthew 13:34; Mark 4:33). In fact, in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) fully a third of Jesus’ teaching comes in parabolic form. If nothing else this tells us that the parables were a central method in Jesus’ preaching ministry and therefore worthy of our investigation.

Many people, when they think of the parables, think of simple stories that illustrate Biblical truth. The problem with this definition is that many of the parables are the furthest thing from simple. In fact, often they are really hard to figure out. Furthermore, Jesus rarely explains to His listeners the meaning of the parable, nor the Biblical truth that He is seeking to highlight. It’s as if Jesus, in His teaching ministry, was testing the hearts of His listeners to see if they really wanted to grasp the treasures of the Kingdom of God.

### **You Won’t Get It Unless You Really Want It**

How do you engage a person with a truth that won’t impact them if it stays in their head alone? The answer is; you veil that truth in a form of teaching that requires the listener to engage and participate in order to discover the meaning. This is what Jesus was doing when He spoke in parables.

The word ‘parable’ literally means “putting things side by side”. It is an indirect way of communicating a Gospel truth, which demands the hearer to engage and ultimately to respond and commit. If you don’t want to understand the meaning and value of a parable, you surely won’t. But, for the person who is longing for Gospel truth, who thinks of the good news of the Kingdom as the greatest treasure of all, the parables are rich with meaning and application.

### **Searching for Spiritual Treasure**

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells two parables side by side that describe the discovery of a great treasure. The “Parable of the Hidden Treasure” and the “Parable of the Pearl of Great Value” both compare the Kingdom to a treasure that is so valuable, that the person, who stumbles upon it, gladly loses everything to get that treasure. There is a wonderful Gospel truth here that will be central to our study through the parables. A person does not inherit the Kingdom of God because they are really good, because they are really spiritual, or because they try really hard.

The Kingdom is given freely to the person who really wants it. The good news of the Kingdom is “good” because a person realizes what a treasure it truly is!

As we study the parables, I believe that Jesus wants to capture our hearts with the treasure of the Gospel. He wants us to move beyond mere mental comprehension to heart level response and commitment! The parables are going to test your heart and reveal your true desire for Gospel truth. Is the good news of the Kingdom your greatest treasure? Do you long for it? Are you searching it out? Have you given up everything for the Kingdom of God? My prayer for our church is that we will experience a dramatic transformation as we treasure and respond to the Gospel truths in the parables.