

***THE KING'S KINGDOM
MATTHEW 13:44-52***

In our political process, whenever there is an election voters want to know in advance, “If you are elected what will you do?” “What will life be like under your leadership?” We want to know if taxes will be raised, if there will be new liberties granted, or if liberties will be restricted. We want to know the candidate’s positions on things like abortion, end-of-life issues, gambling, fiscal policies, national defense, gun rights, and more. We are trying to get a glimpse of his leadership abilities and how he will care for his people.

The desire to know those things is natural — I suppose all men have always wanted to know these things about their incoming leaders. That is true of our Savior, Jesus, as well. He came 2000 years ago as promised Messiah and the everlasting King of Israel. Both He and John asserted that the nation of Israel could have her Messiah if she turned from her sin: “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand” (3:2; 4:17).

What would life in His kingdom look like? In Matthew 13, Jesus begins to unfold some particulars about His Kingdom through eight parables. Four of those parables were spoken in public to the crowds (13:1-2) and four of those parables were told in a home, in private to the disciples (13:36). It is those private parables that we want to consider this morning, to see one picture of what life in the King’s Kingdom will be like.

Jesus is the greatest King of the greatest Kingdom. That Kingdom is postponed in its timing, divine in its source, invaluable in its worth, relentless in its judgment, and essential for spreading. We can say from this passage that —

THE GREATEST MYSTERIES OF KING JESUS' KINGDOM HAVE BEEN REVEALED.

King Jesus answers the question, “what is Your Kingdom like?” by revealing **five characteristics** of that Kingdom:

1. **The King’s Kingdom Was REJECTED (12:24; 13:10ff)** — why was a “new” Kingdom revealed?
2. **The King’s Kingdom is from HEAVEN (v. 44a)** — what is the source of this Kingdom?
3. **The King’s Kingdom is VALUABLE (vv. 44b-46)** — what is the worth of this Kingdom?
4. **The King’s Kingdom is for JUDGMENT (vv. 47-50)** — what is the danger of this Kingdom?
5. **The King’s Kingdom is for SPREADING (vv. 51-52)** — what should be done about the Kingdom?

1. The King's Kingdom Was REJECTED (12:24; 13:10ff) — why was a “new” Kingdom revealed?

- Beginning with John the Baptist's declaration (3:2) and then His own preaching ministry (4:17), Jesus was presented as the promised Messiah who would inaugurate His Messianic Kingdom.
 - ✓ Both John the Baptist and Jesus declared it was “at hand” — that is, immanent and would be inaugurated as soon as the nation repented and embraced Christ in faith.
 - ✓ Both John and Jesus were offering and anticipating a Kingdom that would fulfill OT promises made to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), Moses (Dt. 28-30), David (2 Sam. 7:16), and Jeremiah (31:31-34).
 - ✓ This Kingdom is conditioned on repentance (Lev. 16:40-45); both John & Jesus emphasize this.
 - ✓ In His first major teaching, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke of an inheritance of land (Mt. 5:5).
 - ✓ In Luke 19:42, the people are told they could have had peace and in v. 44 Jesus weeps over Israel because she did not recognize the Messiah and repent (and thus the kingdom was postponed).
 - ✓ The offer of the Kingdom was for the literal Kingdom and a genuine offer.
- Despite the offer of the Messianic Kingdom, which all Israel has always wanted (and still wants), *Israel rejected Jesus as Messiah* — and in the clearest form of rejection (12:24). Jesus then declared the folly of their reasoning (12:27) and the sin of their blasphemy (12:32 — the sin against the Spirit).
 - ✓ Following that rejection, Jesus changes His approach in His public ministry — he moves to teaching in parables (13:3) — not to reveal truth in a creative way, but to hide truth from those who rejected Him (13:10, 13). This “hiding” ministry was prophesied by Isaiah (Mt. 13:14-15).
 - ✓ The Messianic Kingdom of Jesus was rejected; the Kingdom would not be fulfilled at the first advent of Jesus but would come at a later time, though the promise would still be fulfilled (Lk. 19:11ff).
 - ✓ Until the Kingdom is established at His second coming, there is an intermediary age between the two advents; there is still growth and expansion of citizens of the Kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13). But the fulfillment of the Kingdom and all its promises is not until later.
 - ✓ While the Kingdom was postponed, that did not mean that Christ was not still King. He was (and is) King — and He indicates that there is a “new” kind of “temporary” kingdom until the MK (13:11).
 - ✓ The parables of Matthew 13 tell us what life in this time between the two advents of Jesus is like — Jesus is revealing *mysteries* of His Kingdom (13:11) — things that had been hidden and unknown in the OT, but He is now revealing (and still keeping hidden from those who rejected Him).

