

The Parable of Fascination (Mt 13:44-46; Jn 12:25)

The question is, “Does the good news of the kingdom impose impossible or intolerable demands on one’s life?” The answer is, of course, yes — if one still loves his self-centered life in this world. But to the one who sees it as really good news, he gives up his old selfish life to receive a new unselfish life. He appreciates his new life in the kingdom — that is, the life in the kingdom presents a fascination that removes its impossible and intolerable demands. But this only happens if one receives grace and faith by which one lives and progresses in the kingdom (Rom 1:17; Eph 2:6-10).

The good news is fascination. The good news is fascinating. If it were not, who could be saved? It’s like the word *gospel* or *god spell*. We were all attracted to Messiah and gave up our life to Him and all we possessed for the fascinating hope the gospel presents. The kingdom of God exerts a fascinating appeal — a fascination that takes the burden away, as well as all the difficulties of the narrow way. Acts 14:22 was the good news of the kingdom, giving hope, strengthening and confirming them by hearing this. It was good news to them.

When we understand Mt 13:44-46 we see that *after* this person found the hidden treasure or the pearl, Lk 14:33 ceased to be some radical, harebrained decision, but one which was gladly and joyously done, even as Heb 11 and Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37. The find was so wonderfully and overwhelmingly super-abundant that what he had to give up was nothing in comparison, even as Heb 12:2 says: “He endured the cross for the joy set before Him.”

The attraction of what he had found overwhelms him and permeates everything he does from then on. “Rejoicing at his find, he went and sold everything he had.” This is the theme of the two parables — a profound joy. They gladly did what they had to do in giving up their life that day and also in their daily life in the Community. It did not seem to them to be a daily grind. Life in the community is only a torture chamber to those who do *not* see the treasure as a means of rejoicing or of profound joy. Being fully absorbed in the task of gaining the treasure made it automatic for both men to sell all their own possessions.

They had no need to think things over first: “Hum... let me see now...” So, re-read Mt 13:44-46 and Lk 12:31-33 *and* verse 34. Whatever people consider valuable is where their heart’s energy goes — all their time and energy is spent in doing what is most valuable to them. So, knowing the value of the pearl or the hidden treasure caused them to give no consideration to what *they* needed to do from then until the kingdom comes (Mt 6:9-11 & 33). God so loved the world that He gave up or ransomed all He had, which He loved, to get what He valued the most (Jn 3:16).

What does a person seek first? (Lk 14:26; Jn 12:25; Mk 8:35). And if one is ashamed of Yahshua and His words or gospel, then what is it that he valued most? (Heb 12:2). The shame is what one despises who sees the worth of Messiah or the worthiness of Him (Col 1:10 Mark 8:38). What is recorded in Mt 10:37-38 is what one gladly does to gain the *hidden treasure*. But most do not see the treasure, for it is *hidden* from them (Mt 13:14; 13:1-51; 15:8). Jn 7:17 tells why the treasure remains hidden from them, or they would be illuminated. So, Mt 13:44-45 is simple to the one who is willing to do God’s will — the kingdom of God is of such value that he will give up all he has in order to gain it. This does not mean that he can purchase it with his possessions, but to the contrary — it is something that cannot be compared with the value of his possessions. Overwhelming value is placed on the kingdom. A person cannot have one without leaving the other behind. The demonstration of this or the witness (Mt 24:14) is what brings the world to its end, and brings the kingdom of God to earth. Mt 24:14 is a witness of Mt 13:44-45. It is people who live a life to demonstrate, bear witness of, this parable in Mt 13:44-45 (Isa 52:15; 53:10-11; Dan 2:44).

All who are a part of this witness of the *find* are as the man in Mt 13:44 — rejoicing over his find, he loses his old life to gain it (Rom 6:2-5; Mt 10:38). Then in obedience to Lk 9:23 he begins *now* to *daily* take up his cross and follow Yahshua, His exceedingly great treasure. All who have found Him to be this pearl gladly gave up their life and gladly give up their life daily in the Body (Acts 26:7). As 2 Cor 4:17 says (1 Cor 2:9), there is no real comparison of the true value of the kingdom with one’s possessions (Mk 10:17-22,23,28-30).

The fascinating appeal of the kingdom of God in Mt 24:14 is proclaimed from the witness of its foretaste, which is a living, and authentic and corporeal demonstration. What is already in the midst of the nations is so appealing and fascinating that it will not be at all difficult to change one's life — at the cross — and to live in this kingdom community from now on, enthralled by what had been found (2 Cor 5:15).

