

Priceless (Matthew 13:44-50)

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[0 : 0 0] cool hey everyone good to see you all my name is isaac if you don't know me i'm just one of the leaders here at church so yeah come say hi if we've never spoken before um you don't have to but yeah it'll be cool to get to know you if it's your first time or yeah we don't know each other so um yeah so i'm really excited to speak to you about um the third installment um about our series on parables uh so a quick recap um pastor william had us retelling stories um in the first parable about the seeds and the soil um the follow-up to that was a mini show and tell where we learned about the mustard seed and the starter for bread and the real and the fake lego um so i thought i would start us off um in this uh chapter three with a little game okay so this is a game i like to call um the most expensivest okay it's pretty simple uh i'll show you two pictures up on the screen okay if you think option one is more expensive it costs more stand up if you think option two is more expensive stay seated okay so if you're feeling lazy just pick option two every single time and stay seated all right so the first one is up here okay so these are two burgers the first one is called the golden boy and the second was called solid gold okay so which one do you think costs more stand up for golden boy sit down for solid gold okay on three one two three oh okay so more people think solid gold is more expensive okay it sounds expensive all right you can sit down um and dun dun dun golden boy is six thousand dollars okay crazy right solid gold is only a hundred only a hundred dollars for a burger all right so let me read you um this dutch diner um says this it all starts with the patty which is made from ground a5 japanese wagyu top of white truffles iberico ham onion rings of don perinon and the batter beluga caviar and king crab right so it was just an experiment uh and then good thing was all the proceeds from that burger was donated to a local food bank so they managed to feed the hungry with that um okay second one what about this a brand new ferrari sf70 or a dingy old 1962 ferrari 250 gto which one do you think cost more brand new or old all right stand up for the first one stay seated for the second one one two three boo all right very simple that old dingy thing costs over 50 million dollars right so pretty insane so in um 2018 a private collector paid people reckon somewhere around 70 million for that car and the sf70 ah chump change at 507 000 all right everyone should just go out and buy one um and lastly we're going to see two books first one is what's called the gutenbergs bible and the second one is the codex uh laycaster which was written by da vinci so what do you think is more expensive two very old books hmm stand up for the first one for the bible for the bible or the um the second one the codex all right one two three that was a trick question because sit down the first book is actually priceless it's the word of god but to some collectors the second one was worth a cool 30 million dollars all right even though the gutenbergs bible is not really one you can buy in wickles at 5.4 million dollars all right so it's a notebook from leonardo da vinci that includes things on fossils and the moon and water and other crazy

things so that's pretty cool um i wonder how often we actually think about the value of of stuff okay so i'll probably say pretty often um there's a reason why before every gadget we buy uh we're googling reviews right before every meal we go out to eat we we check zomato before every car we buy every movie we see or album we listen to uh we see if it's worth our time if it's worth our money worth our attention we don't want to waste a single moment doing something that's less than perfect because after all our resources are finite and i think that's exactly what jesus is highlighting highlighting in the parables we see today we're told about the value of the kingdom of heaven so today i'd like to just explore three quick reasons why jesus is saying the kingdom of heaven is priceless and why it's actually worth sacrificing anything to be its citizens we'll see um that it brings great joy that it's for everyone and the pinnacle is that we see jesus seen in his wholeness um and perfection the priceless gift all right so before we start let's just quickly pray heavenly father um please help us just to see the true value of your kingdom today may the word spoken by jesus convict us to see your kingdom is more precious than any jewels any treasure help us understand what was spoken to the disciples has huge consequence for us today and through your holy spirit lord may we step out of this building with our commitment to you renewed we give this time into your hands in jesus name we pray amen so we've heard over the last couple of weeks um the parables that jesus spoke to the crowd as they gathered on the shore um and jesus stood on the boat so like i said they heard about the soil they heard about the weeds and the grain how there will be imposters and evil doers enemies all around but all that's over that's finished and so jesus has gotten off the boat he's left the crowd and he's made his way into the house so um i can't imagine the disciples piling in after him right they're rushing to ask jesus what all of that was about they're in the house and jesus speaks it's just him and the disciples it's a little quieter it's a lot more intimate they might still hear the waves or the crowds in the background explain to us the parable of the weeds in the field and that's the disciples ask and so william explained to us last week and jesus does exactly that and then what we hear uh is the uh is the other parables for today so let's read that together in matthew chapter 13 um starting from verse 44 to verse 50 if you guys want to turn um to your bibles and yeah we'll read it together verse 44 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 when he found one of great value he went away and sold everything he had and bought it once again the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish when it was full the fishermen pulled it up on the shore then they sat down and collected the good fish and baskets but threw the bad away this is how it will be at the end of the age the angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous

and throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth that's the words of Jesus Christ so in the first parable in verse 44 it tells of a man who finds treasure in a field so I don't know about you guys but I've always been fascinated with buried treasure and pirate maps and stuff many people might dream of stumbling across treasure buried filled with gold and rubies maybe a magic genie with three wishes you see in Jesus' day it was a lot more common to bury treasure in the ground to stash money so banks weren't around in the same way as we know today and money that was just tucked away might have been easily stolen or seized by the government it would be much safer to bury your money in the ground but the trouble was when you passed away the treasure remained buried whoever then owned that piece of land would also own your treasure finders keepers, losers, weepers if the treasure was taken out of the ground by someone it would be theft however if the owner of that field sold the land then the rights of that treasure would simply be sold as well and so that's what we see in verse 44 this man he almost stumbles across treasure in the field and what does he do?

he immediately hides it again so we aren't really here to debate how ethical this might have been but we can see his immediate reaction this man knows instantly that he's found something of immeasurable worth he goes out sells everything he has straight away and buys the field so it's quite a short parable but notice something interesting about this man he isn't sad or impenetrable or doubting whether I should or shouldn't do something as drastic as selling everything he knows that the field contains treasure that will make his decision absolutely worth it no regrets no pain no gain right but when the gain is as big as this it doesn't seem like there's any pain at all so here we see the first point about what's priceless about the kingdom of heaven it brings greater joy than anything else so I was talking to a friend the other day from work who actually just bought their first house seems almost impossible in this day and age right they told me they had to give up dinners had to limit their spending had to sell off all their toys and stopped having fun they spent weekend after weekend going to open homes and after 30 something of these open homes they finally found a house that they loved and managed to buy and you know what they thought it was completely worth it after two long years much like the man buying this piece of land and knowing that there was treasure in it it was worth every inch of sacrifice that they had to go through a few chapters later actually in Matthew 19 we see Jesus telling a rich young man if you want to be perfect go sell your possessions and give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and then the rich young man he left and he was really sad and Jesus famously tells his disciples truly I tell you it is hard for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of heaven again I tell you it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God so I think what Jesus is saying here he is not saying you can buy your way into the kingdom of heaven if you sell everything you own there isn't a dollar amount or a percentage of a salary that you can purchase a ticket with gain an admission fee with we see in Luke 19 that Zacchaeus he was happy to sell over half his possessions and then later in Matthew chapter 25 there were these faithful servants that didn't even use their own money they used their masters so it's not looking at how much you offer it's not looking at the amount or the dollar value

God is looking at your heart and what you hold as most valuable and whether or not you're willing to give that up for something so much greater so if I'm being honest with you throughout these couple of weeks writing this sermon I actually struggled a lot because it's weird I mean I'm growing up and that's very strange for me and so many people around me are chasing promotions and they're chasing new jobs and more money more status you know I've got friends telling me you should be buying crypto you should be buying NFTs you know all these things investing in house and land and I get swayed I fall into the trap that these things will bring me pleasure these things will actually bring me joy these things are what makes my life have value and I think what God has been telling me this week is that my issue is

