

A King like no other

Matt 13: 44-58

I always prayed this prayer “God, make me more like Jesus” but I didn’t expect this answer to prayer though...

like Jesus, I’m preaching outside, and the ocean is not far from here... that’s where Jesus was, outside by the sea of Galilee, when he told his disciples the parables of the Kingdom of God; you heard Pastor Toma read 3 of them today.

At that point of His ministry, opposition started to intensify, religious Jews and their leaders not only did not believe in Jesus but also accused him to be accompanied with an evil force with which He performed miracles and cast out demons. The fruit of Jesus’ ministry was so small and insignificant compared to what His Jewish disciples expected. The Jews expected a messiah who would destroy Israel’s enemies and rule over the nation and the world as an earthly king, bringing justice and peace

Even the one prophesied in Isaiah to prepare the way for Him, John the Baptist, who recognized Jesus as the Messiah with signs given to him directly by God, even the Baptist sent from his Prison two of his own disciples to ask Jesus “are you the One who is to come or shall we wait for another... Jesus; are you the Messiah? Aren’t you supposed to bring Justice, I am in prison, evil is winning, shall we wait for another?”

Even His closest disciples, at this point, were disappointed, discouraged and even disillusioned... when Jesus started He went about preaching “repent, for the Kingdom of God has come near you... the Kingdom is here”. His first disciples believed in Him, Nathanael, in his first encounter with Jesus said “**you are the Son of God, you are the King of Israel**”, they followed Him in the hope to see the Kingdom unfold before their eyes... the way they expected it to unfold, after all, the promised king, the Son of David is here... but instead they saw rejection, resistance and opposition. Yes, they can see the impact of the Kingdom, but at times it looked so small and insignificant; like a tiny mustard seed! or a little bit of yeast.

That maybe you today; disappointed, discouraged, worn out by wrestling with the struggles of daily life, tired with all the lies circulating around you, evil seems to have the upper hand... If so, then you need to listen to the message of these parables and get your encouragement as the disciples did.

To those disciples Jesus gave the parables of the kingdom; 7 of them in Matthew 13... He first showed them that there is nothing wrong with the message; the seed, or the messenger; the sower of the seed, but there are all kinds of wrong in hearer’s minds and hearts ... You’re blessed if you receive the word of God, nourish it and bear its fruits.

This parable, and the others, are like a commentary on the stories that you've read in Matthew chapters 11 and 12. Some people are accepting Jesus with enthusiasm, others are rejecting him.

The Jews believed in 2 ages; this age and the age to come. In This age they are prone to evil, injustice, defeat, lack... but when Messiah comes, he ushers in the age to come and reigns with righteousness, justice, prosperity, and peace. And they got all that right. The only part they got wrong is how it's going to happen; they thought that this age is abruptly coming to an end; Messiah puts a dramatic end to this age and ushers in the age to come... But when Jesus the Messiah came ushering in the Kingdom; the age to come, He did not end this evil age, they overlapped, this age and the age to come; that was the inauguration of the Kingdom; soft opening if you will. One day Jesus will come a second time and consummate the Kingdom, this is the day when this age ends, and the new creation which Jesus started with His resurrection will be revealed, the heaven and earth will be renewed. but from Christ's first coming to His second coming to judge the living and the dead, this age and the age to come continue to overlap, This is why the kingdom is a present reality and a future event at the same time, the kingdom is now and not yet, at the same time. the old and new live side by side. This time of overlap is what the new testament calls the latter days.

In His 2nd parable Jesus tells His disciples that God will let the tare live side by side with the wheat until the end of the age. When harvest time comes the weed will be burnt with fire, and you will be harvested to eternal bliss with God... But until then there will be evil and evil doers.... And even within you a Christian, your new nature lives inside your old body, side by side with your old nature. your old nature is crucified with Jesus, it's supposed to remain dead on the cross all the time, but sometimes, when you're not looking, it creeps down and again it's very much alive within you... and you think to yourself; how could I do that, or say or think that way; it's the old that will be done with at Jesus second coming

The next pair of parables

The parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the leaven...

in both of these; the kingdom seems to be a small thing, but great in its impact and ability to grow and change everything...So, he was telling his disciples to be patient, give it some time and do not underestimate the supernatural nature of the kingdom, keep doing the work of declaring the Gospel of the Kingdom ... less than 300 years later, that leaven of the kingdom leavened the whole Roman Empire, people from all walks of life even in the army, so much so that emperor Constantine converted to Christianity possibly to win the loyalty of his soldiers... and it kept happening in History ever since, over and over again... I mean look at you, the leaven of the Kingdom changed you; you are a Christian ... are you laboring in the kingdom and you don't see much fruit to your labor? just give it some time, and do not underestimate the supernatural nature and miraculous power of the kingdom. **1Cor 15:58** be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labor is not in vain.

