

Matthew 21-01-28b

I had a great comment made during the break that I want to avail myself of and share with you with regard to the man who finds the treasure in the field, although he wasn't really looking for it, and then decides he's got to have it and he's willing to sort of be underhanded to get it. And I was reminded that if you go to Acts chapter 13 and you remember that Saul and Barnabas are at Antioch, Barnabas is there, Simeon who was called Niger, I get the idea that this might have been one of the originators of the first black church, and you have Lucius of Cyrene, who had been brought up with Herod the Tetrarch and Saul. As they minister, the Holy Spirit says, separate Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I've called them.

They fast and pray, hands are laid on them and they're sent away. Being sent by the Holy Spirit, this is verse four of Acts 13, 13, four, sent out by the Holy Spirit. Notice the emphasis on the Holy Spirit.

This I think is one of the most overlooked aspects of what we as believers ought to do. And that is follow the guidance and the timing of the Holy Spirit. These guys were all hanging out in Antioch.

Simeon is there, Lucius is there, Manan is there, but the Holy Spirit says these two are the ones that need to go. He did not send them all out. They don't all have the same call.

Paul is going to talk over in Galatians 1.15, I think it is, about God separating him and calling him to this work before he was even born. But he didn't start out doing it from the time he was born. He didn't do it when he was 20.

He didn't do it when he was sitting at the feet of Gamaliel. He didn't do it right after his conversion on the Damascus road. God, the Holy Spirit knows the timing.

Wait on the Lord, be of good cheer, He will strengthen your heart. Wait, I say, on the Lord. They who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

And when they've got their strength, that's when they mount up with wings. That's when they run and aren't weary and they walk and are not faint. Because they waited on the Lord, and while they were waiting, they built up strength.

We often want to get to the good part of flying and running and walking and miss the part that waiting on the Lord, that's when you renew your strength. And we say, well, but I don't want to wait. Something needs to happen.

I'm marching in place. I'm marking time. I'm spinning my wheels.

I'm not going anywhere. Nothing's moving. That is the time to renew strength.

Where does strength come from? Presence of the Spirit, power of the Word. Accumulate, grow in grace and knowledge. Cultivate the presence and power and sensitivity to the Holy Spirit who leads and guides through the Word.

If you're in a waiting period, that's battery charge time. That was the song we had on Sunday. A charge to keep I have, right? Strengthen.

That's what waiting is for. If you have a time of waiting, praise God for it and build your strength. They who wait upon the Lord will renew their strength.

That's what Saul did. That's what Barnabas did. And at the right time, God, the Holy Spirit said, now's the time to pull the trigger.

Now's the time to go. But not all of you, just these two. The other guys are still in a waiting mode.

They'll do something later. And so they go through the island of Paphos in verse six. They found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew whose name was Bar-Jesus, son of Yeshua.

You know, son of means a chip off the old block. If you're a son of Belial, you're an awful lot like Belial. If you're a son of Abraham, you're like Abraham.

If you're a son of Israel, if you're a son of the kingdom, you know, the sons of the kingdom are supposed to reflect the values of the kingdom and so on. Well, here's a guy that's called Bar-Yeshua, and not by accident, he's kind of like Antichristos. He's got the name in his name, but he's not really of a piece.

He's not cut from the same cloth. He's with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, an intelligent man. This man called for Barnabas and Saul, sought to hear the word of God.

Elymas, the sorcerer, this is the same guy, Elymas is his translated name, withstood them seeking to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Notice the powerful preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ has the same effect on Elymas that it had on the Pharisees, the Sadducees, the scribes and religious leaders. They see their power and influence slipping away, and so they resist it because it's all about power.

It doesn't matter what's right. I've got my hands on the levers of power, and I want to keep them there, and I want to increase my leverage. I don't want to lose it, regardless of what's right.

You can make your own application to the present day from that. So he's trying to turn the proconsul away from the faith. Stick with me, the sorcerer, don't go with the truth.

