The Value of the Kingdom

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Preacher: Edward Kang

[0:00] We're going to continue on in our Matthew series. Today's passage is continuing on in the parable series,! We're in verses 44 to 52.

If you don't have a Bible and would like to use one, please raise your hand and we'd be happy to give you a Bible that you can use and keep. Again, we're in chapter 13, verses 44 to 52.
Let me pray for the reading and preaching of God's word. Heavenly Father, you are this great, precious, matchless treasure.
The best thing that we have ever found. But life is distracting.
Life is hard. We have an enemy. A fierce enemy that's seeking to distract us. Take our eyes away from the rich treasure that we have found.
[1:23] I pray, Heavenly Father, please use my weak words, this short time, to refresh anew our evaluation of the kingdom of heaven.

that, Holy Spirit, you would be in this place. You would fill us so that we would have eyes to see and ears to hear that your kingdom is worth everything.
Make us a people united in this one thing. that we would just have this one thing and we would lose all else in joy to gain this one thing.
Make it true of us now. Help us to come back to our first loves. Speak through me.
I am a weak man with so many infirmities, deficiencies, but you are perfect. You are strong. Be glorified through me.
[2:39] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. If you are able, please rise to honor the reading of God's word. Starting in verse 44.

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up. Then, in his joy, 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 who, on finding one pearl of great value, 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 gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away 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 fiery furnace.
[3:53] In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all these things? They said to him, yes.

And he said to them, therefore, every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.
This is God's holy and authoritative word. You may be seated. Yeah, you can throw all that stuff out.
Those simple words would come to haunt James Howells for the next 12 years of his life. Because of that all too common mistake of just mistakenly throwing out something, he has been on a decade-long journey.
to retrieve that piece of trash who's made his new home at the local city landfill. His plan? Hire a bunch of lawyers.
[5:08] Beg and plead the local city council to allow him to purchase that dumpster, that landfill.
Fly specialized drones with infrared cameras to find this piece of trash.

Send out a pack of those Boston Dynamic robot dogs. You guys know the kind. The ones that could do backflips. Excavate tens of thousands of tons of trash cart by cart to a scanner trained by AI to find this piece of trash.

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Finally, install a backup magnetic belt to capture, to catch any kind of leftover metallic objects. house. He's willing to invest millions and millions of dollars and thousands of hours of power to find this piece of trash so small that it just got mixed in with the rest of his everyday trash.
To his overly engineered plan, Howell said, and I quote, this seems logical. But this man looks crazy until you understand what he was looking for.
Back in 2013, he accidentally threw out an office hard drive which contained his only copy of a 51 character password to his crypto wallet, his Bitcoin wallet.
[6:35] You see, Howells was one of the first people in the world to start mining for Bitcoin and in doing so he amassed an incalculable fortune. A fortune that is currently valued at $800 million.

Now, I still think that Howell should probably just cut his losses and move on with his life, but it makes a little bit more sense of why he would go to such things to find this little tiny hard drive.
You see, our actions reflect what we value most. We shape our entire lives around what we value. Our schedules, budgets, thoughts, our conversations, our relationships, they all display on the outside what we value on the inside.
Someone else didn't know anything about you but saw a snapshot of your life this past week. What would he or she think about what you value?
[7:46] In our passage this morning, Jesus wraps up his discourse about the kingdom of heaven by making one simple point. The kingdom of heaven and its king are worth everything.

The kingdom of heaven and its king are worth everything. One of the repeated words in this parable is the word all or every.
So in the final four parables of this chapter, we'll understand how the kingdom of heaven is all rewarding, all reckoning, and finally all revealing.
Our passage this morning opens with two short parables starting with the parable of the hidden treasure. Verse 44, the kingdom of heaven is compared to a treasure of inestimable worth that a man finds buried in a field.
Here, Jesus draws on a common ancient practice because remember back then there were no secure banks, no FDI insured banks where you could store all your valued possessions.
[8:59] But especially in a period rife with wars, fighting, pilfering, you needed a safe place to hide your stuff. And so the best option for all these people, for a lot of people, was simply just to pick up a spade, pick up a shovel, and dig so they could hide their treasures underground.

