

DRILL: Today's Study

August 4, 2024

MAIN TOPIC: Accessing the Treasures of the Kingdom

FOCUS SCRIPTURES

MATTHEW 13:44-The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field. In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

MATTHEW 13:11-He replied, "You are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not."

FOCUS QUESTIONS

- What is a parable?
- Why did Jesus speak in parables?
- Why were the disciples permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not?

SLIDE: VIDEO OF INTRO TO BIBLE STUDY

God taught me when I didnt know that I needed to be taught. I want to share with you a bible study that I did 12 years ago. Instead of teaching the topic, I would like to show you how God is working even when you dont see it.

SLIDE: 12 Years Ago- Reilly, Atalee, Savannah

There's some moments in your life that you just don't forget. March 21, 2012, about 12 years ago, I had to do something that absolutely was devastating in my opinion. It was the day I spazzed out about leading a bible study I attended a church in Savannah Georgia.

Atalee was about 3 at the time and Reilly was seven or eight. I loved this old lady Bible study group that I was attending on Wednesday Nights.

I loved going and listening to their amazing and encouraging stories about life. They always had a way of tying biblical lessons into everyday life. They were such a blessing to me.

SLIDE: VIDEO Why I was doing a bible study

I was a very quiet individual. I didn't say a whole lot. As a matter of fact, I really didn't say much to anyone. It was just easier that way.

Well one day, our teacher said that she'd be gone for several months on some trip out of the country. She said she would need the class to rotate volunteers to do a Bible study each week to teach a lesson.

I thought there's absolutely no way that I was going to teach anything related to the Bible. I loved God, but I wasn't a teacher nor did I want to be a teacher. Nor did I have a calling to be a teacher!

I certainly wasn't qualified at all to be teaching these ladies ANYTHING!

I'd much rather be listening. So when I saw the clipboard being passed around, I just kept passing it on. I had been going to Southside for about a year, but I didn't REALLY know these strangers.

I sure hadn't been going there long enough to lead a Bible Study. When it came to the Bible, I didn't have a clue. I just didn't read it because the Bible just confused me.

A bunch of names that I couldn't say. I hated the history period. I mean, it is in the past, what does it matter? I have here and now problems to worry about.

There are weird stories that don't add up in the Bible. I could just do without all that madness in life. I knew the Bible was important, but not something I needed to complicate my life with things I couldn't fully understand.

I knew I loved God. In my heart it was just enough. Besides, I thought it best to leave all the teaching up to people that have a better mind and discipline than I do.

Ms. Patsy was always a very bubbly teacher and positive all the time. So she had no problem convincing me to sign my name on that clipboard.

So, against my better judgment, I signed up.

Ms. Patsy said, "I already have the topics you're going to teach ready. We are going to cover the Parables. You can pick what you want to do or we can draw it from a bowl."

Everyone else was excited to draw and be surprised where God was going to lead them to teach.

Me on the other hand, I was trying to find a way to get out of the room without anybody noticing. I was wondering if I could fake like I was sick, or if I needed to go check on Atalee in the nursery. Maybe fake an important phone call?

Anything, I could do to get out of this situation.

Unfortunately, None of the scenarios in my head played out with a good ending. So when it came my turn to draw a topic I grabbed the paper, glanced at it “ Matthew 13:44” and shoved it in my bible.

Panic had already set in. I am the WORST at winging things. I just can't do it. How in the world was I going to pull this off without completely falling apart and it taking 200 years to do? I don't have time to do this.

That night I was contemplating why I ever went to church. Why did life have to come to this point? What if I just never went back would they even know?

For me at that time....THIS WAS A BIG DEAL!

Even when I was in college, it would take me 100x longer than everyone else to catch on. My notes were always intense and I would have to make 100s of note cards to memorize if I wanted to accomplish anything of value.

In my world, in my heart I was right with God. I didn't need to read or study any scripture to be right with God.

