

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT PRAYER MEETING 29 July 2020

Thanks again to the 21 people who were able to join our online prayer meeting by Zoom yesterday.

This week we reflected on:

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.' (Matt 13: 44-46)

Comments:

- The general feeling was that these are challenging and slightly puzzling parables. (And of course this is why Jesus spoke in parables - he wants us to search for the meaning!)
- There are many ways the parables can be interpreted, and they will speak to different people in different ways. The following are how they spoke to different individuals.
- There are tremendous treasures hidden in God's Word - we need to meditate on the Scriptures and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the treasures.
- We need to make the effort to look for God's treasure.
- If you have found the treasure of the Kingdom - how are you going to use it?
- We can be distracted by things of this world but the Lord is saying all these things are temporary and not as important as faith, joy and union with Him. Focus on God: He alone is eternal.
- As fallen humans, we are always tempted to prefer the immediate reward of a KitKat rather than save up for an Easter egg in the future, Our lives are a struggle against selfishness in order to achieve the goal of Heaven.
- It challenges us about seeking greater intimacy with Jesus.
- By seeking to forgive everyone - which is extremely difficult - we are playing our part in building God's Kingdom.
- There are many other treasures in our faith that we can discover and value e.g. the intercession of Our Lady.

"Bible Alive" commentary:*

What is our greatest treasure, something for which we would sell everything we own? These two parables challenge our response to this Kingdom.

What is the Kingdom of heaven or the Kingdom of God? The Catechism explains: "The Kingdom of God lies ahead of us. It is brought near in the Word incarnate [Jesus]; it is proclaimed throughout the whole Gospel and it has come in Christ's death and resurrection....it is in our midst in the Eucharist....the Kingdom of God means Christ Himself" (CCC2816)

Both the people described in the parables were searching - it took effort, concentration, discernment. We are encouraged to seek the presence of Jesus in our daily lives: "seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness" (Matt 6:33) "Seek and you will find" (Matt 7:7). What they find is of enormous value for they both sell everything they own to acquire it. We can ask ourselves: how much do we treasure Jesus and our life with him?

The words "sells all that he has" can seem a little frightening at first, but it is important to note that the man is full of joy. What we are asked to do is to give first place in our hearts to Jesus and to lay down anything which may interfere with this. This may mean "selling" [giving up/sacrificing] some of our time in order to meet Jesus in prayer [and in meditating on Scripture and in greater intimacy with the Lord. It may mean giving up preoccupation with worldly pleasures, or selfishness, or unforgiveness. It may mean giving up our reluctance to share the Kingdom by witnessing]. This can be done with joy when we realise how great is the treasure we receive in return.

Prayer: Lord, you are my treasure, the delight of my soul, my salvation, my refuge and my hope. Help me to hold nothing back, but to embrace you wholeheartedly. Amen.

* Quotation from [Bible Alive](#) July 2020 copyright 2008 Alive Publishing. [Except words in brackets which I added to relate it to earlier comments]

Follow up

- I also came across another commentary which explained why the first man didn't just steal the treasure, but bought it legitimately: because there are no illegal ways to heaven. There is only the one way that God has given us: through Jesus. *"Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6). "If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. (Romans 10:9)*
- Remember: we don't buy our way into the Kingdom of Heaven by our good deeds. We are saved by grace - the freely given gift of God through the passion and resurrection of Jesus. *Our justification comes from the grace of God. Grace is favour, the free and undeserved help that God gives us to respond to his call to become children of God, adoptive sons, partakers of the divine nature and of eternal life (CCC 1996).*
- I encourage you to watch this YouTube video on the subject [Parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl](#). Its only 6 minutes but it has really helpful comments and suggestions for further meditation and prayer.

We will be meeting by Zoom again next Wednesday at 8. I will send round the invitation nearer the time and hope once again many can join in.