The parables of the treasure and of the pearl give us understanding of the full-orbed existence of the witness of the kingdom that is Yahshua's new family (Mk 3:35) — those who do His will, the will of the Father (Mt 7:21). Yahshua in Mt 13:44-45 tells also something about His own experience of His own life and that of His disciples (Jn 10:11), but with the greatest caution not to expose who He was and why He was sent. He used much tact in His parables (Mt 13:10-15). He wants only those who can understand *with their heart*, for with the heart a man believes unto salvation (Lk 12:34; Rom 10:10,9,17; Jn 7:17).

This story in Mt 13:44-45 is a story of the reason why one would be able to give up everything to *follow Him*. And it tells why one is able to receive the gift of eternal life, and to live from *then on* for the sake of Him and His name (Mk 10:29; 8:35). To live under the demands of the kingdom does not make those who sees the hidden treasure tortured, bitter, or down-trodden. But they receive what we know as faith and grace to endure to the end (Mt 24:13), and be purified in doing the good works prepared for them (Eph 2:8-10; Rev 19:8).

They who are able to hear and to see have a profound freedom which is known only to those who are *fascinated and captivated* by what is truly important and truly valuable. Their burdens become light (Mt 11:28-30).

This is still the cry of the Savior and Redeemer (Ecc'cus 51:23-27; 24:22-25) — to live faithfully and strictly for the one who saved us. Messiah's yoke replaces the Torah (which one must be under) — to be saved. And the gospel replaces the social order of Sinai. His yoke is a yoke that does not oppress. It is not a legal burden. Why? Because Yahshua is gentle and humble of heart, unlike Mk 10:42. He is a servant of all. He lives not for Himself, for His power, or His interests, but *completely and exclusively* for His Father in heaven and for His kingdom.

Mk 8:35 or 10:25 is not a law that is *merciless* but one which is *liberating*, like a treasure one finds and begins rejoicing that he can now obey the gospel's demands with joy. It is a light burden and easy yoke that enables us to breathe freely, and by this a nation is founded upon His name and His word (1 Jn 2:4; 5:2-3; Lk 13:23-24).

His commandments are not addressed to isolated individuals but to a *community*, such as was the result of anyone who received the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:13; Acts 2:32-47). His commandments cannot be obeyed by any Christian because he can only *claim* to see and to know Him (Jn 9:41). It is only His new family in Mk 3:34-35 who can do the Father's will. Only when each recipient of the Holy Spirit draws strength from one another can it be done. Otherwise, no one can find the treasure to rejoice over in the first place.

The Sermon on the Mount can only be lived out alongside with others who have undertaken the journey together as the people of God — only then is the burden light. Other burdens were too heavy to carry (Gal 6:2). If the law of Messiah is not fulfilled, He died in vain (Isa 53:10-11). Only where the community exists as in Mt 16:18, which is the community that sticks together *at all costs*, where everyone helps one another, can the law of Messiah be fulfilled. Otherwise, it's just the Christian church life, which is a hoax (Eph 4:1-6). This exposes the Christian Church as a hoax, as Jn 13:35 and 17:23.

So the treasure that is hidden is 1 Cor 2:9, but is revealed by His Spirit (2 Cor 4:17; Gen 15:1). He is our exceedingly great reward (Rom 8:17,18-21; 2 Cor 4:17). He is beyond all comparison (Mt 13:44-46). But Mt 13:47-50 says again what the kingdom of heaven is like — that there will be many who will be *the bad fish* who do not see the overwhelming value of Salvation as the exceedingly great reward (Gal 3:29), beyond all comparison to anything else one could offer.

So all a person can do is give up all he has — his life, his family, his wife, his children, his house, his farm, and yes, his tractor also. The gospel then is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1:16-17) from faith to faith and ever increasing (2 Cor 3:18; 1 Cor 6:20). So Mt 13:44-45 shows us what the kingdom of God is like, as what must be witnessed if the end of the age is going to come (Mt 24:14), it's fruit produced (Mt 21:43; Dan 2:44).