There was no turning back though. Ms. Patsy told me I had about 6 weeks before it was my turn to teach. Longest 6 weeks ever!

I was completely miserable. I couldn't sleep. The overwhelming panic caused my thoughts to be clouded. I couldn't function at all.

I didn't like the idea of being responsible for leading people astray. Because there was no doubt in my mind, that was EXACTLY what I would be doing.

You're held to a higher standard when you assume the teaching position and I could barely do the normal standard Christian life much less the higher standard part of being a Christian. but also knew I couldn't say no to God or Ms. Patsy.

Hindsight....Without a doubt God hand picked this lesson for me. It ended up being a lesson within a lesson for the rest of my life.

The next part of today's bible study, I am going to place you inside my mind with my real thoughts as I tried to figure out the mess the Holy Spirit had gotten me into.

I hope it helps someone to feel they are not alone in this world even if no one is around. The Holy Spirit will teach us when we don't know we need to be taught as long as we are seeking to be closer to Jesus. The Christian struggle is real, but we gotta keep moving on even when it doesn't make sense. He is working even when we don't see it or feel it.

SLIDE: PARABLES- Googling Matt 13:44

THE BIBLE STUDY

MY ABILITY TO KNOW NOTHING ABOUT ANYTHING RELATED TO THE BIBLE

So I went home that night. Ready to give up on everything. I sat down at the computer and I typed in Matthew 13:44 in Google.

First line I read "The Parable of the Hidden Treasure"

Listen, I know most of y'all probably know what a parable is, but I didn't have a clue! So before I could even begin to read the main scripture, I had to actually understand what a parable was first.

SLIDE: PARABLES- Googling WHAT IS A PARABLE?

So again, I Googled” what is a parable?”

The dictionary defined that a parable is a simple story that is used to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson as told by Jesus in the Gospels* .
Most of the time I would end up dumber than when I started.

The Holy Spirit had his work cut out with me.

SLIDE: PARABLES- WHY SPEAK IN PARABLES?

So, I Googled some more and a few devotionals popped upon why Jesus spoke in parables. One in particular helped me the most. It stated,

SLIDE: Mini Answer for Speaking in Parables

Look at this way:

Imagine that you have only one shot to accomplish your mission.

You must find a way to explain God’s kingdom in words that will make sense in every century, in every language, in every culture. Of course my next question was “Why would Jesus speak in parables?”

Why couldn't he just say it exactly the way he needed us to know so there would be no confusion. It sure doesn't take much to confuse me.

One of the reasons panic took over was because I knew I was really bad about not being able to stay on topic and a 10-minute research will turn into hours.

Your message must be so interesting and vibrant that people will want to listen.

And your words must not only make sense; they must change hearts.

This is the challenge that Jesus faced in his mission to save mankind.

This is why HE used a simple story to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson.

Jesus also spoke in parables because part of the audience he faced was openly hostile.

The Pharisees, the teachers of the law, and the chief priests are often listening—not to learn, but to condemn (see Luke 11:53-54).

ok, that makes sense. I got this, but...

SLIDE: Look Up Pharasee

Of course I had to look up a deeper meaning of Pharisees. I didnt know who they were and I barely spelled the word half way right to even look it up.

I Googled on to see if I could find anything else of value to add to my notes.

SLIDE: OTHERS ASKED TOO!

OTHERS ASKED WHY JESUS SPOKE IN PARABLES

I am glad to see that I wasn't the only one that asked why Jesus spoke in parables.

The disciples also ask the same question.

This is what I read, In Matthew 13:10-13

SLIDE: MATTHEW 13:10-13 (NLT)

10 "His disciples came and asked him why do you use Parables when you talk to the people?"

11 He Replied, " you are permitted to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven, but others are not.

I couldn't even get two verses in and I already had questions that needed clarity.

SLIDE: WAIT?!! Permitted?

What did the disciples do to be permitted and what did others do to NOT be permitted?

