



The Treasure of God

We take a breath and come intentionally into God's presence

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

We bring before God our lament for the week that has passed and our better hope for tomorrow. Lord have mercy: **Christ have mercy.**

Holy Spirit draw us close and minister your grace to us.

Open our hearts and minds to all you have to say and show us this day. **Amen.**

Bible Reading: Matthew 13:31-33,44-52

Jesus put before the crowds 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."

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."

"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.

"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."

Reflection

Apparently, the most expensive natural pearl ever sold was Marie Antoinette's pendant selling for \$32 million in a 2018 Sotheby's auction.

The earliest record of pearls being considered precious objects are from Mesopotamia artefacts dated to around 2,300BC. Most pearls are now cultured and produced in pearl farms where a foreign object is placed inside a mussel or clam to initiate the pearl creation process. It takes at least three years to produce a thick layer of nacre in a cultured pearl, although lower quality pearls are produced more quickly (Emma Lake). Queen Elizabeth with all of her precious and priceless jewels is said to favour a three strand necklace of pearls given to her by her late father, King George.

In today's reading the merchant who finds the precious pearl sells everything he has to own it. He then stops his search for he has found what it is that he has been looking for. It is a moment of realisation and understanding, a contentedness in what has been found. In relation to the kingdom of God, it is that moment or moments when we have perfect peace with our faith and abiding trust in our relationship with God. However unlike the merchant whose search is now over I find that faith requires ongoing attention (prayer and reflection, biblical and spiritual reading, music, community and service). Our faith can ebb and flow but even in the ebbing times the knowledge of that moment, that experience of the constant and faithful nature of God can sustain us through.

I wonder how many people had walked straight past that precious pearl, the beautiful treasure hidden in plain sight? I wonder how many times we walk or rush by and fail to see the beauty of God that is surrounding us?

I wonder what it is that veils -hides our awareness of God? Do we maybe look for the big awe moments and miss the value of the day to day speck of faith and belief. Early in the passage we are asked to consider the tiny mustard seed and particles of yeast and how from these small humble starts great things can come.

In the minuteness of our being, of our faith, God is still present and can do great things through us. Madeleine L'Engle's reassuringly says 'In a very real sense not one of us is qualified, but it seems that God continually chooses the most unqualified to do his work, to bear his glory. If we are qualified, we tend to think that we have done the job ourselves. If we are forced to accept our evident lack of qualification, then there's no danger that we will confuse God's work with our own, or God's glory with our own.'

To God be the glory indeed! May we find Gods' treasures big and small this week and be the small but growing vessels through which God can bless others. **Amen**

Worship Music

To God be the Glory with lyrics Royal Albert Hall:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-15v9iworAU>

Nearer my God to thee with lyrics <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=414J9NAJ9fs>

Now the green blade rises – Lucy Gibson attached

Prayers

Almighty God,
Creator of all, we praise you.

We thank you for all your seen and unseen blessings to us.
Draw us close and breath in us a contentedness of spirit, and knowledge of your great faithfulness.

Help us to live good and holy lives which are pleasing in your sight.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for our world; for healing, for peace, for racial and social justice.
We ask your protection on all frontline staff, may they have all the equipment and resources they need as they care for others.

As we move forward may we do so with care for one another and for your creation.

We lift to you all areas of the world struggling to cope with a rise in infections.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who have lost jobs and livelihoods, for those fearful of the future.

For our children and young people in all the uncertainty.

For the vulnerable, the homeless and hungry.

For those whose homes are not safe places to be.

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for one another and those we hold dear.

For those who await treatment..

For those who are unwell...

For those who are depressed and anxious...

We commend into your eternal keeping all those who have died.

We pray comfort for those who grieve.

And give thanks for those whom we have loved...

Lord in your mercy: **Hear our prayer.**

We take a moment to lift the prayers of our own hearts before God...

We commend ourselves and the whole of creation to your unending love.

Joining all our prayers together we say the prayer our saviour taught us:

**Our Father, who art in heaven;
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
As we forgive them that trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.**

Blessing

The light of God surround us.
The love of God enfold us.
The power of God protect us.
And the blessing of God Almighty
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you and those whom you love always. Amen

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord: **In the name of Christ Amen**