Saul, who is called Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit. Notice the emphasis on the Holy Spirit. How does Paul know what to do in this situation? Do you wait? Do you bide your time?

Do you hope that the word's going to sink in deep and bear fruit later? The Holy Spirit tells Paul it's time to speak.

He looks intently at Elymas and says, Oh, full of all deceit and all fraud, you son of the devil. He's not bar Jesus, he's bar devil. You son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease perverting the straight ways of the Lord? Now, indeed, the hand of the Lord is upon you, and you shall be blind, not seeing the Son for a time.

Immediately a dark mist fell on him. He went around seeking someone to lead him by the hand. So that is the resistance.

That is the opposition. There is a time to resist. There is a time to accept.

The Lord Jesus is coming up against resistance, and so he doesn't directly confront so much as begin preaching in parables. The confrontation is going to come a little bit later. Now, if you turn forward in the book of Acts to the second sorcerer that we find in this book, I think it's forward.

I'm having trouble finding him now. There is another response by a sorcerer who sees the power of the Holy Spirit and has more of the response of our merchant in Matthew chapter 13. This is going to be back in Acts chapter 8, so no wonder I couldn't find it.

I need to go backward instead of forward. Do not underestimate the importance of the leading of the Holy Spirit. If you want to see the difference between the merchant who buys the pearl and the man who is operating in the field, it isn't necessarily that you get joy by your own efforts.

Joy is a fruit of the Spirit. But if you go back to Acts chapter 8 and begin at verse 9, when Philip is preaching and there are miracles that he's doing in Acts 8.6, unclean spirits come out of many who are possessed, many who are paralyzed and lame are healed. This is very similar to the works that the Lord Jesus did.

He told His disciples, everything that I've done, you will do all of that and more. Well, Philip is one that is doing that. But then in verse 9 of Acts 8, a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery, this is our other sorcerer in the book of Acts, astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, This man has the great power of God.

They heeded him, because he astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. But when they believed Philip, as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized, Simon himself also believed. Notice the contrast.

He believed, and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done in the power of the Holy Spirit. Now,

when the apostles who were in Jerusalem heard that Samaria received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them. Peter and John came down and prayed that they might receive the Holy Spirit.

As yet he had fallen upon none of them, they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. They laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. It required the authenticating presence of apostles, Peter and John, not just Philip.

Philip is a wonderful evangelist, a wonderful preacher, but he is not an apostle. Jesus gave special gifts and a special calling to his apostles, and it is only through them and their presence and their preaching that the Holy Spirit comes. Simon, in verse 18 of Acts 8, saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands, the Holy Spirit was given.

He offered them money, saying, Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit. Peter says, Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased for money. This guy is a believer.

He's been baptized. He genuinely recognizes the power of the Holy Spirit, but he wants to gain the treasure by an illicit method. He's going to purchase it.

You have neither part nor portion in this matter. Notice, somebody that has neither part nor portion can still be a believer. The word part here is meros, the very same one that is used in Revelation talking about those who are outside, dogs, fornicators, sorcerers, all those who love and practice a lie, and their part is in the lake of fire, their portion, their meros, not they themselves.

They just do not have the privilege of entering the city. They do not dwell in the city. They are outside, and an angel at the gate will stop them if they try to enter.

Nothing that corrupts will be allowed to enter. They are outside, and their meros, their portion, is in the lake of fire. You have neither part nor portion in this matter.

Your heart is not right in the sight of God. You're a believer, but your heart's not right. That's the man who wants to buy the treasure for the price of the field, and he's joyful.

Change your mind, verse 22, of this, your wickedness, and pray, God, if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity. He's jealous.

He used to be the focus of attention. The focus of attention has shifted to the apostles and to Philip. He wants the focus back on himself.

It's a joyous thing for many people to be the center of attention, and it is a trap and a snare, and it traps Simon. Simon answered and said, Pray to the Lord for me that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me. So, a great illustration of

comparison and contrast.

