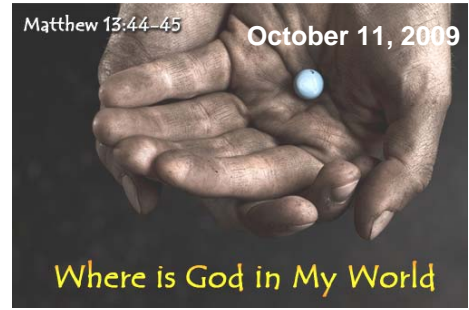


Where is God in My World

When two people are in similar situations, God's presence may be clearly visible to one, but elusive to the other. What can account for this?



Matthew 13:44-46

The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls.

Reflections

Now or later? The disciples were keen to learn about the Kingdom of Heaven, a place they would someday be together with the God of Israel. They were seeking the promise to come. Jesus uses today's parable to teach his disciples a fresh perspective: the Kingdom of Heaven is. Now. Active in our lives today. So live in that knowledge and be active now in the Kingdom of Heaven.

This parable is about how near God is; so near that His Kingdom is buried within us if we will look for it. Verse 44 teaches us of the treasure in the field. What can be learned from this verse? With God at the center of this verse, we have in one short statement God's incredible love for us. God has declared His people to be his treasure from ancient times (Exodus 19:5). And again in Psalm 135:4. We are his *treasured* people.

Next see how God reacts to his treasured people: "in his joy (he) went and sold all he had." All He had, that being our Lord

and Savior Jesus Christ. The price He paid was the blood of Christ shed for us in Jesus death. And not only did he buy us, His treasure, he bought the whole field, the heavens and earth are all His, as he demonstrated in His love through the death and resurrection of His Son.

Jesus uses today's parable to teach his disciples a fresh perspective:

The Kingdom of Heaven is . . . NOW.

Active in our lives today.

Moving on to verse 45 we encounter a pearl. A pearl was and is a precious object, rare and beautiful.

Think of how a pearl is formed. A foreign object, like a grain of sand, in an oyster is the beginning of a pearl. From that imperfection in the oyster a

beautiful and treasured object is formed. So it is that when in our sin we hear of God's salvation in Jesus Christ and we accept it as our truth we become a pearl of great worth. The beauty of our salvation and everlasting life is a testament to the merciful God who sent His son to cover our sin with His love. Through the redeeming power of Jesus death and resurrection, we, His people, are made precious.

The Kingdom of God is here, now. In our school hallways and classrooms, our work places, our marketplaces, our homes. In our whole world, the Kingdom is here! Even though Jesus sends us out into a sinful world (Luke 10:2-3), we can go forth and face evil wolves knowing that we are God's treasure and he will lift us up on eagles wings!

—Karl Berland

Series Resource:

God is Closer Than You Think, John Ortberg, 2005.

Readings

Sunday, October 11

Matthew 13:44-45 How does God's willingness to 'sell all he has' for you change your relationship with Jesus Christ?

Monday, October 12

Exodus 16:1-16 There are periods of our lives where we are traveling in the wilderness without hope. Yet, as with the Israelites, God is with us. How can you look beyond yourself in the *wilderness* to recognize God's presence in your life

Tuesday, October 13

Luke 18:29-30 Jesus recognizes that we will do difficult things in His name. How does knowing His promise to reward eternally help to strengthen you for the challenges you face now?

Wednesday, October 14

Psalms 23 In good times and in difficult times God is with us. Think about some of those good times and bad times in your life. Reflect on how God's presence was there working to support you, lead you and care for you.

Thursday, October 15

Matthew 19:23-24 What is keeping you from entering the Kingdom? How is "entering the Kingdom" different from salvation?

Friday, October 16

2 Chronicles 26:5-15 When we focus on the Lord our success can blossom as it did for Uzziah. What are the activities you can do to help you keep focused on Jesus that would benefit you daily?

Saturday, October 17

Mark 1:14-15 Here is the great promise for us today: *Repent! God's Kingdom is at hand!* How does knowing this great treasure is yours now, change your life?

Don't have a Bible? Access these scriptures at biblegateway.com.