

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

He sells everything he owns and buys the field.

Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' And he said to them, 'Well, then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Shorter form 13:44-46.

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL



Reproduction of this bulletin in any form prohibited. Published with ecclesiastical approval by ST PAULS PUBLICATIONS, PO Box 906, Strathfield NSW 2135. Tel 02 9394 3400 Fax 02 9746 1140. Scripture readings from the Jerusalem Bible, published and © 1966, by Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Co. Inc. are used by permission of the publishers. Psalm text from *The Psalms, A New Translation*, © 1963, The Grail (England), HarperCollins. New translation of the Order of Mass from *The Roman Missal* ©2010, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved. Artwork by Sr Dorothy Woodward rsj. Layout, commentaries and illustrations © St Pauls Publications, 2020. No 1835. Website: www.stpauls.com.au

Reflections on the Gospel



THE SAVING WORD

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME / A

26 JULY 2020

GLIMPSING THE KINGDOM

The two little parables, that of the Treasure Discovered in the Field and the Pearl of Great Price, both depict a situation where a person finds something that they dearly want to possess. In one, a poor day-laborer comes across treasure buried in a field – an unimaginable windfall! In the other, a merchant recognises something he has been searching for all his business life: the perfect pearl!

Neither, however, is able to get hold of what they have discovered immediately. There is a gap between finding and possessing. But already the mere sight of what each have found frees them to 'sell all' so that they can finally possess it.

Jesus told the twin parables to illustrate a key feature of the Kingdom of Heaven. It is not something we possess right now; only in the future will it be fully realised in the world and in human lives. But those who have caught a glimpse of it from Jesus know that they have come upon a treasure that will fulfil their deepest desires. The joy of the discovery puts all other attractions in second place. They gain the freedom to 'sell all' in order, one day, to obtain what they have seen.

Taken together, the parables contain a whole Christian spirituality – perhaps best illustrated in the life of St Francis of Assisi. His commitment to radical poverty was not something imposed on him. It flowed in complete freedom from the 'treasure' of God's love that he, in supreme degree, had glimpsed.

Brendan Byrne, SJ

FIRST READING

1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

A reading from the first book of the Kings

You have asked for wisdom.

The Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, 'Ask what you would like me to give you.' Solomon replied, 'Lord, my God, you have made your servant king in succession to David my father. But I am a very young man, unskilled in leadership. Your servant finds himself in the midst of this people of yours that you have chosen, a people so many its numbers cannot be counted or reckoned. Give your servant a heart to understand how to discern between good and evil, for who could govern this people of yours that is so great?' It pleased the Lord that Solomon should have asked for this. 'Since you have asked for this', the Lord said, 'and not asked for long life for yourself or riches or the lives of your enemies, but have asked for a discerning judgement for yourself, here and now I do what you ask. I give you a heart wise and shrewd as none before you has had and none will have after you.'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM Ps 118:57, 72, 76-77, 127-130. R. v. 97

R. Lord, I love your commands.

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord, / is to obey your word. / The law from your mouth means more to me / than silver and gold. **R.**

2. Let your love be ready to console me / by your promise to your servant. / Let your love come to me and I shall live / for your law is my delight. **R.**

3. That is why I love your commands / more than finest gold. / That is why I rule my life by your precepts: / I hate false ways. **R.**

4. Your will is wonderful indeed; / therefore I obey it. / The unfolding of your word gives light / and teaches the simple. **R.**



SECOND READING

Rom 8:28-30

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

He predestined us to become true images of his Son.

We know that by turning everything to their good God co-operates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose. They are the ones he chose specially long ago and intended to become true images of his Son, so that his Son might be the eldest of many brothers. He called those he intended for this; those he called he justified, and with those he justified he shared his glory.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

cf. Mt 11:25

Alleluia, alleluia! / Blessed are you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, / you have revealed to little ones the mysteries of the kingdom. / Alleluia!