



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

June 12, 2011

JUMP START #345

Matt. 13:44- “The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it goes and sells all that he has and buys the field.”

Our passage today is found in the section of illustrations or parables defining what the kingdom of Heaven is like. Jesus tells us that the kingdom of Heaven is like the sower who threw the seed upon the land, but at night his enemy came and sowed weeds into the field. He then tells us that the kingdom of Heaven is like a mustard seed. Then, the kingdom of Heaven is like leaven that was placed inside dough. After our passage, Jesus continues with the kingdom of Heaven is like a pearl merchant who found a pearl of great price. Then the kingdom of Heaven is like a giant fish net that caught all kinds of fish. The good were kept and the bad were thrown out.

Many parables throughout this chapter are to teach what the kingdom of Heaven is like and to show that God’s kingdom is not like the kingdoms of the world.

Our passage today is about a man who stumbles upon a treasure that was hidden in the field. It was not uncommon for people living in the time of without safety boxes, to hide valuables in a field. If they were robbed or more likely invaded by another nation, their valuables would be safe. Here is a man who finds such. He doesn’t steal them, or even take them. He buys the field so he can get the treasure. The cost of the field was expensive. It cost him all that he had. But it was worth it because of the treasure he found.

That’s the story. Now what’s the point? What’s the spiritual lesson here? The treasure is salvation, God’s will, all that Jesus stands for. Salvation is free, yet it costs. It costs us our all. We are to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, and soul. We are to deny our self, and take up our cross and follow him. To say that it costs nothing really isn’t so. We can’t buy salvation, but it costs us complete and total commitment on our part.

This man in the story realized what he found. He saw its’ value. He knew what it was, and what it was worth. How about us? It’s not just having a place to go on Sunday, church. It’s a new way of life. It’s a different way of thinking. It’s seeing life and all that there is through the eyes of God. Wrong, looks differently from God’s perspective. Doing things for others is different when you bring God into the picture.

This man in the story wasn’t given the treasure, he had to do something to obtain it. So do we. We are saved by grace, yet we have responsibility. Those two thoughts are not opposite. Jesus said in Luke 13 to “strive to enter the narrow door.” That word carries the idea of agony and effort. Without our

responsibility, grace would save everyone, even those who didn't want to be saved. Striving, effort, "purchasing the field" still doesn't earn Heaven for us. We can never earn it. But we must want it. We must be willing to change our lives, our hearts, and our attitudes for God.

How excited this man in the story seems to be. He found something great. We hear stories similar to that. Someone in a garage sale makes a rare find and buys a painting that is worth thousands of dollars. Heaven is worth it. Heaven is all the world to me, as the hymn goes.

Where do we find that treasure? It's in the Bible. It's Jesus Christ. It is what he offers you. A better way than the direction you have been going. A better heart...a better hope. What's it worth to you? Are you willing to give up everything for it, or more accurately, for HIM?

I think the reason some don't is that they just haven't realized the value. Sure they want to go to Heaven when they die, who doesn't, but every Sunday in church? Change my habits? Read the Bible? Help others? Follow Christ? They begin thinking, that's too much or I really don't want to do all that, or worse, it's not worth it to me. And so they walk on, leaving a rare and valuable treasure in a field. They remain poor and broken on the inside when they could have Jesus. They continue going down a dead end road that leads to nowhere when they could follow Christ. They continue to fill their hearts and minds with senseless and empty things, talking about others, complaining about everything, and denying how miserable and stuck they really are. You might think, boy, he's really slamming people today. No. I'm remembering how I once lived before I found a treasure in a field. That treasure changed my life. It changed my values and what I was after. That treasure is Jesus.

He became mine after I sold everything. How about you? Are you ready to try it his way? It'll cost you, but it's worth it.

Roger Shouse