And if the original owner passed away before retrieving it, a treasure could very easily be hidden for a very long time. And it seems like that's the case in this parable.
If the current owner had known that a rich, matchless treasure was buried in his field, would he have told it? Now, Jesus doesn't give us a lot of detail on the back story of this man, how he found it.
Details like, who is he? Why he was on this field? How did he find this? Because that's all going to detract away from his main singular point.
Regardless of the circumstances, this man finds this one hidden treasure. And he immediately understands its worth. He does a quick cost-benefit analysis, does the math in his head, and he easily concludes that his entire net worth, everything that he's gained from working year after year, everything that he's possibly gained from his family inheritance, all of that can't compare to the value of the treasure.
[10:32] treasure. So he determines to hide the treasure again, to sell all that he has, to buy that field so that he can gain it properly, legally.

The second parable is very similar in length and messaging. Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to a merchant who is in search of the finest of pearls.
Today, 99% of pearls are manually farmed. They're dramatically boosting their production and dramatically decreasing their value and rarity.
But back then, all the pearls were natural and extremely rare and prized. They were even considered more valuable than gold. There are ancient reports that tell of pearls that were worth more than tens of thousands and tens of millions even of dollars in modern currency.
Some serendipitously stumble upon a treasure that just plops in their lap. But others, like this merchant, search, labor with intention and persistence.
[11:46] When he finally finds that pearl, though it cost him time and energy, he instantly recognizes that this pearl was worth it.

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With his trained eye, he sees its coat, its luster, its perfect sphericity, its color, its shape, and he immediately knows he's found something he's never found before.
Knowing the market for these kinds of things, he too performs a cost-benefit analysis. In comparison, commentators surmise that the man in the first parable was just a lowly day laborer, didn't have much to his name probably, but this merchant, it's not like that.
He probably had other expensive, rare pearls in his possession. He had even more to sell, yet still, Jesus is emphatically making the point, it is worth to sell all that you have, just to gain this one pearl, this singular pearl.
That word one, it stands out in verse 46. Jesus could have said a pearl, but he says the one pearl. I think to highlight its singularity, this one singular pearl is more valuable than all the other pearls in his possession combined.
[13:13] This cost-benefit analysis is the central point of this parable. We're familiar with the basic idea, right? It's a fancy business term, that's a very basic idea.

Do the benefits outweigh the costs? If so, then go for it, it makes sense. If not, then pump the brakes, rethink things.
So there are two parts to that analysis of understanding. It's the cost on the one hand, and then the benefit. So I want to first look at the cost. The cost of the kingdom is plain and clear.
Almost verbatim, Jesus tells us plainly that both of these parables, these men sell everything. They sell everything that they have. Though they might have looked crazy to the outside world, they nonetheless liquidated their homes, their land, their livestock, extra clothing, jewelry, stored food, anything and everything.
It all must go so that they could buy this one thing. Jesus makes it clear that the kingdom of heaven, of being under the rule and reign of Jesus Christ, the king, it costs you everything.
[14:37] The kingdom of heaven is all-encompassing. It's all demanding. Jesus very plainly tells us in Luke 13, anyone, any one of you who does not renounce all that you have cannot be my disciple.

Now, I don't think that Jesus literally means that today we need to now take a vow of poverty and sell all that we have to give to the poor. You read of examples of wealthy people in the gospel and in the book of Acts who provide for Jesus and his disciples.
Even the apostles, Peter, he's shown to have possessions. And for those of us with families, it is our God-given responsibility to provide for them, to work hard for them.
If you don't, then you are worse than unbelievers. That's what 1 Timothy 5 says. For even unbelievers understand their duty to provide for their families. But while Jesus might not literally demand all, he does spiritually demand all.
All of our hearts, all of our allegiance. The cost of the kingdom is steep. There is no easy believism in the kingdom.
[16:01] There is no, all you need to do is just say a prayer. Just come up once for an altar call. Even just get baptized. Just get wet for a little bit and then you're going to be good.

You can coast. It is only those who are willing to give up everything who will be able to gain the kingdom.
As the old saying goes, salvation is free, but it costs you everything. money. It's not just with money, whether it's our time, a dream of yours, a relationship, attachments to comfort, family, your health even.
There can't be anything where we say to Christ, you can have this much. You can have 10%. you can have Sunday mornings, but this, this is mine.
This is my line in the sand. You, you cannot touch this. brothers and sisters, where is that line for you?
[17:21] Lots of us ponder what we ought to do with our lives. Some of us are thinking through our professional careers, maybe even thinking about entering full-time Christian ministry.

