

Fr. Martin's Reflection – July 30, 2023

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Jesus continues to teach us with parables in our gospel this Sunday. In the first of two parables, the Hidden Treasure, a man stumbles upon a buried treasure in a field. Recognizing its worth, he joyfully sells all he has and buys the field to possess the treasure. Similarly, in the Pearl of Great Price, a merchant finds an exquisite pearl of immeasurable value and sells all he owns to obtain it. These parables highlight the inestimable worth of the Kingdom and the willingness required to attain it. They emphasize that to embrace the Kingdom of Heaven fully, one must be willing to relinquish all worldly attachments and invest wholeheartedly in pursuing a relationship with God.

In the third parable of the Net, the focus shifts to the final judgment. Just as a net collects fish of all kinds, representing people from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, the Kingdom of Heaven will encompass both the righteous and the wicked. At the end of time God will separate the good from the evil, indicating the importance of living a righteous life and making choices that align with God's teachings.

The Householder parable concludes the series, highlighting the role of a faithful scribe or teacher who brings out both old and new treasures from the storehouse. This symbolizes the continuity of God's word throughout history and the importance of understanding and embracing the entire message of the scriptures.

Collectively, these parables encourage us to approach the Kingdom of Heaven with a sense of urgency, recognizing its supreme value and the necessity of putting God above all else. They remind us that obtaining the Kingdom requires dedication and sacrifice. Moreover, the parables underscore the inclusive nature of the Kingdom, reaching out to people from all walks of life, but also the final accountability for one's actions and choices.

The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl of Great Price emphasizes the joy that comes from finding and embracing the Kingdom of Heaven. They show that it is not merely a duty but a cause for celebration and delight. The sheer exuberance exhibited by the man and the merchant demonstrates the incomparable joy and fulfillment experienced by those who have discovered the Kingdom and surrendered their lives to its divine purpose.

In contrast, the Net parable serves as a cautionary reminder that not everyone who claims to belong to the Kingdom of Heaven genuinely does so. The net captures both good and bad fish, mirroring how some may appear righteous on the surface but lack true faith and commitment. This parable warns against hypocrisy and underscores the importance of living a life consistent with one's professed beliefs.

These parables challenge us to live lives of wholehearted dedication to God. They also remind us of the responsibility of teachers and leaders in guiding others toward a profound understanding of God's word. As we reflect on these parables and allow them rest in our hearts, let us rejoice in the treasure of the Eucharist and let us allow Christ to change us personally, and through us, change the world around us.

Have a blessed week.

Fr. Martin