

Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Costly Pearl (Matt 13:44-46)
Jesus' sequence of parables on the Kingdom of God

1. Carefully observe the Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matt 13:44). What is the Kingdom of God being compared to? What is the focus of the parable?

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matt 13:44, NKJV)

2. What do you scrutinize in the Parable of the Costly Pearl (Matt 13:45-46)? What is the Kingdom of God being compared to? What is the point of this parable?

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. (Matt 13:45-46, NKJV)

3. Why does Jesus begin the Parable of the Costly Pearl with “again?” Why are these two parables paired? What is being compared or contrasted?

4. Note that there is a sequence of parables in Matthew 13 when Jesus teaches about the Kingdom of God with: the Parable of the Sower, Parable of Weeds, Parables of the Mustard Seed and Yeast(Matt 13:44-46), Parable of the Hidden Treasure and Costly Pearl, and Parable of the Dragnet. Is there a significance in the order of His presentation? Fill in the row of the Parables of the Hidden Treasure and Costly Pearl.

Parable	Who hears Jesus' interpretation?	What is being emphasized?
1. Parable of the Sower (Matt 13:1-9; Mark 4:1-9; Luke 8:4-8)	Everyone	In contrast to Jewish expectations, the kingdom of God was not about political power or land. In His Parable of the Sower, Jesus indicates that the good news of the kingdom will be heard by all kinds of people, but only a small number will hear, understand, accept and have an abundant spiritual life from it.
2. Parable of Weeds (Matt 13:24-30, 36-43)	Disciples	In contrast to the Parable of the Sower, the Parable of the Weed presents the seed as either Believers or non-Believers. In a world that contains both Believers and non-Believers, Jesus places an emphasis on His role as Judge deploying His angels to separate non-Believers from Believers before ushering them into the Kingdom of God.
3. Parables of the Mustard Seed and Yeast (Matt 13:31-33; Mark 4:30-32; Luke 13:18-21)	Everyone	The Parable of the Mustard Seed places an emphasis in the power of the seed; its small size belies how big the plant will ultimately be. In like manner, the small and humble beginning of Jesus' ministry belies the future glory of the kingdom of God. In the Parable of the Yeast, the kingdom begins in a small way; however, unlike the mustard seed, yeast does not grow. Instead yeast transforms and changes the flour into dough; the kingdom of God is a small living agent that, once initiated, cannot stop until it transforms and changes completely.
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Teacher Notes

1. Carefully observe the Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matt 13:44). What is the Kingdom of God being compared to? What is the focus of the parable?

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. (Matt 13:44, NKJV)

Ask the student: what is the Kingdom of Heaven being compared to? What is Jesus saying about the worth of the Kingdom of Heaven? Is the Kingdom of Heaven different from the Kingdom of God?

The simile Jesus uses is “the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field.” Jesus is emphasizing the desirable worth of the kingdom of heaven. In His description of the laborer who is joyful of the find and sells all that he has to buy the land, Jesus is placing a context to the value of the kingdom of heaven; no earthly possession is worth more.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the same as the Kingdom of God.

Jesus is not concerned about the morality of the laborer, He is focused on the laborer's joy of discovery and subsequent action to acquire the land.

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Ask the student: is the Kingdom of Heaven being compared to the costly pearl or the merchant? What is it worth?

Jesus' point of comparison is with the costly pearl not the merchant.

The Kingdom of Heaven is greatly desired and worth everything one owns.

3. Why does Jesus begin the Parable of the Costly Pearl with “again?” Why are these two parables paired? What is being compared or contrasted?

Jesus begins the parable with the word “again,” which connects the Parable of the Costly Pearl with the preceding Parable of the Hidden Treasure.

Ask the student: contrast the laborer of the Parable of the Hidden Treasure with the merchant of the Parable of the Costly Pearl. How did each find their object? What did they know? How much did they pay?

The laborer accidentally discovers the hidden treasure; the knowledgeable merchant is searching for fine pearls in the market place.

Both laborer and merchant recognize the worth of their valuable object, and both sell everything to purchase it.

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4. Parables of the Hidden Treasure and Costly Pearl (Matt 13:44-46)	Everyone	Jesus emphasizes the desirable worth of the kingdom of heaven. The laborer who accidentally finds the hidden treasure sells all that he has to buy the land. The merchant, who is seeking beautiful pearls, finds one so exquisite that he sells all that he has to buy it. The pairing of the two parable juxtaposes two different types of people. In the Parable of the Hidden Treasure, a man accidentally discovers something valuable. In the Parable of Costly Pearl, the man is searching for something valuable. In like manner, one may hear of the Good News when he least expects it or when he might be searching for the truth amidst the marketplace of ideas.