Should I go to med school, or move to this city, or marry this guy or girl? At the risk of minimizing the importance of those questions, they are always secondary.
The primary question is, can I renounce all that I have to follow Jesus Christ? Far too many of us get the order of this question mixed up.
We try to figure out what to do with our lives without resolving a total, complete surrender to Jesus Christ. But if you're resolved, if you get that first question right, then that totally transforms the way

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that you answer that second question, doesn't it?
When we're confronted, though, with the high cost of the kingdom, it might be easy to push back saying, oh no, Jesus didn't mean everything. Jesus is kind.
[18:41] Didn't we just read that he is gentle and lowly and that he won't break a bruised reed? Your interpretation makes the kingdom too demanding, too exclusive, too harsh.

You're right. Jesus is all-loving, all-kind, and that is precisely why he does demand our entire allegiance.
Because he knows that those who live outside of the kingdom of heaven, we serve. They serve a self-defeating, self-sabotaging enterprise. Take money, for example.
Money universally is seen as power. Money promises security, safety. It holds out the illusion of control, of freedom of worry.
It is so easy to let money displace God as our highest good, as our rock and our redeemer. But the reality is, is in the long run, money will never make you feel rich.
[19:55] Money will never make you feel rich. It's like salt water. it temporarily quenches your thirst. But it will only suck your cells dry from the inside out and make you thirstier and thirstier and thirstier.

Even when I know that in my own head, if I'm honest, I am cut to the heart by this passage. And I'm convicted by my allegiance to other things.
I've had to wrestle in prayer in preparation for this sermon. Could I do what these men did?
Could I sell all that I have and renounce everything for the sake of the kingdom? to give up my house, my car, my 401k, my entire net worth?
Could I lead my family down that path? Could I joyfully do it? Do I value the kingdom above all else?
[21:16] every morning, every single day, I feel the need to train myself to do this one simple thing. Trying to rip open this grip, this tight grip that I have on my possessions.

I have to do that every morning. I have to do that every morning. But in those prayer times, if I'm not careful, I can get into this mode very easily of self-focused performance.
As Jerry Bridges put it, our default mode as believers is to live by performance and not by grace. It is the default mode of my own heart to live just looking at myself and to feel like I'm not Christian enough.
This message so far might have just reinforced that feeling that you are not sacrificial enough. You're not giving enough. You're not holy enough.
But in these short parables, notice that Jesus doesn't describe these men as exceptionally holy or exceptionally righteous. It's not even about these men at all.
[22:38] It's about the value of the kingdom of heaven. in no sense did these men feel like they were committing a self-sacrificial magnanimous act.

If you came up to them and asked them, how did you do this? How did you find it within yourself to be so brave, so sacrificial? They would have looked at you with complete confusion because in the end, this deed was done in joy.
joy because of the value of the kingdom. While he sold every previous attachment, every sense of security, every aspect tied to his previous life, he was supremely joyful.
This is the key. This is the key to all Christian living and all of Christian growth. It's about getting our eyes off of ourselves, off of our stuff, and to look, seek first the kingdom of heaven.
We only learn to deny ourselves and to renounce everything by seeing the surpassing worth of the kingdom of heaven. That's how the apostle Paul, he gave up all former ties, all his former security, all his former boasts.
[24:03] In Philippians 3, he says, whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him. Every gain in this world, all the money, the status, the power, it was like refuse, like worthless dung compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ.
That's why David Livingstone, a missionary to Africa, even when he contracted malaria over 30 times, had his left arm crushed by a lion or had to bury his wife in the soils of Africa.
It almost feels not real, the hardships that he had to endure. But he said this, people talk of the sacrifice that I've made and spending so much of my life in Africa.

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Anxiety, sickness, suffering, or danger, now and then with the foregoing of the common conveniences and charities of this life may make us pause and cause the spirit to waver and the soul to sink, but let this be for a moment.
[25:27] For these are all nothing when compared with the glory that shall be revealed in and for us. I have never made a sacrifice.

I never made a sacrifice. I don't mean to over-spiritualize or trivialize our sacrifices and our hardships that we face.
There are real hardships that we do go through. The battle against our sins, Satan, and the world is real. It rages against us. And Christians do get discouraged and depressed.
But Living Stone's quote is not to minimize our struggles, but it is to maximize the incomparable value of the kingdom. Once we see the immeasurable value of the kingdom, then these sacrifices, they start to feel smaller.
It all relativizes. It's not primarily by just doing this in our prayer times. it's not just doing this. But it's doing this to grasp the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, to gain more of him, to say that I can't believe I get to be in relationship with you, Jesus Christ.
[26:46] The point of this parable is not to starve yourself, but it is to feast. Look, guys, I know you know this. I know you know this.

