

You Bet Your Life
The Value of the Kingdom of God
Living Into the Kingdom - Part 9
Mt 13:44-46; Lk 12:16-21

Introduction

- **We all Have to Ask The Key Questions of Life:**
 - **Why do we exist? What is our purpose?**
 - **Is there a God? What is He like? What does He want from us?**
 - **What really matters?**
 - **The Biblical Answer** = Everything is about God and we were created to be connected to Him, have a relationship with Him, and live for Him in this world, that He might be glorified and as a result we would be filled up with purpose and meaning.
 - **How Do We Do That?** - we connect with Jesus Christ, the Son of God. We enter the Kingdom of God through Him and become who we were designed to be and live a life worth living.
 - **What Does That Cost?**
 - Lk 9:23-25 - *“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”*
 - **Sounds Expensive, but then again...**

ENTERING the Kingdom of God is the Most IMPORTANT Thing You Will Do

Lesson

- **Series Wrap Plan** - I'm going to tell you some new parables and recap some of those taught by Bishop Lovelace back in Part 4, as we wrap up this series.

- **Hidden Treasure & Pearl of Great Price** – Jesus explained the importance of Entering the Kingdom of God with a couple parables/stories:
 - **Mt 13:44-46** – *“The kingdom of heaven 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. ⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.”*
 - **Reminder of what the Kingdom of God is:** Anywhere God’s influence is. Anywhere He is ruling is His kingdom. Are you His kingdom? Does He rule in your life? Is He your Lord and Savior? For real?
 - **Our Series talks about what it means to Live Into It** – which means living in a new reality that you are spiritually alive, connected deeply to Christ, indwelt by the Holy Spirit and now you do different things and live differently.
 - **But it all comes from a RELATIONSHIP with your Creator.** It’s all about a RELATIONSHIP with Jesus Christ. A real one. **Not one based on knowledge of, but connection with.**
 - **Does That Kingdom Sound Valuable to You?** – are you willing to give up everything to live into that Reality? To have a relationship with God.
 - **It Doesn’t sound valuable to everybody...**
 - **Parable of the Rich Man and Beggar** – **Lk 16:19-31** – *“There was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. ²⁰ And at his gate was laid a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, ²¹ who desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man’s table. Moreover, even the dogs came and licked his sores. ²² The poor man died and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s side. The rich man also died and was buried, ²³ and in Hades, being in torment, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham far off and*

Lazarus at his side. ²⁴ And he called out, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am in anguish in this flame.' ²⁵ But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner bad things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in anguish. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us.' ²⁷ And he said, 'Then I beg you, father, to send him to my father's house— ²⁸ for I have five brothers—so that he may warn them, lest they also come into this place of torment.' ²⁹ But Abraham said, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' ³⁰ And he said, 'No, father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' ³¹ He said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be convinced if someone should rise from the dead.' "

- **The Concluding Point of that Story?** - There are some that don't believe they have any need of God at all in their lives. Their resistance is so great that nothing is going to get through to them.
- **Who are these people? Are they us?**
- **The Beatitudes (Blessing in Difficulty & Need)** - In the longest recorded teaching by Jesus in the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount, He tells the people a whole list of things that are better than other things. He says stuff like: you are blessed if you have difficulty in this life. You are blessed if you are needy for spiritual things. You are blessed if you are persecuted now. What was He talking about? He was explaining the concept of **NEED AS A DOORWAY**.
- **He used Money Examples - Lk 6:20, 24** - "*Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God...*" *But*

woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation."

- **Why poor vs. rich is a thing in the kingdom (we think we are full)** – When we think that this life is all that there is, we judge good and bad, full and empty on what we know around us. We begin to think that to have things is to be full, to have money is good. **We think that our carts are full, so we do not long for more.** When we are wealthy and have access to all the things of the world, we close off our hearts from longing for greater, because we look around us and see that in this world, we have all that it has to offer. We think that's it. But it's not.
- **When God Comes Knocking (vacuum salesman)** – When someone comes to your front door and knocks wanting to give you something or sell you something, the moment you find out what it is, you match it up against your level of need. If it's a vacuum they are selling, then you think about how good your current vacuum is and decide if you shut the door. They say their vacuum is better, but your vacuum is good enough, so you close it. But if you don't have a vacuum at all, you will keep the door open longer to listen to what it would be like to have a vacuum and what it can do.
- **The Rich Shut the Door** - If we are rich, we shut the door on God (or never open it), because we have all the world has to offer or at least have access to it. We assume that God is simply going to offer a slightly better version of what we already have, but at a high cost. We aren't interested.
- **The Poor Hear Him Out (the true Offer)** - But if we are poor and know that we have nothing, then

anything is worth listening to. It is in the conversation that we realize that this particular offer is not for sale at any store. We can't buy it even if we had the money. It's here that we realize **it not only brings eternal life in the future but that it brings a bunch of the things that the rich people are chasing after with their money, but it's for free.**

