

## **Matthew 13:44**

Almost every Bible commentator puts you and me as the subject in this parable. This means that we are trespassers and thieves. We trespass on another man's field looking for a treasure he is unaware of. Finding the treasure, while trespassing, we shamefully cover it up to hide it. In this way we can buy the man's field because he would not see the treasure it contained. This, in essence, amounts to nothing less than stealing.

But it's okay, say the Bible commentators, because the treasure we find is Jesus and His kingdom. Therefore we must do whatever it takes: right or wrong, ethical or unethical, to have Jesus and His kingdom for ourself.

But why would the subject of this parable be us when the other parables in Matthew 13 have Jesus as the subject? We should not suddenly switch gears. And so we won't. It's Jesus who is the trespasser and thief...not us. He searches for treasure in another man's field. Finding the treasure He is looking for, He covers it up and He buys that field. Jesus is the subject here. This makes us the object; the object of His search.

You, my friend, are the treasure. But you were not sitting in a royal palace. You and I were hidden in a man's field. How did we get there? Satan threw us there. It's his field. He's the man who owns the field in the parable. Into his field we were born. That's how we got there. He is the prince of this world because ever since Adam and Eve fell into sin, he claimed them and all of their children.

We are in his field, but he hardly treats us like treasure. We're covered in dirt. Field mice scamper over us. Moles dig around us. Cattle do their thing on us. That's life in Satan's field. It's the world we live in. It's not heaven. It's not hell either. It's life lived in the dirt.

But Jesus came looking for you. You were lost treasure; lost back in Eden. Once you were His, for He made you. But the devil took you away from God. But like a woman searching for her lost coin, and a shepherd searching for his lost sheep, Jesus came looking for you. And He found you. You did not find Him any more than a lost coin can find the one searching for it.

In the water of baptism Jesus found you. And He was trespassing to do this. This is why Satan is renounced in the Order of Holy Baptism. Jesus treads all over him; all over his field, in His search for you. And in His joy in finding you, He buys you for Himself and renounces Satan's claim on you.

So does Jesus then put you, His treasure, in a royal palace? No. In the parable He covers the treasure. He hides it in the dirt. The same dirt in which He found you, He covers back over you. And so your life and mine is lived in the dirt even though Jesus found us, bought us, and claimed us.

We're covered with the same dirt that covers our non-Christian neighbors. We get the same sicknesses and diseases they get. We deal with the same problems, the same heartaches. We have the same surgeries on knees, shoulders, and back. And death will claim us just as it claims them. We're all in the field together covered with dirt.

But we're treasure, Jesus' treasure...so we're supposed to have joy. Well, sometimes we don't much feel like rejoicing. The dirt gets into our eyes, and we well up with tears. The dirt gets into our body, and we

develop cancer. The dirt gets into our bank account, and we have money problems. The dirt gets into our relationships, and even daily life becomes difficult.

But we're treasure...so says the parable. Does the person sitting next to you look like treasure? He or she is thinking the same thing about you. Instead of seeing treasure, we see dirt. We see glaring weaknesses and offenses. We see sinfulness in others and in ourselves.

What is treasure supposed to look like? Shiny silver and gold? That's how we perceive it. But it's not what Jesus calls treasure. He sees you as treasure, even with all the dirt and filthiness in your life. He did not go looking for treasure in a palace or mansion. He went looking for you and me in Satan's dirty field.

How are we supposed to believe that we are treasure when we sure don't look like it, or act like it? The only way is to hear exactly what it is Jesus sold and gave up to purchase you for Himself. Not a few coins. Not even all the gold and silver in the highest heavens. Jesus purchased you by giving Himself up for you. His holy precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death...this was the price He paid to have you.

If you were browsing through an antique shop and saw a broken piece of pottery with a sticker price of \$30 million attached to it, you would say that shop owner was insane. A worthless piece of broken junk for thirty million dollars? Jesus paid that price. Even more, He paid the ultimate price for you and me. Either He's insane, or He really does love you that much.

And not just you...He bought the whole field. "*For God so loved the world...*" He saw you as treasure, and He purchased not just you with His precious blood; He purchased everyone in all the world. Some people are more covered with dirt than others. Not only that, they seem to like the dirt, and they like throwing it at others. Jesus bought them also. The price He paid on Calvary's cross was not for one plot in the field. He redeemed every sinner Satan had taken away from Him...even the most filthy sinner in the entire field.

So it doesn't matter who you are, or how filthy you are. Jesus redeemed you. He paid the price to claim you for Himself. Who, me? Yes, you. Every last one of you is a treasure in the eyes of your Lord. Everyone of you is forgiven of all the filth in your past. The water of baptism cleanses every sinful stain you have. No exceptions.

This parable contains five active verbs. The subject does all five. This is the evidence of God's love for you. Jesus finds you...first verb. He covers you...second verb. He goes, and He sells all He has, and He buys the field...verbs 3, 4, and 5. The action is done by your God. You and I just sit there in the dirt. You do nothing. Jesus does everything for you. But this is not to say that you do nothing in response. If you believe this parable...if you believe that you are the treasure Jesus found, covered, bought, and claimed, then this will show in your life.

Your life may be lived in the dirt, but the dirt is not your real home. Treasure belongs in a palace, a mansion. And Jesus is preparing your room there. When it's ready, He will take you there. Until then, you can rejoice, even when the dirt gets in your eyes and everywhere else. Your Lord found you, and He has joy over you. Who cares how bitter life gets here! Your royal place is coming. Amen.