[13:30] I forget just how good the kingdom of God really is I want to chase my dreams I want to chase my desires but what I really need is to be reminded time and time again that true treasures are stored in heaven I need to be reminded that this life is just a mist like Julianne was saying at the start of worship that appears for a little while and vanishes and we can't really hold on to anything I need my heavenly father to show me how much more valuable his kingdom and his righteousness is over all these other things which fade into insignificance that is where I am truly most joyful that is worth selling everything I have giving up my very life to obtain it so what about you guys is there something that you might hold above our God or maybe you just haven't experienced his goodness his true goodness for a very long time

I think all you need to do is ask ask him to show you ask him to remind you to highlight these things in your heart that might have just a little bit more value than his kingdom to you and God I think will show you what is to be gained in the kingdom of heaven is worth any sacrifice you are asked to make moving on to the second parable is actually very very similar to the first so much that it's basically just a repetition and we know how important repetition is in the Bible and so I think this is an idea again that Jesus really wanted to stress to his disciples so I'll read verses 45 and 46 again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls when he found one of great value he went away and sold everything he had and bought it when we put these two parables together I think we see a small but quite crucial difference it's the people the two men in parable of the treasure and the parable of the pearl the second guy we see he isn't just some random dude in a field he's a merchant looking for fine pearls the NLT describes them in a way us Kiwis might be able to understand as a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls pearls so whether he wanted fine pearls or choice as pearls it doesn't really matter

I think two things are clear this man as a merchant he really knows his stuff and secondly he's not on the hunt for something average something just anyone can buy he wants something exquisite he may be looking for a very long time maybe he's collected a lot of smaller treasures maybe inferior pearls that he's been satisfied with in the past but he knows he's hunting for that that perfect flawless pearl so when he sees it when he spots it much like the first man that we learn about with the treasure he knows he just he just has to have it again he goes out sells everything that he has and buys that pearl and I think maybe that's perhaps that's some of us today as well maybe you've been searching for a long time for meaning in other parts of life maybe you've tried different religions or you've tried different relationships maybe experiences where you've been looking or material positions where you've been looking so you might have amassed a bank vault full of valuable memories or mementos but after a while you realise there's just still something missing it just seems like

I haven't found what's fits into that hole or maybe you know you've sat on these pretty comfy blue seats for a lot of years without finding what it is you've been looking for I think what Jesus is saying in this parable he's saying that I am the answer you've been looking for that he is worth giving up all the prior treasures all the past conceptions or the past hesitance he's worth giving up all of that for something far far greater you've been looking and looking but the pearl is actually here in front of you you can tell him that you're willing to give up the mediocre past for a much better future and we can compare that with the man in the first parable you see this man never set out searching for treasure the message bible describes this man as a trespasser who accidentally stumbles upon this treasure you know he wasn't looking he didn't have a treasure map he wasn't following instructions he couldn't have known a good friend of mine you can call him

A a couple years ago he found that there was something sort of missing in life so he wasn't a christian but he had gone through issues with friends and just life troubles it was a story of loss he didn't really see the meaning in life as well so A knew that a local church was starting a new service and he decided to stop by and check it out so what A found here at PCBC it wasn't a billboard top 100 worship team although we're pretty close and it wasn't like a brand new or a very old building with hundreds of years of history as a church it wasn't those things but what he found was God himself speaking through the word directly to him telling him that there's a better way as a place to give up his burdens his troubles and just be a child of

[19 : 51] God it may have been by chance that A stumbled upon this treasure but it wasn't by chance that A's life has never been the same ever since so maybe to some of us perhaps you're like my friend perhaps you're like the man in the first parable maybe you don't know why you've walked into church today maybe a friend dragged you along or your parents dragged you along you'd probably much rather be out on the beach on the sunny day or maybe watching Netflix in bed or gaming you've been doing you've been doing empty fields of life without too much direction but without too much worry so my prayer for you is that you'll discover the treasure that is Jesus today the shiny rock that you've currently got it may be good but I'm telling you it's not the best thing there is your life it may be good but without the one who created you who designed you and gave you purpose without him it can't be a life lived to the full if your life has been without purpose without meaning you'll find that Jesus yoke is easy and his burden is light if you've been tired you'll taste and see that he is the living water one that brings true rest and if you've been hurt you'll experience deep healing from the prince of peace so even though today may be a chance encounter it most certainly is not a cheap one so what we see here about the kingdom and what surprises about it is it doesn't discriminate whether you're just stumbling upon it like the man in the field or you've been searching earnestly for something all these years as a merchant

