

The One About the precious treasure and pearl.

Series: The Big Story of the Kingdom of God
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Kingdom of God.

So, we started the series on the Big story of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is the story throughout scripture and the central story in the life of Jesus.

You see we have been created to be narrative creatures. Human beings love a good story. This is why God, in Jesus, comes to us as a storytelling rabbi. Every time we here a good story it captivates us, we see ourselves in that story.

Jesus started a revolution that has lasted over 2000 years. Even those who do not think him God agree that he is the most influential teacher of all time. He has changed cultures, civilisations and lives.

No tanks, no wars, no political party, no PhD, no family name really. Jesus just told the most revolutionary story.

This should tell you just how much human beings are creatures of stories. is how big a deal stories are to humanity.

So what story are you leaning into? What story are you living out? Is it our cultures story? Is it the story of your preferred political party? Is it the Do you realize it has the power to impact all of your life and that of generations to come?

But you know, that would make one think that Jesus told stories so that he is understood. I mean, isn't it every teacher's goal to be understood? Quite the contrary. Jesus does tell parables because they are not easy to understand. I read some of his stories here and I am going, "That just does not make sense or sit right with me."

You think I'm kidding? Here is Jesus in his own words

His disciples asked him what this parable meant. He said, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that,

***“though seeing, they may not see;
though hearing, they may not understand.’***

Luke 8:9-10

Jesus isn't teaching in parables to be understood.

So if the big story of the Kingdom is that important, why would he use these small stories with hidden meanings?

I think, one the stories are not obvious because human beings often ignore the obvious. Even the most powerful thing when it is so obvious we ignore it. Have you ever realised the most interesting series and shows always have such suspense you hate it but cannot stop. There is a mystery behind them. You think you have them figured out but you have not.

There is a great series I watched many years ago about some 2 kids who were being framed for some terrorist activity. It was so captivating and we knew who was behind all that. It was the Deputy Director of the CIA. Then in the last episode of the season, he was killed off. Wait a minute, who is behind it then? So what do you do in that case? You wait for the next season. Simply, you lean in.

Jesus is using parables to invite you to lean in. They are easy to remember but not necessarily easy to understand. So they stick in your mind for a long time and in the course of days, weeks, months, years or even decades the Holy Spirit reveals the truth to you. The invitation is to lean into the story.

So the big story of the Kingdom is what Jesus is inviting you too. The Kingdom of God is about the dynamic rule and reign of God. Where God's will done. When you think of you bet's dream about what the world should be like? Imagine better.

And he did this through telling small stories. Today we look at the one with precious pearls and valuable treasure.

Let's pray

The Parable of the Hidden Treasure

“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.

The Parable of the Pearl of Great Price

***“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.
Two short ones. Great. But loaded. So some truths to pick out from both.***

Matthew 13:44-46

One, the Kingdom of God is the most valuable thing one can find. Here is one way to look at it. Think of the what you think is really the good life. For a moment, don't think about the narcissistic stuff where you are driving the biggest car and you are rolling in Dubai every other weekend. Think about the things that really matter. What is the good life?

There is no more war in Afghanistan and there is no coup in Guinea because the president is not oppressive. There is no pandemic and so there is no divisive debate about the vaccine.

The good life is where you brother is freed of cancer and heartbreaking miscarriages are not even a thing.

Here is a picture of the good life painted by a prophet

***Righteousness shall be the belt of his waist,
and faithfulness the belt of his loins.
The wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat,
and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together;
and a little child shall lead them.
The cow and the bear shall graze;
their young shall lie down together;
and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra,
and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den.
They shall not hurt or destroy
in all my holy mountain;
for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord
as the waters cover the sea.***

A picture of the good life which Jesus demonstrated by healing the sick and raising the dead and freeing those under demonic oppression and welcoming those who were once excluded and speaking forgiveness to those burdened by sin, feeding the hungry. And finally reconciling everything to Himself in his death and resurrection.

All these are signs of the Kingdom of God. This is the good life. This is a reversal of everything that came with the fall.

And in our small stories today, Jesus is saying the Kingdom is the most valuable thing out there. Even your vision of the good life has got nothing on what God is inviting you to. Jesus wants you to know, it is available, it is possible, it is happening right here, right now.

For all those desperate for this vision of life. Like we said last week it takes acknowledging that God is better at life than we are. So for anyone hungry for the Kingdom. Anyone thirsting for healing, anyone burdened any life, anyone under oppression, anyone needing freedom from sin behold the Kingdom of God is way better than you can picture it. Can you believe it?