But sometimes life is so hard and distracting, discouraging, that you need someone else to tell you this, to remind you of the supreme worth of the king and his kingdom.
It is so easy, is it not, to let our estimation of the kingdom fluctuate. we know on our heads the infinite value of the kingdom, of Jesus Christ, but in our heart of hearts, our personal evaluation, it rises and falls.
I am 100% sure that James Howell's desire for his little hard drive, it rose and it fell, along with Bitcoin. When he saw that his portfolio rose, he just wanted that even more.
When he fell, disinterested. When he saw though, that over time his portfolio grow from 10,000 to a million to 100 million to 800 million dollars, there's a fire.
[28:05] There's a desire for that. We do the same thing when we start to really understand the value of the kingdom. And when we struggle to see Jesus as he is, God is gracious to us to give us the people in this room to rely on our fellow brothers and sisters in this race.

And I have experienced that fellowship here. I am amazed by some of your testimonies. Some of you guys have quit your jobs, moved to a brand new city, just so you can follow God's call to be part of this church.
Others of you are following Jesus and standing up for truth, even if it costs you your relationships with friends and family, even when they ridicule you.
you. Still more of you have given yourselves to the giving, to the service, to the growth of this church and your brothers and sisters. You have made the kingdom your top priority and it shows.
Even when it is a struggle to make the kingdom your top priority, is it not evidence that the kingdom is your top priority still? When we see, when I see that faith in you, I am regularly built up, regularly encouraged that Jesus truly is worth everything.
[29:35] Bonhoeffer says so much, he says, God has put this word into the mouth of others in order that it may be communicated to us. He needs him time, he needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged.

For by himself he cannot help himself without denying the truth, he needs his brother as bearer and proclaimer of the divine word of salvation. The Christ in his own heart is weaker than the Christ in the word of his brother.
His own heart is uncertain, his brother's is sure. When was the last time you experienced true Christian fellowship?
Where a brother and sister reminded you of the joy that we have in Jesus Christ. Don't you want that? Don't you want to do that for others?
Let us faithfully remind one another of the value of the kingdom, that the king and his kingdom are worth everything. Now so far it sounds like the kingdom of heaven is only a benefit to some, but not a force to be reckoned with.
[30:49] Sean spoke last week about the inevitability of the kingdom of heaven. That when the battle is done and the dust settles, it will be the kingdom of heaven that stands, that reigns.

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There is no place for this kind of apathy. No, it's good for you to joyfully sell all your stuff, but it's not for me.
It's great that you found your thing. You have your kingdom, I'll have mine. Jesus debunks any sense of that kind of talk in the third parable of this passage, the parable of the net, which shows that the kingdom of heaven is all reckoning.
In this parable, the kingdom of heaven is compared to a massive sen net thrown into the sea that indiscriminately gathers fish of all kinds, which more literally translates in the Greek to all races.
Jesus again seems to be drawing on real life examples because fishermen would regularly fish in this particular manner. They would stretch out this ginormous net between two boats.
[32:00] It would stretch out even across a half mile and they would slowly sail around. These nets would have a heavy lead line that would drag across the bottom of the ocean or the bottom of the sea, allowing the net to span the entire depth of water.

There was no escaping, no dodging this net. They would haul up every watery creature on shore then and then meticulously sort out the good from the bad.
In the Sea of Galilee, there were more than 20 types of sea creatures. Remember, in Jewish society, they were to follow strict dietary laws according to Moses. So some, some of these species were ceremoniously clean, others unclean.
The good and the bad. And so far, this parable and the parable of the wheat that Sean preached on last week, they touch on similar themes. But while the themes are similar, their focuses are slightly different.
The parable of the wheat focuses more on the fact that the good and the evil, they coexist. But this parable, the parable of the net, seems to build on the previous parable, focused not on their coexistence, but their separation.
[33:24] Right now, all of us see creatures. We're coexisting together. We see the big blue sea in front of us. We see all the open space, all the possibilities.