At this point, I had spent several hours researching the definitions of too many bible words. I didn't seem to be retaining much either.

I hadn't even read Matt 13:44 which was the actual STUDY FOR THE CLASS!.

SLIDE: 3 Weeks Later

So I decided it would be best to just sleep on it for about 3 weeks.

I finally made myself sit down and go at it again. I was so frustrated that I was getting stuck on the words “permitted to understand.” Why did this matter to me?

SLIDE: YOU SHALL NOT PASS

I pushed myself to just keep on reading the next scriptures to see if I could get the context better. I was also trying to convince myself that other versions of the Bible probably used different word so I need to just move on.

SLIDE: MOVE ON MISTY

Again reassuring myself...this ISNT EVEN WHAT I WILL BE TEACHING ON FOR THE WOMEN’S GROUP so why dwell on it so much?

I look back now and I see that I was being taught when I didn't even know that I needed to be taught.

So, I moved on.

SLIDE: MATTHEW 13

I picked back up in Matthew 13

12 To those who listen to my teaching, more understanding will be given, and they will have an abundance of knowledge.

But for those who are not listening, even what little understanding they have will be taken away from them.

13 That is why I use these parables, For they look, but they don't really see.

They hear, but they don't really listen or understand.

SLIDE: YOU SHALL NOT PASS...AGAIN

Nope.....My brain went right back to Matthew 13:11 and was still very stuck mentally on being "permitted" to understand the secrets of the Kingdom of Heaven. It sounded simple, why was it bothering me? Why couldnt I just let it go.

I know being permitted means permission but what did the disciples have to do to be "permitted"?

I kept dwelling on it and I knew that it would take discipline to go forward. I promised myself that I would go back and look at it as soon as I at least read what I am actually supposed to be studying.

SLIDE: REVISIT LATER STICKY NOTE

so I put a pin in my thoughts and said that I would revisit the question later.

SLIDE: TREASURE CHEST

3 weeks after getting the assignment, I finally opened my Bible and finally started to read what I was actually supposed to be studying.

Matthew 13:44 The Parable of the Hidden Treasure.

So, I read it.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered in a hidden field.

SLIDE: SOLD

In his excitement, he hid it again and sold everything he owned to get enough money to buy the field.

SLIDE: 1, 2, 3 Simple

Ok, that makes sense, simple enough. I can do that and I can understand that.

1. Found a treasure in a field.
2. Sold everything to buy the field.
3. Retrieved the valuable treasure.

SLIDE: 2 minutes

However, I now had a problem. My Bible study was going to take a total of 2 minutes and that's if I can stretch out prayer time because what is there to really explain this parable? It is straightforward.)

I knew that I'd have to have more to talk about if I wanted to pull off this lesson without looking completely dumb.

So, I kept googling and reading what other people were saying about this parable.

SLIDE: ABIBLE.COM

I came across an amazing website that had tons of devotionals. Matthew 13:44 was one of them.

It started out stating that a parable can have many meanings.

I mean I wasn't really sure how many meanings the parable of the hidden treasure could actually have

For kicks though, I decided to read through this devotional.

I would now say it was the Holy Spirit pulling me down that particular path to teach me.

I don't think my mind was completely ready for what I read next.

SLIDE: "TREASURES" and "Field QUESTION

The question was asked,

what could represent the "treasures" and "field?"

My first thoughts were are you kidding me? They're going to be like a gazillion Treasures out there could be anything. Obviously, it meant something valuable. What does it matter what the field is? It is just a field where you hid the treasure.

Again, I didn't think to make it any more complicated than that.

SLIDE: ANSWER IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

The study went on to say that the treasure was” the kingdom of heaven”

Of course, I felt kind of dumb because that was probably the obvious answer that I should have come up with first.

I mean the scripture does say the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure.

So I'm feeling kind of dumb at this point. I'd missed the obvious answer.

SLIDE: ????? Question

Then it asked “What Treasures are said to be in the Kingdom of Heaven?”

yeah I had no clue. I have never been there. So how could I possibly know the answer to that question.

