

# Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year A • Psalter Week 1



## TREASURE HUNTERS (MATTHEW 13:44-52)

In today's Gospel, Jesus challenges us to think about what we value most. He uses two parables to get his message across. In the first, a farm labourer discovers a treasure hidden in a field. He realises that it is a valuable find, that it will make him a wealthy man. He buries it again, and sells everything he owns in order to buy the field.

In the second, another man discovers a great treasure. But unlike the farm labourer, this man does not discover the treasure by accident. He has been searching for it. He is a merchant who deals in fine pearls. He knows exactly what he is looking for, and when he finds the most valuable pearl he has ever set eyes on, he is in no doubt what to do – he sells everything he owns so he can have that pearl. Pearls in the time of Jesus were the most valuable of all goods. Now that the merchant has that pearl of great value, he doesn't need to search any more.

Both the farm labourer and the merchant appreciate the value of what they have discovered. They are prepared to risk everything, to spend every penny they possess, in order to have it. Both know it's worth the risk, that it would be foolish to let the opportunity pass them by.

In these parables Jesus is asking if we perceive the kingdom of heaven in the same way. Do we see it as a treasure that is worth more than everything else we value in life? Are we prepared to give up everything, to risk everything, in order to have it? Jesus did. He gave up everything he valued – his family, his home – to do his Father's will and to preach the Good News. For Jesus, there was no treasure greater than doing his Father's will. He was even prepared to give up his life to hold onto it. As Christians, God and God's kingdom must be our greatest treasure. It must mean more to us than anyone or anything else. ■

### REFLECT

People have always taken risks in order to find treasure. Think of the 200,000 who took part in the great California Gold Rush of 1849. Or those who spend all they have on "get rich quick" schemes or other ventures in the hope of striking it lucky. Think of an investor who gambles early on the success of a new company and who makes millions when the company is floated on the stock exchange.

Both the farm labourer and the merchant in today's Gospel know the value of what they've discovered. They are prepared to risk everything to have it because they know it's worth the risk.

Today's Gospel isn't about keeping a sharp eye out for hidden treasure or taking up a career as a venture capitalist. It is about values, priorities, knowing what's important, what our real treasure is. And for Christians the answer is clear: our treasure is the kingdom of God. Our treasure is Jesus. If we follow him, imitate him, live his way, then we will find what we are looking for, the most valuable treasure of all. The gift of salvation is a treasure far more valuable than all the pearls in the sea. ■

### DO

Think of the most valuable thing you own, possibly your house. Now think of the words of Jesus in today's Gospel. Even your house, even everything you own lumped together, counts for nothing compared to God and God's kingdom.



### LEARN

For Christians the only treasure that matters is the kingdom of God.

Wisdom is a gift of God.

### SAY

**"Lord, give me the grace to recognise the treasure in my life and the strength not to sacrifice it for things that are worthless. Amen."**

### PRAY

We live in a materialistic world, which defines happiness in terms of the size of one's bank account and the extent of one's possessions. Pray for yourself and others that you will have the wisdom to know what is truly important.

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

God is in his holy place,  
God who unites those who dwell in his house;  
he himself gives might and strength to his  
people.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

O God, protector of those who hope in you,  
without whom nothing has firm foundation,  
nothing is holy,  
bestow in abundance your mercy upon us  
and grant that, with you as our ruler and  
guide,  
we may use the good things that pass  
in such a way as to hold fast even now  
to those that ever endure.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

1 Kings 3:5:7-12

A reading from the first book of the Kings.  
The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream  
and said, "Ask what you would like me to  
give you." Solomon replied, "Lord, my  
God, you have made your servant king in  
succession to David my father. But I am a  
very young man, unskilled in leadership.  
Your servant finds himself in the midst of  
this people of yours that you have chosen,  
a people so many its numbers cannot be  
counted or reckoned. Give your servant a  
heart to understand how to discern between  
good and evil, for who could govern this  
people of yours that is so great?" It pleased  
the Lord that Solomon should have asked for  
this. "Since you have asked for this" the Lord  
said, "and not asked for long life for yourself  
or riches or the lives of your enemies, but  
have asked for a discerning judgement for  
yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I  
give you a heart wise and shrewd as none  
before you has had and none will have after  
you."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 118

Response:  
Lord, how I love your law!

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord,  
is to obey your word.  
The law from your mouth means more to  
me  
than silver and gold. (R.)
2. Let your love be ready to console me  
by your promise to your servant.  
Let your love come to me and I shall live  
for your law is my delight. (R.)
3. That is why I love your commands  
more than finest gold.  
That is why I rule my life by your precepts:  
I hate false ways. (R.)
4. Your will is wonderful indeed;  
therefore I obey it.  
The unfolding of your word gives light  
and teaches the simple. (R.)

**SECOND READING**

Romans 8:28-30

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.

We know that by turning everything to their  
good God cooperates with all those who  
love him, with all those that he has called  
according to his purpose. They are the ones  
he chose specially long ago and intended to  
become true images of his Son, so that his  
Son might be the eldest of many brothers.  
He called those he intended for this; those he  
called he justified, and with those he justified  
he shared his glory.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!  
I call you friends, says the Lord,  
because I have made known to you  
everything I have learnt from my Father.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

Matthew 13:44-52

(For shorter form Mt 13:44-46, read between  
> <).

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.

>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. <

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a  
dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul  
of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen  
haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect  
the good ones in a basket and throw away  
those that are no use. This is how it will be at  
the end of time: the angels will appear and  
separate the wicked from the just to throw  
them into the blazing furnace where there  
will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

"Have you understood all this?" They  
said, "Yes." And he said to them, "Well then,  
every scribe who becomes a disciple of the

kingdom of heaven is like a householder who  
brings out from his storeroom things both  
new and old."

>The Gospel of the Lord.<  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

(all bow during the next three lines)

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Accept, O Lord, we pray, the offerings  
which we bring from the abundance of your  
gifts,  
that through the powerful working of your  
grace  
these most sacred mysteries may sanctify  
our present way of life  
and lead us to eternal gladness.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Bless the Lord, O my soul,  
and never forget all his benefits.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

We have consumed, O Lord, this divine  
Sacrament,  
the perpetual memorial of the Passion of  
your Son;  
grant, we pray, that this gift,  
which he himself gave us with love beyond  
all telling,  
may profit us for salvation.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.