You've got those who are opposing from the beginning. You've got those who accept and are excited and then want to progress and want to obtain in an illicit, immoral way, and there is condemnation, just like, as I mentioned, Ananias and Sapphira. So, great suggestion to go back and look at those sorcerers.

Let's return now to Matthew chapter 13 and look at the parable of the dragnet. All seven of these parables that are similes for the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of heaven is a perspective broad enough to include evil, those who appear righteous but are not, and there will be a separation between the two. In the kingdom of God parables, there is a different emphasis.

It focuses on God and on relationship with God. This focuses on the environment where evil is tolerated for a time, but there is a day of judgment. There is a day of reckoning, and that is what those who are faithful, obedient, and persevering should wait for.

Don't try to preempt it. Don't try to bring it on and execute it in our own strength and our own perceptions. There's a lot we don't know.

We wait. Vengeance is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

We should be prepared for the presence of evil near at hand. Be patient. God says there is a day of reckoning coming and it is in God's time.

Don't get ahead of it. Wait. Paul and Barnabas wait until the Holy Spirit commissions them.

The other guys don't go yet. Philip is operating in the power of the Spirit, but he can't do some of the things the apostles can do. There are complementary ministries in the church age, and one guy doesn't do it all.

So as we return here now to the parable of the dragnet, we're going to see that this is of a piece and cut from the same cloth as the first six parables. The kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some of every kind. Notice again, kingdom of heaven, you've got all kinds.

Reap the field, there's going to be tares and wheat. There's going to be a tree and birds. There's going to be dough and leaven.

These things are mixed. So the dragnet is cast into the sea. Remember the sea, the wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest.

These things are existing in the sea. The sea is universally the picture of the entire world, and dwelling within the world, there are going to be good and bad. When it's full, it's drawn to shore.

Notice when it's full. The dragnet, this is the kind of net that has got corks on the top for the top to float, and it's got weights on the bottom. There were different kinds of nets.

Some of them were circular, and you would go out in a boat, and there's a drawstring in the bottom, and you throw it. It's got corks, and it's got weights. You throw it out there to encircle the fish.

Then one of the fishermen, like Peter, seems to be the guy that did this, would dive into the water, go down to the bottom of the net, and draw the drawstring, and tighten the bottom of the net, and then you pull the net into the boat. Dragnet is a different thing. This is kind of a rectangular net, and you stretch it across some distance from the shore, and then drag the ends inward.

The lead weights are going to drag the bottom, and you're going to pull in whatever is between the net and the shore. You drag it up onto dry land. It's too big to pull into a boat.

So that's what a dragnet, and that's what this is. So it's full. Notice it takes time.

You've got to deploy the net, and then there is a period of time where the net is slowly being drawn to shore, and then when it's up on the shore, they sat down and gathered the good into vessels, but threw the bad away. So it will be at the end of the age. This is another one that Jesus gives the key to interpretation.

The angels will come forth, separate the wicked from among the just, and cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be wailing and gnashing of teeth. I've been trying to figure out when would be a good time to make this point, and I'm just going to make it now before I run myself out of time.

I mentioned on Sunday, and I've been leading up to and talking off and on about the notion that the kingdom is underway now, that there is a mystery form of the kingdom. Jesus is the king, and you and I should be engaged in kingdom work, and King Jesus, etc., this kind of language. Well-intentioned, well-meaning, zeal for God, but in my humble opinion, and as you know, I can always be wrong, but let me explain why I think it is inappropriate for us to go down that road and use that language.

In addition to the reasons I already gave you, which is Peter never uses that language. John never uses that language. Paul never uses that language.

I think Paul wrote Hebrews, but if you want to separate Hebrews out, Hebrews never uses that language. Jesus is our high priest. Jesus is the head of all things to the church.

Jesus is the all-in-all. He's a lot of things, but none of the New Testament apostolic writers ever present Jesus to us, the church, as king. That's a pretty compelling argument in and of itself, but let me offer you something based on what we've covered

in terms of kingdom of heaven, kingdom of God.