How would I know what Treasures are in heaven? and does it even matter if there's Treasures in Heaven? I was stumped, but these were my real thoughts.

I kept reading and right on cue, I felt dumb...again.

In 2012, I had been a Christian for almost 20years. I should have known the answer to this question.

SLIDE: PRICELESS TREASURES

The priceless treasures in Heaven that are here on earth are things like knowledge, wisdom, faith, justice, mercy, truth, gentleness, kindness, love, patience, discernment. I wasn't sure I was worthy enough to go forward in the study. This stuff was just too hard to figure out even with the answers in front of me. I really wanted to quit.

SLIDE: WHERE DO YOU OBTAIN THESE TREASURES

To add salt to my wounds, The study went on to ask another question that I would ultimately fail at.

Where do you find and obtain these Treasures?

I almost thought it was a trick question. I mean how could you find faith or justice, or love, or truth, or gentleness?

How do you find stuff like that? I'm just being honest, it's what was really going through my head.

I had to pause and take a second to guess, but not a thing came to mind.

I never really looked at those items as being a treasure. I mean how could you really "find" a treasure like mercy or gentleness?

Because to me mercy and gentleness are actions and are not items to be found.

So I was curious to see what this study was going to identify the field as.

yep when I read the answer I felt dumb...again again.

SLIDE: WORD OF GOD

the Word of God. The Word of God is the field where you find the treasures of heaven here on earth.

The Kingdom of Heaven has hidden treasures that are buried inside the field, the Word of God.

Another way to say this part of the scripture is to say

“Love, gentleness, faithfulness, discernment are buried inside the Word of God.

I realized that the treasures that God wanted me to have we're being hidden from me because I wouldn't go look for them in the field.

It wasn't easy. Looking up tons of devotionals and googling definitions. My learning curve was astronomical, but I did manage to come up with a good solid 15 minute Bible study for the Wednesday night class. The ladies told me I did a great job, but I didn't feel like it fully.

SLIDE: NO VALUE IN THE KINGDOM

Now, I want to shift focus. I want to show how satan manipulated my mind and controlled my thoughts by making me feel like there was no value in any of heavenly treasures.

SLIDE: LIES SATAN TELLS

Satan lied to me. He took valuable treasures from me without me even knowing. I come from a broken family, the word love can be very scary. My definition of love is not necessarily the same as what other people would define as love. I certainly didn't see “Love” as a “priceless” treasure that I had to find. It was actually a burden more than a blessing.

My treasures were small. I had enough to survive and that was good enough for me.

I loved God with all my heart, but I didn't know HOW TO LOVE abundantly. I hadn't been taught. I also wasn't asking to be taught either.

I was not living the way God had intended for my life to be, because I wasn't looking into the field for those Treasures.

I was depending on my understanding most of the time and praying the rest would just fall in place.

At that time, I felt I was doing just fine. I didnt need more.

I didnt want to read the Bible because it would just confuse me with 1000s of questions I could never get a logical answer for. I was complacent with just being a Christian that was surviving on my small treasures. I didn't think what I was doing was broken. So why try to fix it?

I wasn't selling everything to get those heavenly Treasures. Honestly I didn't really think of any of those types of treasures to be valuable anyways.

What proof did I have that those treasures were value anyways? So why look for them?

SLIDE: LIES SATAN TELLS LIST

Satan told me Lie after lie that I took on as the truth. I used my own understanding as well.

You have enough love. You have enough gentleness to survive. You came from a broken home, your family were alcoholics, you can do this on your own for the most part. Dont bother God with small things. Be grateful for enough, It could be worse.

SLIDE: RED LETTERS

John 10:10 IN RED LETTERS: The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly.

SLIDE: RED LETTERS 2

Jesus never said that he wanted me to just survive.

He said that he wanted me to have more life more abundantly.