And then the last 3 parables occur in today's Gospel lesson.
The treasure hidden in the field, the pearl of great value and the parable of the drag net

The man in the parable of the treasure went and sold everything and bought the field, the merchant who found the unique pearl also went and sold everything, meaning all his other pearls, everything in his house, and the house and the business and any other properties he had... Now, that's not wise by human standard, that's not diversified investment at all, that's not only putting all your eggs in one basket, it's putting your eggs, your chicken and the coop all together in one basket. It doesn't make sense on a human level... it made sense to the Father though. He loved you so much that he gave his only begotten Son to give a way of rescue and salvation to you, to everyone who believes, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. It made sense to the Son.

who, though he was in the form of God, (says Saint Paul in Phil2) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Christ let go of everything, He exchanged everything He is and He has for you and me, He forfeited everything, even His very life to die the most shameful and painful of deaths to purchase you and me... And He thinks you are worth it! Notice the motive or driving force of that man who found the treasure ... "**Then in his joy** ---he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field"... joy is a key word here. Let me read for you a verse from Hebrews 13 and see if you can recognize the similarity

Let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who... **for the joy** that was set before him... endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Heb12

Jesus envisioned you... saved, forgiven and free, and the joy of it sustained Him as He was tortured and ridiculed.

Jesus envisioned the Father's joy with His restored family giving Him His due honor and glory forever, and that sustained Him when His hands and feet were nailed to a cross.

Isa 53:11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied;

Isiah, by the Spirit of prophecy, was describing what is happening now, and what will continue to happen through eternity. People from every tribe and tongue, one big happy family, forgiven, justified glorified, one with the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit in uninterrupted joy and worship... and Jesus looks at that and says, yes, it was worth it. **Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied**

Jesus the expert pearl merchant valued us so much, loved us so much...What can we say to that... thank you?... and love Him back! Value Him above and beyond anything and anyone, prioritize Him, seek first His Kingdom, loose our lives for Him and for the Gospel of His Kingdom...

Jesus actually told us how to love Him back;

Joh 14:15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

Matt 16:25 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will find it.

Jesus valued us as His treasure so much that he gave us Himself to live in us, becoming the treasure within, which Saint Paul talks about saying

2Cor 4:7 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

..., so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

And He expects us to show that treasure to the world

Jesus stepped onto the scene of a hopeless and dying world announcing the arrival of God's Kingdom... What was that kingdom that His disciples struggled to understand?... in essence, the Kingdom of God is about God's rescue operation for his whole world, and it is taking place through King Jesus.

Jesus has come to confront evil, especially, spiritual evil and its whole legacy of demon oppression, disease and death. Jesus has come to restore God's Rule and reign over the whole world by creating a new family of people who will follow him, obey his teachings, and live under his rule.

The risen Jesus gave His disciples and us a final teaching called the Great Commission.

Jesus said that he is now the true king of the world "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me". and so he sent his disciples out to all nations with the good news that Jesus is Lord and that anyone can join his kingdom by being baptized and by following his teachings.

As I was parking my car this morning I saw the sign "You're now entering the mission field" ... we keep complaining that we unable to meet and worship as we used to, And rightfully so, but coming to think about it I wonder if this is the Holy Spirit kicking our "bodies" outside the building and closer to the mission field... He did that with the first disciples, he told them you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth, but no one wanted to move from Jerusalem, it took some serious persecution to get them to leave; they were scattered all over taking with them the good news of the Kingdom...

Matthew starts His Gospel with 'Emanuel' the one prophesied in Isiah 9 whose name means "God is with us"... and ends it with Jesus' last words in the book to his disciples "Go, I will be with you always to the end of the age"... Confident in His promise let's go out to the same hopeless dying world and tell them about our Jesus, **the King... like no other**

.....