And we imagine ourselves to be completely, completely free, completely and forever autonomous. All unaware that the net is enclosing in on us.
Because the net, slowly but surely, is sweeping the sea of the entire world. And it's filling up right now, as we speak.
And it indiscriminately catches men of all kinds. They don't care what demographic you fit in. The net will catch all of us.
It'll catch your Uber driver, your neighbor, your lab partner, your dentist. The net has a max capacity. It can't and won't fill up indefinitely.
[34:34] And once it reaches that capacity, the kingdom of heaven, then it will be revealed in all of its resplendent glory. And judgment will come.

With the bad being thrown into the eternal fire. The place of weeping and gnashing of teeth. This parable is a sober reminder of the reality of hell.
As John MacArthur points out, Jesus speaks more about hell than he does about love. He speaks more about hell than all the other biblical authors.
And he does so because he loves us. He earnestly warns us that this net is slowly but surely coming. For scripture teaches us that Jesus will return one day soon.
All with his angels to separate out the good fish from the bad fish, from the sheep, from the goats, from those of the kingdom of heaven and those outside of it.
[35:41] Those who reject Jesus as their king and serve other idols cannot and will not be welcomed into the kingdom of heaven. Believe it or not, we're already coming up at the end of 2025.

Looking forward to start 2026. many of you guys have big goals, big dreams. Get married. Have a child.
Start a new job. Buy a home. All good things. All blessings. But forget not that 2026 could be the year that Jesus returns.
It could be the year when the net is full. 2026 could be the year could be the last year of our lives, the last year of earth.
So this holiday season, what will you speak about with your family and friends? This next year, what will you speak about to your coworkers, to your neighbors?

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[36:52] You know, I bet you that going back, the men in our passage who found this great treasure, they never shut up about it. I bet you their friends were sick and tired of hearing about their treasure.

And I bet that we would too. We can't help it. What you value, what makes you most happy, is what you speak about, what just overflows in your life, just naturally oozes out of you.
We see this later in this very last verse in our passage. Those who have and hold this treasure, they are commanded not to hoard, not to hide, but to bring out this once hidden treasure.
To show publicly, to share liberally, to let others benefit from this treasure that we have found.
When you do, God can and will use that treasure of the gospel to transform the evil to the righteous, just like he's done for all of us.
And then the kingdom of heaven is not just a personal treasure, but it turns or it becomes a precious safety net to snatch us up, save us up from the pits of hell.
[38:12] This transformation from evil to righteous, it depends on one crucial thing. It's understanding. Without understanding, the kingdom remains hidden and its power unrevealed.

And that's why Jesus now turns away from the crowd in verse 51 and turns directly to his disciples and he asks, do you understand all these things?
Understanding has been a key theme in this chapter. It's full of parables so far. Earlier in verse 11, Jesus rebukes the unbelieving, saying that they don't have eyes to see, ears to hear, nor do they understand.
But to the disciples, Jesus said to them, to them it has not been given, but to you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven.
Now, if you know anything about the disciples in the gospels, you know to question whether they really understood what Jesus is talking about. But when the disciples confidently respond in verse 51, saying, yes, Jesus, we get it.
[39:25] We understand all these things. Jesus graciously agrees, very graciously agrees, and grants them the honored title of scribes.

Now, if you're familiar with that title, this was surprising for two reasons. Almost every time you read of a scribe in the gospel of Matthew, that character is not one of the good ones.
Though they're highly esteemed in Jewish culture, although they're seen as scholars and teachers and experts in the Mosaic law, they consistently rejected Jesus, testing him against their man-made laws, their man-made religion.
not only that, none of his disciples were ever formally trained like these prestigious scribes had.
They knew how to fish. If you needed to fish, they were your people. If you needed to do your taxes, Matthew might have been your guy. But none were rigorously trained as scribes.
[40:37] But despite their lack of education, Jesus then compares these blue-collar, uneducated, former fishermen to scribes.

He bestows upon them this honored title. These are the ones who have unearthed the hiddenness of the treasure, of the pearl. These are the true biblical scholars who see and understand the reality of the kingdom.
And so that these blue-collar men, these uneducated men, Jesus then compares them to rich, powerful, influential masters of the house who have gained this incredible treasure to share with others.
That's what verse 51 and 52 say. And what comes out of this treasure? Jesus calls it what is of old and what is of new. What does that mean?
Here Jesus connects these two ideas of being a scribe with great understanding to a rich man with great treasure. Saying that the teachings are the treasure.
[41:44] The teachings are the treasure. Jesus is likely speaking of old and new teachings as in the old Hebrew scriptures, our Old Testament to the new teachings about the kingdom of heaven.