2. The King's Kingdom is from HEAVEN (v. 44a) — what is the source of this Kingdom?

- When Jesus speaks about the Kingdom, He calls it the **Kingdom of Heaven**.
 - ✓ That title is used 32x in Scripture, and every reference is in Matthew — it's a Matthean term.
 - ✓ (In fact all four of these parables are related only by Matthew; we understand that these are particularly important for the Jewish people, though it certainly has implications for us also.)
 - ✓ The temptation is to think that Jesus means “a kingdom that is about Heaven” — and to think that this is about life in Heaven, in contrast to life on earth (and that it has nothing to do with earth).
- However, the title is indicating the source of the Kingdom — it is the Kingdom that is *from Heaven*.
 - ✓ That is, it has its origin in Heaven — it's not an earthly creation, but a heavenly designed plan.
 - ✓ It is a parallel term to “Kingdom of God” (Mt. 19:23-24; Mt. 3:2 // Mk. 1:15; Mt. 13:11 // Mk. 4:11).
 - ✓ So the term simply means that this Kingdom is God's plan, God's purpose, and God's work. He has promised it and He will bring it to completion.
 - ✓ It also means that it is dependent on Him and we can trust (no matter who rejects the plan or the Messiah) that He will fulfill His promise. The Kingdom of Heaven cannot be subverted.
 - ✓ The four parables that Jesus spoke in private to the disciples (Mt. 13:36) explain the nature of Christ's Kingdom while we wait for His second coming and the full Millennial Kingdom...

3. The King's Kingdom is VALUABLE (vv. 44b-46) — what is the worth of this Kingdom?

- The first parable says that the Kingdom **is like a treasure that is hidden in a field**.
 - ✓ Now it seems to us that it would be unusual to hide treasures like this. But remember the times: there were no banks and safe-deposit boxes at the time and long journeys were not uncommon (e.g., annual trips to Jerusalem) and invasion from other nations and looting was not uncommon.
 - ✓ So people would at times bury their valuables to hide them from thieves or looters. And sometimes they would die before they returned to unearth the treasure. That apparently happened in this story. So the **man** [who] **found** the treasure reburied it and then **buys** the field legally (he didn't just walk away with the field; he gave the new owner fair value for the field — in fact, he may have “overpaid,” since he had to **sell all that he had** to acquire the field).
 - ✓ The point is that whatever he had to give up to get the field (and the treasure), it was worthwhile.
- The second parable parallels the first parable — the Kingdom **is like a merchant seeking fine pearls...**
 - ✓ Here the story is about a **merchant** — a jewelry wholesaler; unlike the first parable where the man “stumbles” across the treasure, the merchant is actively looking for something valuable.

- ✓ He found **one pearl** (we can imagine that he usually purchased many pearls on his buying trips). And that one pearl out-valued everything else he owned, including the complete value of all his other jewels and all his other pearls. So he sold everything and bought the one pearl.
- ✓ “No cost is too great when it is a matter of gaining the kingdom. The sacrifice of all that a man has is not too much [to pay for the Kingdom].” [Morris]

- To say that King Jesus’ kingdom is “valuable” is an immense understatement.

- ✓ In 2016 an unnamed man went to an estate sale and purchased a sketch of a mother and child — it was a **charming sketch** and a reasonable price — \$30.
- ✓ When he bought the sketch, he noticed the signature at the bottom — one of the most famous **monograms**, the classic A/D of Albrecht Dürer. When he bought it he knew it wasn’t genuine; he just loved the picture — it was “a wonderfully rendered piece of old art.” One of the owners of the Agnews Gallery in London heard about the sketch and had other ideas after he and numerous other experts examined it: “It was either the greatest forgery I have ever seen—or a masterpiece.” The sketch is scheduled to go on sale eventually and it is estimated it [may sell for as much as \\$50M](#).
- ✓ What would you give to get a sketch like that? For most of us, it would be worth selling all.
- ✓ For all of us, selling all (sacrificing all) to gain Christ and His righteousness is worthwhile.
- ✓ Jesus doesn’t mean “sell your possessions to buy salvation” — He means, give up what you think you can do to attain righteousness and seek the righteousness only Christ provides (**Mt. 6:33**).
- ✓ Citizenship in the Kingdom of Christ is worth anything we give up to gain Him (e.g., suffering [**2 Cor. 4:16-18**], self-righteousness [**Phil. 3:8-11**], or sin [**1 Cor. 6:9-11**; **Rom. 14:17**; 1 Thess. 2:10-12]).



4. **The King’s Kingdom is for JUDGMENT (vv. 47-50) — what is the danger of this Kingdom?**

- The first two parables revealed the benefits and value of the Kingdom; this parable reveals a warning about the Kingdom — there is judgment attached to the Kingdom (similar to tares parable, **vv. 37-43**).
- ✓ **The Kingdom is like a dragnet** — fishermen would use a long net that was 3-4 feet tall and very long that is dragged and pulled back to shore. It would snare everything in its wake.
- ✓ After it is **drawn up on the beach**, the fishermen would sort through the **good** and **bad** fish. There are two words that are usually used to contrast between good and bad, but here Jesus changes the word for **bad** — he uses a word that means “rotten, spoiled, putrid.” These are fish that are not just “not good eating,” but they are “dead, decaying, and deadly” fish.
- ✓ That’s a good analogy for those who don’t make it into the Kingdom. They are utterly worthless.

