

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

HIDDEN TREASURE

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

Parables of the Kingdom (Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52)

In addition to the two extended parables (the parable of the sower and the parable of the weeds), that Jesus goes on to interpret, in chapter 13 Matthew collects a series of shorter sayings about the kingdom of heaven. Each parable makes its own specific point. For example, the parable of the hidden treasure, which is told only in Matthew's Gospel, points to the experience of the disciples. They, too, have found treasure in Jesus and left all that they had to follow him.

Our image to stimulate reflection on this section of Matthew's parables is *hidden treasure*.

Core extract from the Gospel (Matthew 13: 44-46; for reflection throughout the week)

Jesus said, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field,
which someone found and hid;
then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has
and buys that field.
Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant
in search of fine pearls;
on finding one pearl of great value,
he went and sold all that he had and bought it.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Lord God,
your kingdom is worth more
than all human treasure.
Teach us to value your kingdom
above everything else,
that we give ourselves
to your service;
now and always.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

The Parable of the Yeast

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

Three Parables

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.'

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.'

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Treasures New and Old

'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52)

Begin to explore this selection of parables from Matthew's Gospel by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- How helpful do you find the image of the Kingdom of Heaven as hidden treasure or a precious pearl?
- How do you rate the behaviour of the person who found the treasure?
- How do you rate the behaviour of the merchant who bought the pearl?
- What parable would you write to make this point today?
- What do these parables say for us today?

Using your Bible

The two parables about the hidden treasure and the precious pearl belong only to Matthew's Gospel. There are two other passages only in Matthew where there is reference to pearls and to making purchases:

- Matthew 7: 6
- Matthew 25: 9

Explore passages of the Wisdom literature in the Old Testament that resonate with Matthew's parable:

- Job 28: 12-19
- Proverbs 2: 1-5
- Proverbs 8: 10, 11, 19

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Exploring online

Widen your exploration of Matthew's parables about the hidden treasure and the precious pearl by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Parables of the hidden treasure and the precious pearl
- Godly play parable of the treasure (YouTube)
- Images and pictures of the parable of the hidden treasure

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on Matthew's parables about the hidden treasure and the precious pearl is *hidden treasure*. Draw on your experience of hidden treasure. For example:

- Reflect on something that you have found.
- Reflect on something that you regard as priceless.
- Reflect on how much you value your religious faith.

What have you learned about hidden treasure?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the theme of Matthew's parables about the hidden treasure and the precious pearl or by the image of hidden treasure.

- Create a picture or make a model of Treasure Island.
- Make a collage of pictures of 'priceless' things.
- Re-tell the parables of hidden treasure and the priceless pearl in contemporary ways.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the theme of Matthew's parables of the hidden treasure and the precious pearl or on the image of hidden treasure.



**Liverpool
Cathedral**

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Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales.



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