

The title for today's message is: **Where's Your Treasure**

Jesus said: **The kingdom of God is like treasure hidden in a field,**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The title of today's message could easily set our imaginations running. "Where's Your Treasure." Or like the TV commercial "What's in your wallet.

Now I suppose I could spend a lot of time in introductory comments, exploring what people actually do treasure in life.

We might even discuss all the mistaken values, and commodities in this life that people seem to treasure so much.

I once read an article in the newspaper, where there was a picture of a young man jumping for joy on his front porch.

The caption read, "George Pollard, a Deacon, kicked up his heels after learning that he had won \$300,000, in the lottery.

Pollard, 64, will receive \$20,000 a year for the next 15 years." Now, I suppose some of you here, could add his or her own story here about treasures.

Yet, I'm not talking about just any treasure. No! I'm talking about "Life's greatest treasure, that's right, the kingdom of God.

Now, knowing what the treasure is, lets not allow our minds to soar heavenward too quickly, simply because of the term; "The Kingdom of God."

Look, the Kingdom of God has a lot to do with our life right here and now, on earth. Now, "The Kingdom of God can be identified as follows:

It's the gracious activity of God, it's our salvation through our Savior, and our new life of hope, and joy in Christ Jesus. That my friends is the "Treasure."

But obviously too many people overlook this treasure! Look, a win in the State lottery, grabs our attention much, much easier.

Sadly, a great number of people today, will never find the treasure that Jesus is talking about here. It just seems to escape them.

And if the truth be known, it often escapes us too! That's right, we who know and believe in Christ Jesus, and live under the mercy, and grace of God.

You see, we too, just like non-believers, spend too many of our days in quiet desperation and loneliness.

Months, and months go by without genuine joy, nor a genuine zest for life. Yes, we too, live our days fearing other people.

Allowing years to slip by without hope for the future. Yes, at times the kingdom of Heaven escapes us too.

So there is a need for you and me, to talk about the kingdom of God this day, and every day. Yes, we need to hear about it again and again.

So, I begin today with speaking the Word's of the first two parables. Jesus said: ***"The kingdom of God is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field." "Again, the kingdom of God 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.

Now, these two parables, the Treasure, and the Pearl, gives us a great insight of the kingdom of God.

We can also say it gives us information that can make our daily lives as Christians, more meaningful and vital.

Here, the first parable tells us, that sometimes there is an element of surprise, in finding this treasure.

The picture here is of a man digging in a field, maybe simply checking the soil for the owner, when all of a sudden his shovel strikes some kind of metal.

Now, the clang of the shovel against the metal, sent a cold shiver up and down the man's spine. He thinks to himself, what have I found?

Whatever the treasure is, the man has stumbled upon it. A treasure that has been there all the time just waiting to be found.

Now, the man realizes that in order to claim the treasure, he must purchase the land from the owner. Which he does.

Okay, what is Jesus implying here? The implication is that the treasure, is for anyone and everyone. Not just for the man in the parable.

Here, Jesus wants us to see that the treasure, is given, not earned. And that it could have been anyone who found "Life's Greatest Treasure".

Look God's grace can really lay us down low, and at the same time it tells us that any poor, or rich person can claim this treasure, and at any time.

As Jesus once indicated in another parable, the one about the man who comes to work in the field at 3 in the afternoon.

Yet, will receive the same wages as the man who came to work at 8 in the morning.

And if we're not too spiritually sophisticated to admit it, the joke is on us. Our high-minded religious seriousness.

Doesn't earn us one solitary point in God's system of keeping score. Another words.

Jesus is saying that the kingdom of God, our salvation, and forgiveness, always comes to us as a surprise.

How about you, isn't it surprising that God's grace is picking you up and saving you, right now this very moment?

I mean, what have we done? Really! Isn't there much more evidence here that we ought to come to church today, with our heads hung low.

Hoping, just hoping against hope, that just maybe our heavenly Father will overlook our past sins?

Or maybe this past week, or as early as yesterday? But surprise! As we come into the Lord's house this morning.

We don't even discern one little sigh of disgust from our Father. Who can believe it, instead there is a grand Feast waiting for us right here at His altar!

As with the prodigal son, God the Father doesn't even ask us where we've been. Yet He sets before us this meal of forgiveness.

By now our eyes ought to be focused directly on God, as He asks us to focus our eyes on the Cross of His son.

He wants us to see the perfect sacrifice, and payment in full for all our sins that His Son Jesus Christ paid for us on the cross.

He directs us to the living Lord of Easter morning, so we can see the certainty of eternal life in His shining face.

What a surprise! The treasure's been there all the time. God's grace, has been waiting for all of us.

Yet you might ask; why? Why is this treasure so elusive? Why does Christianity become such a drag for us?

Why is our salvation through Christ Jesus, at best, something we merely assent to?

I think it's because we've often lost the reality of God's Amazing Grace. It seems that our child sense of surprise, has escaped us.

Our sophistication has allowed our joy of salvation to go to our heads, frozen in polite religious talk, and proper holy music.

The sheer heart felt joy of being knocked over by God's grace in Christ Jesus, is no longer our daring personal experience.

Today, of course, many people can't be surprised about anything anymore. They have lived through many wars.

They've been jarred by the brutal shootings of innocent children and adults, and they have seen the devaluing of life itself.

And they've read about sexual scandals among the reputable. So, yes, for a lot of people today, there are no longer any surprises at all.

Yet, the kingdom of God is always a surprise. God's mercy in Christ Jesus, and the clean slate He gives us here this very day, and every day.

The unqualified invitation for you and me to ascend these altar steps, and to sit at our heavenly Father's table.

All this is God's uplifting, and trail-blazing surprise for all of us here today. And then, just briefly, in the second parable.

And what was similarly stated in the first parable: that the kingdom of God demands that we give up something.

It demands our repentance and in these moments of worship, for instance, He demands our undivided attention.

Look, the treasure in the field, and the pearl of unusual quality and value, consumed the imaginations of their finders, that is until they firmly possessed their find.

God's kingdom demands our brain-power, our thinking capacity, our will to listen to God, even when fatigue challenges us.

I once heard someone say that he always likes to come to an early church service, so that he can "get it over with" and spend the rest of the day at leisure.

My friends, we're not here in God's house to get anything "over with." Rather we're here to get something started!

We're here to join heart, and hands as one Body in Christ, seriously intent on giving up everything for the sake of the kingdom of God.

We don't come to church to put in an appearance. We come to joyfully, and wholeheartedly, spend time with God, and with each other.

We come, and sit down with one another, as family members come together, earnestly seeking to counsel, and to encourage each other.

All, in our blood-bought faith, knowing that we all have found treasure here today, extremely valuable treasure.

Treasure worth more than we could ever have, yet its free for the taking, Its been waiting for you and me to simply reach out and take.

Amen.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy spirit be with us forever. Amen.