God's grace has been freely given to all through the sacrifice of his son Jesus Christ and so finally the last parable actually mirrors the parable of the weeds we heard earlier after Jesus' illustration of farming of good grain and not so good grain he moves on to fishing much like the good wheat that is taken into the barn the good fish will be gathered in baskets much like the weeds that are gathered at the harvest and burned the bad fish will be thrown away and at the end of the age the angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth so that's verse 47 to 50 so an illustration like this would have been fully understood by the disciples that Jesus was speaking to so many of them were previously fishermen now turned fisher of men a big net in the example shown here would have been dragged behind a boat until it was full of fish and then the disciples the fishermen would have hauled that massive net onto the shore so you can't choose what type of fish you get it was just a big smorgasbord of marine animals everything goes therefore all kinds of fish will be dragged onto the shore and the word Jesus uses here for all kinds of fish it was quite a strange one so one that for those science nerds out there would have been better translated into genus or tribe it's appropriate when we're talking about humans but we're not really talking about tribes of fish right but that's precisely it halfway into the parable

Jesus actually switches from talking about fish to talking about people the wicked will be separated from the righteous like we heard earlier the weeds from the bad seeds and on judgment day every kind of person no matter you're good or bad will have to give an account before God remember that there is no good apart from Jesus there is no salvation in works no amount of good deeds no amount of money that you offer none of that can satisfy a holy and perfect God the reality of the opposite right the reality of hell is seen here and to be honest it's not quite nice is it it's not something we like to think about too often we much rather focus on the good part you know the part where the righteous shine like the sun we shy away sometimes from those street preachers that condemn passerbys to an eternity of pain we don't like to face the fact that those we love our friends our family our colleagues schoolmates all those that don't know Jesus at the end of the age will be separated from him and so finally

I think we see the pricelessness of the kingdom of God that is revealed through Jesus Christ on judgment day and why this whole point why are we so willing to sacrifice what we hold dear to is because God's sacrifice what he held dear the most why we're so willing to offer up our treasures and our pearls is because God offered up his greatest treasure his greatest pearl Jesus Christ God's priceless gift of Jesus at the cross means that we are able to spend eternity with him the substitution for our sins on Calvary means that we are saved from the weeping from the blazing furnace from the gnashing of teeth from the reality of hell so for those that know Jesus and have a relationship with him and are saved how will you respond will you weep for those that will be separated from

God's presence will you pray relentlessly for those that are heading towards destruction our God wants all to experience this priceless gift of Jesus Christ famous preacher Charles Spurgeon once said if sinners be damned at least let them leap to hell over our dead bodies and if they perish let them perish with our arms wrapped about their knees let no one go there unwarned and unprayed for true disciples know that the kingdom of heaven is worth sacrificing everything for because it brings greater joy than anything this world can give for those that might not know this great joy it's no secret we're not trying to hide it it's Jesus Christ and he's available to you right here today you just have to ask so how will you react after all this do you truly understand and grasp the value of his kingdom maybe there's things in your life you know you need to sacrifice maybe there are relationships you need to give up maybe jobs you need to quit maybe there's people that you need to forgive attitudes that you need to change in the end

[27 : 58] I think it is all worth it yeah let's pray heavenly father thank you for the priceless gift of Jesus thank you for showing us through parables that there is no amount of sacrifice that is too great to belong to the kingdom of heaven you know the desires of our hearts may you help turn them towards you may your kingdom come and you will and your will be done here on earth in PCBC as it is in heaven amen