And from this chapter, from these parables, you might get the impression that the new teachings are the only things that matter. Meaning that you can leave behind the old.
On the flip side, the scribes and the Pharisees who only knew of the old reject the new. Both of these ideas, they miss the mark.
The old and the new are inseparable. And they need to be taught, held together. Jesus is clear that he has come not to wipe the slate entirely clean, but to finally reveal.

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To reveal what has been hidden since the foundation of the world. That's what verse 35 of chapter 13 says. Paul says so much in Ephesians 3.
[42:51] He says, To me, though I am the least of all the saints, his grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. The unsearchable riches of Christ.

And to bring to life for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God, who created all things so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.
This was according to the eternal purpose that he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord in whom we have boldness and access with confidence through our faith in him.
This is the perfect text to understand these two verses. It is only in Christ do we find these unsearchable new yet old, old yet new treasures.
Do you guys understand too verse 10 there? These treasures were hidden for the ages even from heavenly beings. Through us, the church of Christ, we show even heavenly beings like angels what is the true revelation of the mysteries of God in Christ Jesus.
[44:11] Today online, there are thousands and thousands of voices that are competing for your attention. Scroll for 10 minutes and you'll find video after video of people who claim, claim that they've discovered new teaching, a new insight, a new way to the good life.

Religious gurus,! Influencers, political pundits, they're all saying in their own unique way, I'm the new thing that you should listen to. I have the new insight, the new understanding that you should pay attention to.
And you know what? People do. Millions and millions of people watch and follow these men, these women. But none, none of these people have the message that was hidden from the beginning of time.
None of these people have the message that is new yet old, that's old yet new. We, we, the church of Christ, do. That's why Jesus says in verse 51 that this identity as a scribe, as the master of the house, is not just for the 12, but it's for every scribe, every disciple trained by him, like you and me. believer, do you understand and grasp the value of your treasure? You possess treasures new and old, the very treasures that angels longed to look at, the very treasures this blind and confused world needs.
[45:58] And this mystery is not only true, but it is good. the full mystery is revealed in the work and the worth of Jesus Christ, our Savior, that by his death and his resurrection, we have full access to the kingdom of heaven.

This is good news for people like you and me, that a kingdom that should have been out of reach for all of us who are half-hearted, distracted, divided, unsured, discouraged, weakened faith because Jesus has made a way by dying on our behalf for the complete atonement for our sins. We now have boldness and access, confidence through what? What did Ephesians 3 say? It's not by our perfection, not by our performance, not by selling all that we have and going on missions. It's not by that. It's by faith. We read these verses for our assurance of pardon, but God, but God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.
By grace, you have been saved and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.
[47:35] For by grace, you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast.

once you see the incredible riches of mercy that he has towards sinners like you and me, your heart can't help, it can't help but to bubble up in joy, to treasure Jesus Christ, to know the worth of the kingdom and be willing more and more every day to sell and to renounce all that you have, to see it all as dung, as worthless compared to just gaining this one pearl.
and when he becomes your supreme delight, you can say this quote with true conviction. This quote is one that we heard that I think impacted all of our pastoral team at this pastor's conference this last week that I wanted to share with you and it is my deepest prayer that God may make us men and women who can boldly confess this to the entire world.
I love Jesus Christ and as I say it, I want to make clear what I mean.

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I admire Jesus Christ more than any other human or angelic being. I enjoy his ways and his words more than I enjoy the ways and words of anyone else.
[49:13] I want his approval more than I want the approval of anyone else. I want to be with him more than I want to be with anyone else.

I feel more grateful to him for what he has done for me than I do to anyone else. I trust his words more fully than I trust what anyone else says.
I am more glad in his exaltation than in the exaltation of anyone else including me. Would you pray with me that we would be people like this?
Lord God we thank you that because of your mercy and grace we are of these people that can say I love Jesus Christ.
Make that a bigger more tangible more fervent reality in our lives that we would say I love Jesus Christ and that everything else pales in comparison to following him.
[50:17] That he is this rare jewel this precious pearl that we are willing to say no to everything else and gain all that we have in Jesus Christ that as we're about to sing may we declare that Christ is enough.

I renounce all in the world the world behind me the cross before me make us people of your kingdom that treasure you above all.
In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen.

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