

The Kingdom: Living Within: Part 14

Last week we studied the parable of *The Hidden Treasure* (**Matthew 13:44**) and *The Costly Pearl* (**Matthew 13:45-46**). We discovered that the overall message in these two parables is that the most important, special, cherished, desired, and wanted thing that God could ever lay His eyes on is you, me—us. He gave up everything that has any value to Him to have access to us. I encouraged those of you that simply cannot accept this reality about being a treasure and a pearl to challenge yourselves to start living like you are the pearl because it is critical you engage with these truths since you now know them. You have been taught what this all means and that means that you cannot blindly stay in your same old way of handling your life without blatantly rejecting God. You cannot sit and be confused anymore. Because you have participated in this study and because you understand the mysteries of these parables you must change and let your *New Creation* have the room to do things differently. Not only is it time for you to walk in freedom, if you are not already, but you are accountable to walk in freedom. Be sure that you do not shrug your shoulders at this, it is the truth and you are accountable.

We have two more parables left in **Matthew 13**: the parable of *The Dragnet* (**Matthew 13:47-50**) and the parable of *The Householder* (**Matthew 13:52**). Let's start with the *Dragnet*.

Matthew 13:47–51

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea, and gathering

fish of every kind; and when it was filled, they drew it up on the beach; and they sat down and gathered the good *fish* into containers, but the bad they threw away. “So it will be at the end of the age; the angels will come forth and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will throw them into the furnace of fire; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. “Have you understood all these things?” They said to Him, “Yes.”

At a first glance, this parable runs a striking resemblance to the parable of *The Wheat and the Tares*. Remember, angels gathered the wheat (sons of the Kingdom) to be put in the barn for later use and gathered the tares (the sons of the Devil) to be burned with fire. The parable of *The Dragnet* is a very similar concept but instead of dealing with the distinction between the sons of the Kingdom and the sons of the Devil, I believe we are dealing with a different distinction. The separation that I believe the parable of *The Dragnet* is making is a separation between the called and the chosen. It is a statement describing the reality that the Kingdom of Heaven draws many in, but only some truly enter.

Let’s start by taking a look at what fish, nets, and fishermen represent in the Bible. It is not to be lost on us that many of Jesus’ disciples begin as fishermen and later became fishers of men. In fact, Jesus told Simon Peter and Andrew that if they follow Him they will become fishers of men (**Matthew 4:19; Mark 1:17**). Other references that use the picture of fishing as a description of collecting men together for a specific purpose include **Jeremiah 16:16**, where we read: “Behold, I am going to send for many fishermen,” declares the LORD, “and they will fish for them.” This is referencing gathering the people of Israel for their coming exile to Babylon.

Similarly, in a prophecy Ezekiel had concerning the restoration of Israel from their exile of Babylon he sees a river of healing originating from the Temple threshold that produces multitudes of fish and fishermen with their nets spread along the shore of their lands marking change and restoration (**Ezekiel 47:9**). Likewise in **Ezekiel 26:5,14** God judges the nearby nation of Tyre and we again see the spreading of nets and fishing as a metaphor for collecting man.

Fish can also be found to be a Biblical symbol representing men. For example **Habakkuk 1:14** states, “Why have You made men like the fish of the sea, like creeping things without a ruler over them?” **Ecclesiastes 9:12** adds, “Moreover, man does not know his time: like fish caught in a treacherous net and birds trapped in a snare, so the sons of men are ensnared at an evil time when it suddenly falls on them.” Pharaoh and all the people of Egypt are likened to fish in **Ezekiel 29** and our example of Jesus telling the disciples they will fish for men also supports the connection that the Bible uses the metaphor of fish to describe men (**Matthew 4:19**).