- **Rich and Poor isn't just about Money** - The idea of being rich or poor isn't always about money or dollars. We can be rich with attention, rich with fame, rich with toys and escapism, we can be rich with talents and abilities. **Whatever we have enough of that fills us up, is wealth. Sometimes we are just full of ourselves.**
- **Parable of the Rich Fool** - Living for ourselves and not for God is a waste
 - Lk 12:15-21 - *"And he said to them, "Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."¹⁶ And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷ and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' ¹⁸ And he said, 'I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, "Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry."²⁰ But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' ²¹ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."*
 - **It's More Than Selfishness, it's Temporal Thinking**
 - if we get our eyes off the fact that we were built to live forever. If we buy the news that this world is all

about us and that we need to milk it for all it's worth. If we believe that this life is all there is, we will get lost in the things around us. But if we realize that this life is short and the next one is the real deal. If we realize that this life is about serving God with what we have and building His kingdom. If we focus on the eternal, then everything we have takes on a new meaning: using it for the glory of God.

- **Finding Lost Stuff** - In Luke 15 Jesus lays out three parables/stories about lost things: Lost sheep, lost coins and lost sons. We tend to focus on the Prodigal son story about the young man who took his life with His Father for granted, took his inheritance early and wasted it all and fell into ruin. Then he went home, and His Father welcomed him with a warm embrace and restoration. But I want to focus on first two: Sheep and coins. The Son one is about coming to your senses and returning to Christ, but the first two are just simply lost and never coming home on their own.
 - **Parable of the Lost Sheep** - **Lk 15:1-7** - *"Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. ² And the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them." ³ So he told them this parable: ⁴ "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the open country, and go after the one that is lost, until he finds it? ⁵ And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. ⁶ And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' ⁷ Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."*
 - **Parable of the Lost Coin** - **Lk 15:8-10** - *"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors,*

saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.'
¹⁰ Just so, I tell you, there is joy before the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'"

- **The Context of the Passage = All People Matter** - The Pharisees and religious leaders were complaining to Jesus that He was wasting His time with the useless people (sinners and tax collectors). Jesus rebuked them and explained that they (those sinners) were precious to Him and His Heavenly Father and that when they are rescued all of heaven rejoices.
 - **Those That NEED a Savior (Levi/Matthew & Co.) - Lk 5:27-32** - "After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me."²⁸ And leaving everything, he rose and followed him. ²⁹ And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. ³⁰ And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹ And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."
- **The Insight in the Message = They stay lost, they are never coming home** - coins don't find their way back to the purse. Lost sheep don't just come home.
 - **Sometimes it just happened to you (coins)** - raised in a non-Christian home or surrounded by a non-Christian environment.
 - **Sometimes you just wander away (Sheep)** - out of ignorance and selfishness, not realizing the ramifications of your actions (Sheep)
 - **We need to be found** - Jesus is in the business of finding people.
- **The Offer Has Been Made - What will you do with it?**

- **Today Jesus is extending an offer to you to rescue you from yourself.**
- **Counting the Cost of Kingdom Living** – Is it Easy to Come in or Hard? – depends on your level of resistance. *Is surrender easy for you or hard?*
 - **The Price Tag of Total Surrender** - Lk 9:23-25 - *“And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. ²⁵ For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?”*
 - **Counting the Cost of Living Into the Kingdom** - Lk 14:27-33 - *“Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. ²⁸ For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? ²⁹ Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, ³⁰ saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ ³¹ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? ³² And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. ³³ So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.”*

Conclusion

- **Altar Call Week - Have music played at the End**
 - **Periodic Check In** - to make sure that we are all on the same page here at Bridgeway. It’s absolutely critical that all of us, every single one of us, has a relationship with Jesus Christ that is alive and active. Today is the day to make sure that we do.