

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> July reflection

**Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52**

### **The Parable of the Mustard Seed**

He put before them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.'

### **The Parable of the Yeast**

He told them another parable: 'The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.'

### **Three Parables**

'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

### **Treasures New and Old**

'Have you understood all this?' They answered, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.'

Parables are stories to reflect upon; there are different styles of parable but they all contain scope for reflection.

The final statement in this passage is one that we might easily pass over, as it is not a straightforward statement as old bad, new good. It is saying there is old treasure and new treasure, old truth and new truth, old gospel and new gospel, the new fulfilling the old? How do you read it? The old has value but the new is of greater value?

We live in a world where some people will say, "anything goes", and others say all roads, all religions, lead to God. Is that what Jesus is teaching here?

Jesus is speaking of a Kingdom that is worth more than anything else in the world. Compared to the religions of the world there is no comparison as to the value of the Kingdom he speaks of; the old covenant was about a relationship with God, the new covenant was about a relationship with God that was attainable through the Love of Jesus, his death, resurrection and Ascension.

Further than that it is a Kingdom with more value than anything else one has ever attained. Life, religion, philosophies can be made up of many things of value but Jesus is saying that they count as nothing compared to the Kingdom of heaven.

When we were living in Cleveleys, Anita and I every so often would go to the Harris museum in Preston. It had a wonderful collection of scent bottles and card-cases, a local history section, other collections and a large Art Gallery. There was one painting I would always spend time looking at, "Why Way" by Charles Spencelayh painted in 1939. Each time I returned to it there was something else I would see.

Reflecting upon reflecting on the picture makes me see the parables in two different ways. Firstly, often when we stop and reflect upon the parables of Jesus new thoughts and ideas come to our mind; secondly however much I reflect upon the painting it is not mine and I cannot possess it. The parables of the Treasure in the field and the Pearls remind me that I can possess the Kingdom; the price has been paid for it by Jesus, what I need to do is realise its value and put everything else aside to possess it.

That truth is different from other religions and philosophies; a decision needs to be made for time is moving on and judgement day will come. Have you got the greatest treasure in your life?