The last connection that I want to mention is the cultural significance of fish within the Christian movement, specifically related to the persecution of the early church. Yes, more than half of Jesus disciples were formerly fisherman, but there was a specific connection of faith in Jesus to the symbol of the fish through something called the *Ichthus*. For many years following the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, early Christians faced severe persecution. It is said that as a way of identifying themselves to one another upon meeting in a public place, one person would draw an arc on the ground in the dust. If the other person was a follower of Jesus they would complete the drawing with another arc forming the

symbol of the fish. Most Christians are aware of the fish symbol and today many western Christians have it as a bumper sticker on their car or carry it as a key chain. But broken down letter by letter in the Greek the word *Ichthus* is an acrostic (hidden message) meaning “Jesus Christ God’s Son, the Savior.” It was a fish symbol that embodied an understanding of faith in Jesus.

So the fish is used to describe a multitude of relationships between men and God. Hence, I believe that in this parable Jesus is referencing a specific group of men drawn in by the dragnet of the Kingdom of Heaven. You see the sea is another biblical metaphor for people (*Isaiah 5:30, 8:7, 18:12, 57:20; Jeremiah 51:42*); yet, in this parable we see that there is a separate group being pulled out of the water. In this particular case I believe that He is referencing those who have been “called.” This is where this parable differs from the parable of *The Wheat and the Tares*. In that parable, there was a clear separation between the children of the Kingdom and the children of the Devil; however, that parable did not deal with the called who are not chosen. In the parable, all types of fish are brought in by the net, but then the good fish are gathered and the bad fish are thrown back. I believe this is where the distinction between called and chosen is made. The chosen are placed in a container to go with the fisherman and the called are thrown away.

Now, we have studied the issue of the called and the chosen in great detail. Steve has been very faithful in painstakingly covering every single aspect of this topic for us in his teachings on the Kingdom, specifically *Faith, Hope and Love Part 7*. In that we discussed the Lord who Sanctifies you, **Jehovah Mekoddishkem**. Steve states, “‘Sanctification’ captures the idea that God surveyed the realm of humanity and personally hand-picked you to be His own; hence, you have been chosen and set

apart from all others who have not been chosen. For some, this is a hard truth to swallow and one laced with accusations of exclusivity and intolerance. But regardless of the feelings and sentiments of some, the truth is that our Lord is the one who sanctifies: He chooses, He marks, He seals, and He ensures that all things work together for good such that the “chosen” might be conformed into the image of the Son (**Romans 8:28-30**.)” And we must not forget, Steve also highlighted the fact that the chosen are those who truly chose Jesus in return. Even in the teaching on the parable of *The Wheat and the Tares* we discussed your response to having been chosen is a part of being chosen. That no matter where you turn in the Bible you cannot escape the intersection between God’s choosing and man’s need to actively respond to having been chosen. Steve explains in *Part 7* that “in **Revelation 3:4-5**, Jesus says that He will not erase from the Lambs Book of Life, those who now—in their present—overcome and continue to overcome (*present active participle*), and refuse to defile themselves with the garments of the world. Those who overcome will be clothed in white and Jesus will confess their names before His Father and before His angels. Thus, man has to choose to respond to God and make a *present active* decision of faith, and continue to make that decision of faith over and over again, to “overcome” and not soil their garments in the filth of religion. This is what it means to come to Jesus; and those who do will experience their eternal reward.”

We also discussed the key indicators of the chosen: they hear and they follow.

John 10:1-5

I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than

going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice.

Moreover, the Bible speaks of our securing our entry in the Kingdom through: 1) Doing the will of the Father; 2) Living by faith; 3) Being poor in Spirit; and 4) Being converted by God and choosing, as a matter of lifestyle, to approach Him as a child. If you aren't recalling what I am saying, you really need to review the Kingdom teachings and let them sink deep into your personal theology. We have talked at length about the called and the chosen and all of you have had ample opportunity to understand it enough to know that it is not enough to call it "unfair" and look away. According to this parable the angels will separate the fish and many will be thrown away.

For the purposes of tonight, outside of that quick touch back that I just did on the basic idea behind understanding those who are called and those who are chosen, I truly believe that God wants me to focus on the emptiness of religion. You see the dragnet pulls in a group of fish out of the water and I believe that group is specifically comprised of two groups of people: 1) those who are willing to reject religion and receive the one true God who alone can do good; and 2) those who want to hang onto their religious ways of approaching God believing they can be good and do good for God. Again, this goes back to our extensive studies on the

verse in **Matthew 7:21-23** regarding those who say “Lord, Lord” and believe they belong to God because of all the amazing things they did for God—all in Jesus’ name. I want to read that set of verses right now to give us a fresh stage for what I am going to say.

