



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)

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Jump Start # 525

Matthew 13:44 *"The kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field."*

Our verse today is found in the setting of several parables about the kingdom of Heaven. Jesus is describing and defining different aspects of the spiritual nature of His kingdom to an audience who thought the kingdom was going to be physical like David's was of the Old Testament. Jesus doesn't tell about horses, or armies, or generals, or campaigns, or fortresses, instead He describes the influence, the growth and the value of His kingdom.

Our verse hints at the concept of truth, of which is the foundation of Christ's kingdom. Back in Biblical times, it was not unusual for a person to bury treasure in a field. Today, we'd put it in the bank. Banks were not institutions like we know them today. They were not insured and the common man didn't have access to them. In the parable of the talents, the one talent man buried his talent in the field.

Citizens did that to protect their treasures. This parable has a man who is walking across a field. He stumbles upon this buried treasure. It's worth is great. He goes and purchases the field so the treasure becomes his. He didn't steal it, he bought it. This echoes the Proverb that says, "Buy truth and sell it not."

The treasure he found was truth, the truth. The kingdom of Heaven is like this, Jesus says. A person comes to the word of God and they discover that it is right and life changing. He gives his all to possess it. For us, it is the total surrender of our will to embrace His will. We give up our sinful ways. We give up trying to be big shots. We give up our independence. We give up running the show. We surrender our self to Him.

The treasure is not impossible to find. It's there if a person looks for it. For those who are not interested, they will walk right past it. For those who do not ever want to change, they won't

see it. But for those who realize that there must be more to life than this, they will find it. For those who are seeking God, they will stumble upon it.

This life changing treasure is something that we want to keep all of our life. One of the saddest things to witness is a person who comes to this treasure and later leaves it. What are they going to exchange for it? What have they found that is better than this? Of course, the answer is nothing. There is nothing. They walk away thinking and believing that they can get along fine without this treasure. It seems to work for a while. They are content, happy and getting along just fine. But things start falling apart, they always do. Without God's word governing your life, you tend to drift toward sinfulness and selfishness. It erodes relationships and tarnishes your attitude. It is most evident at the end of life, when a person who has lived without Christ comes crashing to that dead end and they cast into eternity without God.

What a blessing it is to walk with God's word as our guide, compass and friend. Passages become well known and very practical after years of use. They comfort us. They help us. They remind us. They kick us in the pants. They lead us to be a greater person and they build a marvelous relationship with the Lord.

God's word works. It changes us, molds us and shapes us. Let the word work on your heart. Think about it. Let it simmer in your mind and heart. See the goodness of Jesus and the power of the Lord. See the righteous ways that He wants us to walk in. See that the best marriage is based upon God's word. The best attitudes are those shaped by God. The best life is life following God.

It is easy midweek to be so busy with life that this treasure is stuffed away somewhere. School, work and schedules can make us weary, stressed and forgetful that we have a treasure that belongs to us-it is God's marvelous word.

We travel life, not without a guide nor a direction-it is God's word. How thankful we ought to be. How blessed we are to gather with other believers and study that word and to share insights that will help us even more. That is the beauty of Bible study. Make that a part of your life, it will help you.

We indeed are a rich people, who have found the treasure of Heaven.

Roger Shouse

