

Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Quincy, IL  
Rev. Martin R. Eden

Pentecost 8  
Saturday, July 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.  
Sunday, July 26, 2020 at 9:00 a.m.

## “You Are the Treasure Hidden in the Field”

Matthew 13:44-52

These past few weeks, we have been working through this series of seven parables with mixed metaphors in Matthew’s Gospel. Jesus has spoken of Good Seed in the Parable of the Sower and the Parable of the Weeds. Jesus is the Mustard Seed which seems small, and He works invisibly like Leaven, like yeast being worked through an entire batch of dough. Yet, for all of His good work, sadly, the entire field of the world does not bear the fruit of faith.

Those parables we have seen in the past two weeks speak of **how** God works in the world through His Word. The parables we hear today tell of why God works in the world. And the final parable also reminds us that, sadly, many who hear this Word will reject it, be separated from God and be thrown in the fiery furnace where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (just like in the Parable of the Weeds).

Many in our world today ask, “Why would a loving and righteous God eternally punish those without faith?” They are really asking the wrong question. I understand why people want to get rid of hell as a concept because never-ending agony imposed upon rational beings who can recognize their hopelessness being faced with eternity in hell is so terrifying that it goes way beyond anything that we ever want to

think about. But making our human sentiments the measure of who God is and what He can, will, and must do is always a bad way to approach God – as if we get to judge God and His unbreakable will and Law, and turn it into something that we think is right and that better suites our sensibilities.

And if you deny there is punishment in hell for all eternity, you really have to deny there is life for all eternity – but we don't have time today to flesh out that entire connection. Let's just say that either Jesus needed to come and fulfill the Law to free us from the judgment of that Law, or He didn't need to come. If there is no risk of judgment, why did He come? And why did He willingly suffer as He did? The answer is obvious. If He doesn't come, we suffer. The historically provable fact that He did come should put to rest any question about whether Adam's children are at risk of eternal judgment.

Jesus speaks of the fiery place where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth for all eternity. Eternal judgment and damnation should not be the controversial or questionable side of the equation. It is on the "heaven" side of the equation where we should be asking the questions. I am a poor, miserable sinner who deserves both temporal and eternal punishment. The unbreakable Law of God says that I deserve to be punished right here, right now and for all eternity.

What Jesus explains in these parables is **why** you and I can have hope. We ask the question, "Why does God care about what we think, feel, or do in this life? Why does God care – even to the point of sending His own Son to suffer and die at the hands of evil men?" And

that was no accident. That was the plan. That was the plan God announced to Adam. The Messiah would crush the head of Satan, and in doing so, He would bruise His heel. The victory would not be without cost. And without that victory, we would be subject to the unbreakable Law of God.

Why does the Almighty God go to such great lengths to rescue sinful humans? Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field"; "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."

You are the treasure hidden in the field of the world. You are the pearl of great value. Yes, you and I are sinful humans. And the Son of God gave up everything, came down from heaven, and paid the full price and purchased you and I out of our slavery to sin. Why would He do such a thing? It seems totally irrational.

After all, the human body is mostly made up of carbon and water. The value of the physical material of a body is pocket change. We are made of very common elements. We are dust and to dust we shall return. Why would God go to such lengths to rescue dust out of the sin of our own making?

Let me ask you this, "How much do you value your children? What price would you place on their life? To what lengths would you go? How much discomfort would you be willing to endure to keep them from dying? How irrational would you be to do whatever it would take to keep them alive?"

It is true we are dust and to dust we shall return. However, Scripture says that we are “fearfully and wonderfully made” and that by God’s hand I was “knit together in my mother’s womb” [Ps. 139], and God told Jeremiah “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you.” You have a loving Father who sent His Son, who gave all that He had (even His own life), so that sin can no longer separate you from God.

We have seen through all these parables that these stories are much more about Jesus than they are about you and me. He sows the good seed. He is the mustard seed and the leaven. He is the man who found the treasure hidden in the field of the world, and He gave up all the He had (He gave up His own life) so that He could purchase you.

You are the treasure. You are the pearl of great value. This is why He has done all that He has. This is why He has gone so far out of His way to bring you near to Him. It never fails to overwhelm me that the Almighty Living God, the Creator of all things, truly cares about what you and I are doing right here, right now.

As Paul says in Romans, “nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Death does not separate us. Life does not separate us. Nothing in all creation can stop the Good Seed of the Word of God from being sown into the field of the world; nothing in all of creation could stop the man Jesus from paying the price for the treasure hidden in the field. You are that treasure. Amen.