Matthew 7:21–23

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*. “Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.’”

When it all comes down to it, in the context of this parable, the fish that get thrown out are those that simply will not exchange their religion for the truth. I don’t know how to emphasize this enough; if the way you live and if what you believe is not in alignment with the Word of God and I mean in real agreement, then you are not practicing a life of faith but a life filled with religion. It does NOT matter if you are doing that here at Pathway; doing it here does not mean you have rejected your religious approach to God.

As we have been talking about securing our entry to the Kingdom, we discussed that people who are secure don’t ever have to question it because they know. Also when we were studying the parable of *The Wheat and the Tares*, I said that when you are wheat you know it and you don’t walk around asking yourself if you’re a

tare. We also talked about how if you're acting like a tare you can stop simply because you have heard the truth, have recognized the incongruity of your life and your thoughts with those of the Spirit, and are willing to now and continually change it by submitting your thoughts, your ways, and your will to the truth. I reference these things because I don't understand why in the area of our religious idolatry we still compromise our lives and behave like the truth isn't the truth.

I have come to be so steady, at peace and rest, because I have made a sincere and concrete decision of belief in my life that only God is good and my religion is pointless. Practically, I have decided that if whatever I am personally philosophizing about, regarding ANY situation related to ANY circumstance, doesn't line up 100% with the Word of God, then it is a lie and it doesn't get to have any time in my mind, body or life.

Sadly, it seems to too many of us are in a constant state of trying to wiggle God's truth around our comfort level, justice, anger, fairness, and more. That kind of approach to God is all about negotiating with the truth; and it is religion. And, regardless of where it comes from or where it is going, it doesn't work and it will never work because it is just us playing religion like a little child plays house. The angels throw the "bad" fish of religion away. And that is why there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. They have strived to perform for God, all in Jesus' name; yet, all the while never ever really doing the will of the Father. Serving God and doing great things for God that have not been appointed by the Father gets you absolutely nowhere in terms of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The reason why I read that verse in **Matthew** again about "Lord, Lord" is because I wanted you to see that it is in plain English. We didn't piece together ten different verses to make that conclusion; it is written out as plain as day and it came out of

the mouth of Jesus Christ the Son of God who was crucified on the cross for our sins so that we could call Him Lord and He would hear it. We are accountable to this verse. This parable applies to us because we are all in the dragnet you guys, but I have to ask you to ask yourself: “do you do the will of the Father?” Only you can answer that. If faith, hope and love are not fruits of your life wake up and change.

This message bothers me. It bothers me so much because I’m really nervous for some of you. Some of the fruit around here stinks so pungently and you don’t seem to care. I don’t have a list of names written down, but I hear the grumbling and the thanklessness. I see the faces, the moping, and the hateful and destructive ways that some of you treat each other. Just because I’m not in your face weekly about it doesn’t mean that I don’t see it. And just to be clear, I’m not saying this because you’re bothering me; unfortunately, I have learned to live with that stinky fruit. I’m used to it, too used to it in fact; but I’m doing what I am supposed to be doing in my own journey of faith and I am at peace regarding my secure entrance to the Kingdom, but are you?

I have deep affection for each of you so I desperately desire to have conversations and receive communication through email and such that indicates that you are secure. I want to witness care between you and others that conveys that you are secure. If this is convicting any of you then please, I implore you, do not find yourself thrown back into the water. Do not roll the dice and play the odds. Today, hold yourself up to the Word of God and reject your religion. Reject what you are doing here trying to live your life the way you want to under the umbrella of Pathway. Hold yourself up to the Word and align with it and reap the goodness, joy, peace, friendship and love. You will find that you are in good company and you

will encourage people to believe in a God who saved you.

