

## The Kingdom of Heaven

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.” (Matt. 13:44)*

These words concerning the kingdom of heaven were spoken by Jesus to His disciples. To this topic much attention is given in the Bible. The kingdom of God is pictured by many different examples throughout the Old and New Testaments. Jesus also spoke much concerning it. The chapter in which these words are found, Matthew 13, deals in its entirety with this topic. By many parables Jesus teaches about this kingdom. Even yet today, in the services of God’s children, much is spoken of concerning the kingdom of God. This, we believe, is precisely as it should be. As we hear from the words of Jesus, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.” (Matt. 6:33)

We do not desire that the preaching of the kingdom of God would diminish, but that it would continue and abound both unto us who have received the grace-gift of living faith and also unto those who are outside of the kingdom. The kingdom of God cannot be seen by our carnal portion. It is, as described in this text, a hidden treasure. This treasure is revealed when one receives the eyesalve of the gospel. Thus, it happened with Saul of Tarsus. When Ananias placed his hands upon Saul and preached to him the gospel of the kingdom, the scales of unbelief fell from his eyes, and he received sight to behold the kingdom of God. (Acts 9:7,18) Through eyes of faith, the kingdom is now seen as a treasure, as the prophet Zechariah beheld it, “I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold...” (Zech. 4:2)

In this text, Jesus compares the kingdom of God to a treasure hid in a field. On our own part, we would behold only the earthen field but not the treasure it contains. Therefore, the eyesight of living faith, by which the treasure is seen, is understood by the believer to be a grace-gift of God. As Martin Luther has written, “For neither you nor I could ever know aught of Christ, could ever believe in Him, ever take Him as our Lord, were it not given into our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the preaching of the gospel. What a precious matter it is when it is given into one’s heart to hear and believe the gospel preached from God’s kingdom. The sinner is able to hear that all sins are forgiven in the name and blood of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Thus, one blinded by sin receives sight of this grace kingdom and is able to say as Luther: “I believe that there is upon earth a small holy flock, a holy assembly of pure saints under one head, Christ. They are called together by the Holy Spirit in one faith, one mind and one understanding. They possess many gifts but are one in love and without sect or division. Of this assembly I am also a part, and a sharer and owner in its blessings, through the Holy Spirit...”

The kingdom of God and its beauty cannot be seen from the outside. From this viewpoint, one sees only the earthen field. As it has been said, the kingdom of God is hidden by the faults and flaws of the believers. It is a spiritual kingdom and is not formed of the flesh and blood of the believers. That carnal portion has never repented. In the past, it has been wrongly taught, especially by those who fell in the last heresy that the kingdom of God has two portions, one spiritual and one fleshly. This was used in an attempt to explain their wrong doctrine that the kingdom can err. In this text, we see that Jesus does not compare the kingdom of God to the field, but rather to the treasure hidden in that field. Clearly, it is seen that the kingdom of God, the pillar and ground of truth, is an unerring kingdom. It is that candlestick made all of gold, without flaw or blemish. Its beauty is the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who as a lamb without spot or blemish offered himself as the sacrifice for the sins of all mankind. This righteousness even the greatest sinner can own by faith as a grace gift.

The beauty of this kingdom is not an outward beauty from the righteousness of man and his good works. “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23) One’s own righteousness is as a filthy garment and spotted by the flesh. (Jude 23) For this reason, one must do as this text relates; sell all that he has and buy that field. In other words, to be undressed of the filthy garment and be clothed with the righteousness of Christ. The prophet writes of this change of garment: “And he answered and said unto

those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." (Zech. 3:4) This change of raiment God performs through the preaching of the gospel from His kingdom here on earth. One is able to receive it with joy and hide it into the depths of the heart only when one is able to become as a childlike grace beggar. As Jesus has said, "Verily I say unto you, Except, ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter in the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 18:3)

Even now, if there should be one such soul who is traveling with a conscience awakened unto its sinful condition, the gospel of Christ that is preached from His kingdom yet has power to perform that change of raiment. Here one can yet be unclothed of all filthiness of sin and be clothed upon with the righteous garment of Christ. The gospel is yet calling sinners unto repentance. But, also unto you, dear brothers and sisters in faith, may it be yet revealed unto you and me what a great treasure is ours here in Gods kingdom, where we are able to journey as His children. Uplift your hearts to believe even now all sins and doubts forgiven in Jesus' name and precious blood and be of good comfort. How precious in this calling to be a child of God. When we travel in His kingdom, we own righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit here in time and also one day in eternity.

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