- This fishing image is the way ***it will be at the end of the age.***
 - ✓ That is, this judgment will happen at the end of this age before the start of the Kingdom (25:31ff).
 - ✓ So in the current “kingdom” (current age between two advents), kingdom citizens (believer) and non-citizens (unbelievers) live together; at the end of this time, there will be a judgment to determine who is fit to enter into the Millennial Kingdom of Christ.
 - ✓ ***The angels*** will participate in carrying out the judgement of Christ as they come with Him (25:31).
 - ✓ The point of the parable is that judgment is inevitable as part of this Kingdom — it is inescapable. It is a reminder that “being gathered” does not imply inherent safety. There will be safety for some that are gathered, but not all. There will be an evaluation of all men in that day; only those who are ***righteous*** will survive — all others will be sent to judgment. And by way of reminder, the only way to be righteous is to either have absolute righteousness (5:48) or to rely on the One who fulfilled the Law and is righteous for us (5:17, 20; cf. 5:3-4).
 - ✓ The judgement is graphic and horrific —
 - ***Furnace of fire*** — the fire refers to physical judgment and the unrelenting torment on the bodies of those who are in hell — a burning without consumption (5:22, 29). “Hell is not merely the fate of forever reliving bad memories or of going out into nothingness, as many people believe and teach. Nor is it a place where sinners will continue their sinning, unrestrained and unrebuked. There will be no pleasure at all in hell, not even the perverted pleasure of sin—only its punishment.” [MacArthur]
 - ***Weeping and gnashing of teeth*** — refers to the grief and inner anguish related to God’s wrath. The phrase is used 7x in the NT (6x by Matthew) and always with the same impact: “It leaves no doubt about the unhappiness of the final state of the lost.” [Morris]
 - ✓ This parable is a reminder to the unbeliever that as good as this world is, it will not end well for him.
 - ✓ This parable is a reminder for the believer that as bad as this world is, it will end well for him.
- If you are not a believer, then know that whether it is at this judgment or another one, you will have to stand before God and give an account for yourself. And if you are depending on your own righteousness and goodness, you will not be able to acquit yourself.
 - ✓ A common sentiment about Hell is “I’m looking forward to it; I’ll party with my friends.”
 - ✓ There is no party in Hell — there is only *unrelenting* torment and wrath. If you think you are good enough to please God without Christ, or that you have nothing to fear in Hell, then hear this Word from Christ — there is a coming judgment; it is escapable right now by trusting in Christ. But there will come a day when you cannot escape His judgment. If you are not righteous, you will be cast into that utter darkness, fire, and place of gnashing of teeth.
 - ✓ I compel, urge, and plead with you to examine your heart, repent of your sin, and trust in Christ.

5. The King's Kingdom is for **SPREADING** (vv. 51-52) — what should be done about the Kingdom?

- The point of the parables was to reveal truth about the Kingdom to the disciples and hide truth from those who had rejected Christ (vv. 10ff). In **verse 36**, the disciples had asked for an explanation of the parable of the tares. Now Jesus asks (v. 51) if the disciples ***understood all these things***.
- They affirmed that they did understand, and given Jesus' instruction in the last parable, they apparently did understand His teaching about the Kingdom (He didn't correct them).
- The final parable (**v. 52**) draws out implications of understanding these truths as kingdom citizens:
 - ✓ Jesus is making a conclusion about His teaching — ***therefore*** — there is something to do.
 - ✓ The Jewish ***scribe*** is someone who not only copied biblical manuscripts but who was an expert in understanding and interpreting the OT Law; the Twelve now assert that similarly they understand Christ's teaching — they are "***scribes***" of Christ and ***disciples*** of the ***Kingdom of Heaven***.
 - ✓ But the position of "scribe" is open to ***every*** person who has faith in Christ — including us today.
 - ✓ Christ's scribes are like ***heads of a household*** — who gives his ***treasures*** to the household.
 - ✓ Jesus is saying that their knowledge is their "treasure" that they are to share with others — they have both "old" and "new" knowledge — they have the "old" revelation about the Kingdom and the "new" (previously unrevealed) knowledge about the Kingdom. They are to share that knowledge with others — that the Messiah has come, the Messiah is coming again, and the Messiah will judge and set up His Kingdom.
 - ✓ The disciples have knowledge about the King's Kingdom, and they are responsible to share it — akin to what He will give as His final command in **28:18-20**. He has put us in His Kingdom to also make us ambassadors of His Kingdom (**2 Cor. 5:17-21**). If we won't tell, who will?
 - ✓ Said most simply, there are evangelistic implications for those of us who are in Christ's Kingdom —
 - There is a joy to the Kingdom of Christ that is worth giving up everything to gain
 - There is a judgment that is coming that is inescapable for all people
 - There is a privilege in serving the King in leading people to come to Him for righteousness.
- As we noted earlier, Jesus is the greatest King of the greatest Kingdom. That Kingdom is postponed in its timing, divine in its source, invaluable in its worth, relentless in its judgment, and essential for spreading. Christ came to offer that Kingdom to Israel, and despite their rejection, He will still fulfill His promises and has also provided a form of kingdom blessings in the interim until His great kingdom is established in Jerusalem.

BENEDICTION: **Prayer — baptism and membership**