The last thing that Jesus says in verse **51** is “have you understood all these things?” and the scriptures say that they answered Him with “yes.” So they understood and now you understand too. Keep in mind that it is no mistake that we have studied these very intense mysteries of the Lord, things hidden since the foundation of the earth, during our attack of delusion. God saw fit to set in stone realities that were otherwise set on rickety support before we did this study in **Matthew 13**. We have needed these truths to be revealed during our time weathering this attack of delusion from the Enemy. But be mindful, our next attack, coming in the spring, is going to present an insatiable lust and desire for the things of this world. And what are you going to do? You must hold fast to that which is true.

1 Thessalonians 5:14–24

We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything *carefully*; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.

With that, let's continue onto the last parable we will study in **Matthew 13**, the parable of *The Householder*. It really is just a continuation of our chain of parables because after Jesus asks "do you understand all these things" and receives their affirmative response, He adds a parable beginning with a "therefore."

Matthew 13:52

And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old."

Jesus states that if we understand these things, then we are as scribes who have become disciples of the Kingdom of Heaven and we basically inherit the responsibility for leading our house. Scribes were similar to Pharisees in that they were religious leaders and teachers of the law, however there was a distinction in their position. They were lawyers whose primary job was to copy the Scriptures. Their focus was the details of the letter of the law. As they developed, their focus transitioned from mere copyists to teachers of the Scriptures. For example, Ezra was both a scribe and a priest (**Nehemiah 8:2-8**).

Jesus says that we are these lawyers that are to know the scriptures and be responsible for the purity of their message making sure that there is nothing that changes as it is copied and reproduced. That is very applicable given what we just discussed about what it practically looks like to put down our religion and approach

God on truth. He then adds another identity to that of a scribe stating that this instruction is for the scribe who has also become a disciple of the Kingdom. We are these “scribe disciples.” We are the lovers and protectors of the law who also understand the mysteries of the Kingdom. Another interesting thing to note is that traditionally scribes come from the line of Levitical Priests so Jesus is referencing us as priests of our household—the Kingdom of Heaven. This is proved out in our foundational beliefs that Jesus is Lord, only God is good, and we are aliens and strangers in this world. Our being aliens and strangers confirm the reality that we, the scribe disciples, are not to be concerned with the things of this world. This world is not our house; the Kingdom is our house.

Then He goes on to say that within that house we “bring out of our treasure things new and old.” What are our new treasures?

Mark 1:27

They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”

Jesus brought a new teaching with authority! New treasures also consist of new wineskins, where the Holy Spirit can dwell within us in the *New Creation* (***Matthew 9:17; Mark 2:22, 2 Corinthians 5:17***); a new commandment to love each other as Jesus has loved us (***John 13:34***); a new covenant by the blood of the cross (***Hebrews 8:6-13***); a new heaven and a new earth (***Isaiah 65:17***); and that is just the tip of the

iceberg.

Revelation 21:5

And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

What are our old treasures?

1 John 2:7

Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard.

Romans 7:7–8

What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET." But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin *is* dead.

Our old treasures are the scriptures that protect and preserve us, the Law which

paved the way for us to be fully leavened and then fully in touch with our identity as the pearl. Jesus tells us that we are to bring these things out and that means that we are to give them away. We are to let these realities be expressed in and through our lives to each other, to lights, to possible believers, and to unbelievers. We are to bring out the new and the old as a complete presentation of the complete picture of Christ in us. This is what Jesus is saying when He says “therefore.” He is saying if you understand all these things then bring them out and give them away. Teach them, pass them on and live them out with the fruit of your life.

This has been an incredible study you guys. Do you understand the magnitude of what the Spirit has given us access to? He trusts us! That is such an honor! Don't waste this knowledge.

Proverbs 1:7

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction.

In conclusion, let's review the meaning and content of the parables from ***Matthew 13*** one last time before we end this study. Remember these things and hold them close to your heart so that the Lord will continue to give you more new things about Him to understand.

-The parable of *The Sower and The Seed* (***Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23***) depicts the reality of the human heart and condition, each type of soil has potential to claim

patches of our heart that define and mold us. We must be mindful to be constantly cultivating the soil toward being fruitful. This is real time, happening right now. Don't let your soil be hard, rocky, or filled with thorns; fight for the good soil to overwhelm your heart.