It is like priceless pearl, one you and I really cannot place a value on. It is like treasure. You find it and immediately know you have found something of so much value.

The guy with the treasure seems to just stumble upon it. Some of you just stumbled on the Kingdom of God. You weren't looking but once you find it, you know it is something you never wanna let go off.

Sometimes it is aspects of the Kingdom. I remember praying for a friend who had a bad headache that week some times back. They got better, and they were like, "It actually left". It is like stumbling on the Kingdom of God and when you do, you know the value of what you just found and you do not wanna let go of it.

In both stories, the Kingdom of God is at this time hidden. It is not obvious. It seems it is in the same vein as when Paul says that God uses what seems to be foolishness to the world. The things of the Kingdom will often not make sense in our culture or even in our own current present state desires.

When the world hears you talk about the things of the Kingdom it will often look like you have lost your mind or you have forfeited the finer life.

But for those who are being saved it is the power of God.

You actually don't know what else could make sense.

If our way of life completely makes sense to the world and maybe it is not even any different to the world around us, then maybe we should question what story we are leaning into.

The church needs to wake up and see how much we live life in the very same way as the world and the only difference being we loose 2 hours on Sunday morning.

The power of God transforms us that we begin to want that life even against our broken nature. Our view of family, politics, business, sex becomes transformed to be that one God is calling us to and it will not make sense to the world.

Because it will not be the obvious way to live life. It will be like hidden treasure or a very expensive pearl that we search for. When you pray for the sick and expect God to heal them your neighbours will think you are crazy, it is not obvious to the world.

It comes from a place of thinking there must be more than the obvious. There must be more than this defeatism that says suffering and pain is all there is. There must be more than the materialism of our culture that says accumulation of stuff is what one should live for.

Another key facet of these stories is a trade when one finds the Kingdom. So the first person finds treasure and sold everything he had up to that point to keep this treasure.

The next one is pearl merchant who is searching for the most valuable one and when he gets it, he sells everything else to just own this. Here is the thing, for those looking for real life, for the kinds of life Jesus envisioned, when you get it, it is too valuable that it will cost you everything you are too that point.

No one takes hold of the Kingdom without first letting go of everything they are. No one takes hold of the Kingdom without it first costing you everything. You do not lean on the narrative of the Kingdom and still live out the narrative of your tribe, party, country.

Even for those already leaning into God's Kingdom story, the next adventure God calls you too might cost you everything you have gotten up to that point.

You just are not ready to receive the Kingdom if you hold on to what was. And it feels terrifying but the other day a friend of mine told me that often the terrifying journeys are the ones worth taking.

Are you ready to exchange all the false identities you have had up to this point for what God is inviting you to? Are you ready to exchange all your achievements and accomplishments because what you have found in Jesus is more valuable? Are you ready to exchange all other stories you have lived by for this one.

I have met people in this church whose families rejected because they decided to follow Jesus. I have met 2 people at different times here whose lives were under threat because they decided to follow Jesus. For some of you, following Jesus will cost you your job just because that life is not compatible with the newfound life in the Kingdom.

But there is a willing exchange because there is no denying how much more valuable what Gos is offering is. There is no denying that the pearl you have found is more valuable than all. That the treasure you have found is worth more than everything you have now.

It is being just like Jesus who endured the cross because of the joy that was set before him.

It is about counting him faithful, the one who has made the promise.

I remember sitting in my friends house and we were talking about the cost of saying yes to the things of the Kingdom. They had just moved cities to plant a church in the city they had met in.

They had lost friends, lost income all of it and faced the uncertainty of a new venture. And the lady said, "What about all we have gained in that exchange?"

You see it is a joy to lose our lives and find it in Jesus Christ. You see, the more you lean into the story of the Kingdom, the more it becomes your reality. While at the beginning it may seem so costly or even weird to foolish even to you; over time it becomes the only way to live life. Because you will discover just how valuable what you have gained is. And for you there will be no other way to live.

As you are being transformed into the likeness of Jesus, your story changes. Your values around marriage change, your views on politics change, your culture around sexuality changes, your relationship to alcohol changes, your stance around those who are different from you changes.

Yet there is clear message that to accept the Kingdom we must sell who we have been to that moment. Every-time we encounter the Kingdom it costs everything we have been up to that moment if we are to take hold of it.

Some of us are just at the verge of stepping into what God has invited them into but we are more attached to our reputation upto that point and the father is asking, whether you are ready to sell your entire reputation to take hold of your new identity?

For Some of us it could be culture or a story of our culture. Taking hold of the Kingdom take getting go of all we have been to this point.

Let's Pray!