If one sees and finds the pearl of great price, then Mt 21:43 and Mt 24:14 will be done by those who respond rightly as the one in Mt 13:44-46 — that is, without any other thought than to have what it yields ~~the fruit~~ ... the fruit of the kingdom. It is the power of God if seen in the *good news*, producing the fruit of the kingdom. The *witness of it* in the life of the *twelve-tribed* nation is the kingdom. For those who “see the kingdom” (Jn 3:3) and “enter the kingdom” (verse 5), are those who produce its fruit by becoming that witness which demonstrates its worth, as each one walks in the works and is prepared and made ready for Messiah (Col 1:10; Eph 2:10; Rev 19:8). The witness is made possible by Eph 4:2-3; Jn 13:35; 15:8; 17:11,23; etc., etc., etc...

So the question is whether the gospel of the kingdom imposes intolerable demands or whether the kingdom compels a fascination which takes away the burden from all the demands which it requires (2 Tim 2:12).

Fascination is an allurements that captivates, which one takes delight in and becomes engrossed and absorbed in (Mk 8:35; 10:29-30). The gospel should be a magnetism as Jn 6:44. The word *draw* is to attract, pull along, allure, entice, induce, persuade, *but* by the Father using whatever means possible (Heb 1:16). And the gospel or good news also casts a *good spell* on those willing to do His will, enabling them to *know* something only supernaturally known, which cannot be known other way (except by His spirits or His Spirit to draw one to His Son — that is, where His son is, as Jn 12:25-26; 17:3; and 7:17 says).

What can make us hate our life in this world? By expressing hate by leaving the world for His kingdom. Unless one sees the pearl or finds the hidden treasure, nothing else can enthrall him enough to be converted, born again, transferred out of Satan’s kingdom and into the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col 1:13).

If the good news is not a good spell, if it does not fascinate a person, does not attract, allure, and all the rest of what the word *draw* means, then there can be *NO* salvation as Acts 2:38-41. The many other words attracted them to do such a radical thing as follows in verses 42-47. Only these kinds of hearers can receive the Holy Spirit, to be entrusted with such a prized gift as the very life of God becoming one Spirit with Him. 1 Cor 6:17 is no light thing.

Acts 14:22 — The word means to give the disciples cause to rejoice and have hope which could now make this burden light, knowing that it produces a heavy weight of eternal glory (2 Cor 4:17). Verse 16 is probably what they told the new disciples in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch (Acts 14:21), telling them that they *MUST* through *MUCH* tribulation, hardship, and suffering enter the kingdom of God (Rom 5:4; 8:17; 2 Cor 4:16-17). But with the spirit of faith (2 Cor 4:13) they can go through these essential times of hardship to approve them as worthy for the kingdom. Verse 18 is the way we are able to go through these times as if it were a light load, a light burden (Rom 5:2). In Rom 5:2-4 all these things work into us. That is our daily experience in the Body.

Approbation is final approval, the proof of our genuineness (Mt 24:13), the trial of our faith, our trustworthiness, testing the genuineness of our profession and our confession. It is the trying of our souls (Rom 5:4). #1382 — *Proof* of genuineness, trustworthiness, the experience we *gain* which approves us to all, the fact that one has proved oneself true (2 Cor 13:3; 2 Cor 2:9; Phil 2:22; 2 Cor 8:2; 9:13). The community life is the means by which one is proved or tried. Our faith is tested, as in Jms 1:3; 1 Pet 1:6-9; 2 Tim 2:12, to be able to recognize, to be proved, to be tried as metals are tried by fire. Thus we are purified, being approved as accepted men and women in the furnace of adversity (Jms 1:12; Rom 16:10) — to be approved or accepted (Rom 14:18; 2 Cor 10:18; 13:7; 2 Tim 2:15; 1 Cor 11:19) — or unapproved (2 Cor 13:5).

The only route into “the port” (the desired haven) is through the “narrows” – the narrows or the “dire straits” of normal community life (Acts 14:22; Ps 107:25-30, New Jerusalem Bible).

Ps 107:30 — “The port where we are bound,” to Zion – “overjoyed at the stillness, to the port where they were bound” (Ps 84:5-7; 107:31-32).

Lk 13:23-24 — The Strait Gate. Going through the narrows is the only way to the kingdom (Acts 14:22). The narrows of community life is the only entry into the kingdom. Community life as Acts 4:32-35 is the Strait gate, which is contracted by pressure, which as we endure in love, joy, peace, patience, etc., and self-control makes

us into Messiah's own image (2 Cor 3:18; 1 Jn 3:1-3; blameless as Gen 17:1; Gal 3:29).