SLIDE: BIBLE IN STAND

By acquiring earthly knowledge, people have thought to gain a treasure, but by laying their Bible aside they sacrifice a treasure worth everything else...

Our flesh Keeps The Treasure of God's kingdom hidden.

SLIDE: DISOBEDIENCE

For example: Disobedience has closed the door to a vast amount of knowledge that might have been gained from the Scriptures.... God's Word can be understood only by those who are humbly seeking for a knowledge of the truth....

If you search the Scriptures to vindicate your own opinions, you will never reach the truth.

SLIDE: THERE IS GOOD NEWS

If you truly know God you CAN see the kingdom of God and its treasures here on earth!

Then again there are many who come across this treasure, but not recognizing its value (*knowledge, faith, justice, judgment, mercy, truth*) do not reap its benefits.

There are those who say they consider it valuable, but are unwilling to pay the price to get it.

SLIDE: WRAPPING IT UP

So as we wrap up this Bible study lesson I want you to understand something. We should pray for discernment on how to seek his will and not our own. Even if you have to read something over and over each day before you get it. Do it. The point is not to do NOTHING and just hope it all works out.

The unknown is the root of a lot of fear and retreat in the faith. Hardships do not mean something is being done because you did something wrong. The Holy Spirit will teach you as you seek HIS WILL NOT YOUR OWN.

Opportunities will arise for you to be taught when you don't even know that you're being taught. Don't look at it as a failure.

When I first started this study, I was frustrated. I was discouraged. I didn't think that I could do it. Many times I said I didn't have time to do it. I figured Jesus would just walk me through the darkness and I just hold his hand. but when you truly love God there's something inside of you that has moved in.

The Holy Spirit has a way of directing you when you don't even know that you're being directed. Matt 13:44 was simply two sentences. I could have stopped there I probably could have come up with some other studies to fill the time that would have been easier. I could have copied and pasted any of the other bible studies I came across at any point and just been done with it. Something in me said...NO...YOU GOTTA KNOW THIS. KEEP DIGGING. KEEP SEEKING.

On March 21, 2012, God took what I thought was an arrow, a hardship, a handicap and turn it into an opportunity to teach me.

It was the Holy Spirit that was quickening my heart and asking those questions that I thought were stupid that led me down a path to discover a better version of myself. Down a path that equipped me with tools to do more than just survive! I discovered that my eyes and ears had been covered. I wasn't truly living life abundantly, I was just surviving enough.

God knew that I had some extremely hard years coming ahead. He knew that I'd have to get a hold of the Word of God and find those hidden treasures/tools of faith, gentleness, peace, joy, discernment if I really wanted to make it through the furnaces.

Over the next several years past the bible study, I continued to struggle with trying to stay in the Word more. I failed often. I promised myself that I would never teach again if I could help it. It was too difficult. Too stressful and overwhelming. God knew my heart. He did know my heart. That's why I had to change.

At the end of the day though, all my prayers were always "Your will, not mine." I did mean that. I was successful at not teaching anything or any one again for many years.

It wasn't until March 21, 2024 at 43 Assembly of God would I teach my first Sound Mind Bible Study sharing the fiery furnace situations of my life with everyone. EXACTLY 12 yrs to date! Nope that was not planned.

Jesus never said I had to be the smartest person to seek the kingdom of God.

He never said that there was a perfect way to seek the kingdom and its treasures, but he did say to put action into it and do it.

I sure don't understand the last 12 years. Some of the things in my life I kind of wish God would have skipped over. It is still very difficult, however, I do know HE has provided me with the treasures/tools that I needed to live life with confidence and boldness and to live it more abundantly in ways this world could never understand.

Thank you guys for taking the time to listen to my version of the hidden treasure parable. I hope it helps somebody else out as well.

I challenge you guys to ask God to give you the desire to dive deeper into HIS field, the living Word. I also challenge you to pray for the confidence to be instilled in you that you can see he is working even when you don't feel it.

I will be praying for yall!