-The parable of *The Wheat and the Tares* (**Matthew 13:24-30**) depicts the reality of the state of mankind as a whole on this earth. We are not to be judging others, but to be focused on doing the will of the Father. We were meant to be intermingled with unbelievers and were meant to continue to do our work regardless of securing our entrance to the Kingdom, no matter what anyone around us is doing.

-The parable of *The Mustard Seed* (**Matthew 13:31-32**) depicts the reality that Jesus created evil in the midst of His Kingdom thereby displaying the necessity for evil as a tool to accomplish God's purposes in the hearts of man. The Enemy's presence in our lives is part of God's plan to facilitate our neediness for Him and to train us to be strong.

-The parable of *The Leaven* (**Matthew 13:33**) depicts the reality of the individual and how the "tool" of evil works to perfectly corrupt all three pecks of flour—represented in the heart/soul, the mind, and the body (**Matthew 22:37**). We need to realize we are fully leavened to be able to finally reject our own delusion of goodness. We are made righteous before the Lord when we let go of our own striving and fall back into His ready and capable righteousness.

-The parable of *The Hidden Treasure* (**Matthew 13:44**) and *The Costly Pearl* (**Matthew 13:45-46**) depicts God's love for us and puts another stake into the heart of religious delusion about our own goodness and any notion that we can

do anything at all to be loveable. We are so special to God it's almost unfathomable; but until we see His acceptance in the face of our full leavening, we will not be able to understand and enjoy our acceptance. Understanding our identity collectively as the treasure and individually as the pearl is critical to us being capable of walking the path of righteousness. We are the stars of the show.

-The parable of *The Dragnet* (**Matthew 13:47-50**) depicts the reality of how the Kingdom catches many people, like a fishing net catches fish. Yet, in spite of being dragged in by the net, there will still be a separation at the end of days between the called and the chosen. This separation is between those who are pulled into the dragnet based on faith and who gets caught in the dragnet based on religion. God desires faith and those who live a life of religion, even if it is religion to self, will be thrown away.

-The parable of *The Householder* (**Matthew 13:52**) depicts the reality that we, as true believers are priests; keepers, and protectors of scripture and bearers of the Good News of Christ. We are charged in our understanding of these parables to take responsibility for our household and bring forth the old law and the New Covenant under the light of the truth of God's redemption. It is our responsibility to continually communicate these truths, defend them and stand up for them.

This is one of the hardest, yet beautiful studies that I have ever done. I am so thankful that God saw fit to allow me to dig so deep into the soil of His truth. It has changed me for sure. It has grown my faith and given me the heart of a Lion about these truths. The best part about this is that I just want to know more. More! Let this wisdom and instruction grow your faith and understanding about the world in

which you are existing and live. Remember, that now that you know it and declare that you understand it you are charged to take responsibility for this household of the Kingdom and bring out all the treasures new and old.

Before I finish, I just want to take a minute to very intentionally and publicly give all glory and honor to the Lord. Jesus was so kind to the disciples. I can just picture His loving eyebrows raise as He asked, "Have you understood all these things?" He truly wanted to make sure that they comprehended what He was saying, and in that I want to honor Him.

He is faithful, He is true, and He is perfect, kind, and loving. Everything that matters at all rests within the palms of His powerful hands and His glorious plans. He is the King and He is worthy of our fully dedicated lives no matter what He gives us in return. Whether we have a life of prosperity or a life of hard suffering He alone, apart from anything that He does or doesn't do for us, is worthy, worthy, worthy. I will praise Him, worship and serve Him until the day that I die and I receive and accept His grace and mercy in my life. I accept my full leavening as well as my priesthood, as I dearly hope that you will accept yours. I accept the charge He has given me to care for you, His people. The Lord is faithful always. I am just a person but He is God, the I AM; and I exalt His name in this room, in this town, in this city and all throughout the world. May He alone be praised forever and ever. Amen.

He who has ears, let him hear.

Let's pray.