

*The Kingdom of Heaven is like  
Unexpected Treasure*  
Shawn Haws

# TALK IT OVER

## Key Scripture:

### **Matthew 13:44-46**

*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. 45 Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a merchant on the lookout for choice pearls. 46 When he discovered a pearl of great value, he sold everything he owned and bought it!*

### **Acts 9:1-5**

*1 Meanwhile, Saul was uttering threats with every breath and was eager to kill the Lord's followers. So he went to the high priest. 2 He requested letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, asking for their cooperation in the arrest of any followers of the Way he found there. He wanted to bring them—both men and women—back to Jerusalem in chains. 3 As he was approaching Damascus on this mission, a light from heaven suddenly shone down around him. 4 He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul! Saul! Why are you persecuting me?" 5 "Who are you, lord?" Saul asked. And the voice replied, "I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting! 6 Now get up and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do." Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days.*

### **Acts 9:19-20**

*Saul stayed with the believers in Damascus for a few days. 20 And immediately he began preaching about Jesus in the synagogues, saying, "He is indeed the Son of God!"*

### **Philippians 3:5-11**

*5 I was circumcised when I was eight days old. I am a pure-blooded citizen of Israel and a member of the tribe of Benjamin—a real Hebrew if there ever was one! I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6 I was so zealous that I harshly persecuted the church. And as for righteousness, I obeyed the law without fault. 7 I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ and become one with him. I no longer count on my own righteousness through obeying the law; rather, I become righteous through faith in Christ. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. 10 I want to know Christ and experience the mighty power that raised him from the dead. I want to suffer with him, sharing in his death, 11 so that one way or another I will experience the resurrection from the dead!*

Start **talking**. Find a conversation starter for your group.

- Have you ever given up something and chosen something else you know (or thought you knew) had greater value? Share your experience with the group.

Start **thinking**. Ask a question to get your group thinking.

- Shawn said that the gospel of Jesus Christ is something to marvel over. It's something we find and rediscover. It never gets old. How valuable is the gospel of Jesus Christ to you? Sometimes we have been around church so long that the gospel becomes stale and it's so familiar that it no longer has an impact on our lives. If you think about it honestly, are you in this place right now? Are there any steps you can make to overcome this?
- **Read Matthew 13:44-46.** Have you ever purchased something you knew was counterfeit (shoes, purse, etc...)? Share your experience. Did it bother you that it wasn't the real thing? Too often we settle for counterfeit gospels. We think that a particular political agenda, emotional experience, reputation, or keeping family peace is the gospel. How may you have given in to counterfeit gospels? Brainstorm possible strategies for guarding your heart and mind against the counterfeits.
- **Read Acts 9:1-5, 19-20 and Philippians 3:5-11.** How does Paul's conversion and his life after his conversion show us how we should value the gospel of Jesus Christ in our own lives? In what ways are you settling for less than this in your own spiritual walk? What can you do to stop settling?

Start **sharing**. Choose a question to create openness.

- Consider for a moment a routine, habit or ritual that is actually replacing or superseding your relationship with Jesus. What can you change to put your relationship with Jesus first?
- If, as Christians, we believe the Kingdom of Heaven is our most valuable possession, why do we continue to crave and accumulate material possessions? What can we do to cure those cravings? What steps is the Holy Spirit asking you to take?
- If you were guaranteed a place in heaven in exchange for all your earthly possessions, would you make that trade? Why or why not?
- Describe a time when your heart and mind were changed by something found in the Gospel? Was it hard to let go of old beliefs or thoughts? Why or why not?

Start **doing**. Commit to a step and live it out this week.

- Commit to digging into His Word, find Him and know Him better.
- Commit to stop settling and find true joy in Jesus Christ

Start **praying**. Be bold and pray with power.

- God, we thank you for your grace and mercy. Help us to dig into your Word to know you more. Forgive us for the times we have settled on a counterfeit gospel rather than Your one and true gospel. Help us to stop looking for things rather than You and find true joy in our relationship with You. - Amen

Start **digging**. For further study.

- Read the 2nd page and discuss it.

**Question: "What is the meaning of the parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price?"**

Answer: Jesus had just finished explaining to the disciples the meaning of the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares, and these two short parables are a continuance of His discussion of the "kingdom of heaven." He expressed truths about the kingdom in three pairs of parables in Matthew 13: the seed and the sower (vv. 3-23) and the weeds in the field (vv. 24-30); the mustard seed (vv. 31-32) and the leaven (v. 33); and the hidden treasure (v. 44) and the pearl of great price (vv. 45-46).

The similarities of these two short parables make it clear they teach the same lesson—the kingdom of heaven is of inestimable value. Both parables involve a man who sold all he had to possess the kingdom. The treasure and the pearl represent Jesus Christ and the salvation He offers. And while we cannot pay for salvation by selling all our worldly goods, once we have found the prize, we are willing to give up everything to possess it. But what is attained in exchange is so much more valuable that it is comparable to trading an ounce of trash for a ton of diamonds (Philippians 3:7-9).

In both parables, the treasures are hidden, indicating that spiritual truth is missed by many and cannot be found by intelligence or power or worldly wisdom. Matthew 13:11-17 and 1 Corinthians 2:7-8, 14 make it clear that the mysteries of the kingdom are hidden from some who are unable to hear, see, and comprehend these truths. The disobedient reap the natural consequences of their unbelief—spiritual blindness. Those whose eyes are opened by the Spirit do discern spiritual truth, and they, like the men in the parable, understand its great value.

Notice that the merchant stopped seeking pearls when he found the pearl of great price. Eternal life, the incorruptible inheritance, and the love of God through Christ constitute the pearl which, once found, makes further searching unnecessary. Christ fulfills our greatest needs, satisfies our longings, makes us whole and clean before God, calms and quiets our hearts, and gives us hope for the future. The "great price," of course, is that which was paid by Christ for our redemption. He emptied Himself of His glory, came to earth in the form of a lowly man and shed His precious blood on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.