This teaching, who is it to? Who is Jesus talking to at first blush? He's talking to Israel. It is the age of Israel. He's not gone to the cross.

Pentecost hasn't come. The Holy Spirit hasn't been given. Wait for the promise of the Father and so on.

None of that has happened. We are in the closing years of this portion of the age of Israel. We have seven more years to run.

Daniel's 70th week will be the tribulation, but we are getting real close to the end of this part of the age of Israel, but it is the age of Israel, and Jesus is talking to Israel. What is a mystery? The church is a mystery, but it's not the only mystery. If you remember in the earlier part of this chapter, look back up in verse 17, Jesus says in 16, blessed are your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear.

To you, it has been given to understand these parables of the kingdom, right? It's been given to you. Why? They had a love for the Father before Jesus ever showed up. And my sheep hear my voice.

Why? Because they have already started out being sheep. They were born into the flock out of love for God. And when Jesus came along, they recognized, you know, you know me because you know my Father.

I and my Father are one. If you love my Father, you would love me. You do not love me because you do not love my Father.

You don't accept me because you haven't accepted the Father. I am here to do the Father's will. Those who love the Father recognize me for what I am.

That's the gist. But look at verse 17. Surely I say to you, many prophets and righteous men desire to see what you see and did not see it, to hear what you hear and did not hear it.

It was a mystery to the Old Testament, saints, faithful and prophets. Jesus is revealing something to Israel. It's an Israel mystery.

The nature of the kingdom in the Old Testament, if you look at the kingdom passages, the way Isaiah describes the peaceable kingdom, the way Ezekiel describes the kingdom and the temple and all the rest of it, there is no hint that it is going to be an admixture. You don't get these elements of the tares or the leaven or the birds in the tree or the bad fish in the net. God is confronting Israel in the Old Testament and saying, you have got to learn my standards and you have got to be living by faith and endeavoring to follow God's law to qualify for the kingdom.

Watch for Elijah. When he announces it, your hearts had better turn in the right direction or I'll smite the land with a curse, right? You didn't succeed when I gave you the kingdom under David. You better be watching for the real kingdom when it comes, the kingdom under David's son.

You need to prepare. I'm going to send Elijah and he's going to give you one last chance to be ready for that kingdom. When Jesus comes and says, prepare for the kingdom, it is at hand, Jesus gives some new truth about that kingdom.

And he says, as you prepare for this kingdom, as you make his path straight, as mountains are leveled and valleys are filled in, turn your hearts, repent. The ax is laid at the root of the trees. You need to be the wheat that's gathered into the barn and not the chaff that's burned.

A lot of this is new and this material here is new to you. It has been given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom. These are kingdom mysteries, not church mysteries, which is why I don't think the pearl thing quite works.

But how do we treat old Testament truth? We are the church and we are not Israel. So what do we do with the books of the old Testament? The law, the prophets, the writings, the narratives, the poetry, the wisdom books, what do we do with it? Those scriptures were given to whom? Israel. And if you're going to put an adjective on that, it's national Israel.

Israel begins to become a nation under Moses. Moses writes the first five books and sets it down. They get to the promised land and through the period of the judges and consolidation, they're preparing for the kingdom under David.

But the nation of Israel, the people and the nation of Israel are those to whom this was given. These parables about the mysteries of the kingdom are given to that same people and nation of Israel. We don't go to the old Testament and say, well, I am a mystery form of the nation of Israel.

I am a mystery form of the people of Israel. We observe, interpret, and apply, but we know that we are not a nation. The church is not a nation, is it? We're a people, but we're not a nation.

We're not, the church is not a national entity. What's the one thing you can say when you put kingdom in one column and nation in the other and you put people in one column and you put people in the other, which corresponds? People corresponds to people, nation corresponds to kingdom. How can the church be even a mystery form of a kingdom when we are not a nation? There is neither Jew nor Greek, right? We're not national.

The nations are going to be gathered at the sheep and goats judgment. Where are those

nations? In the millennial kingdom. It's not nations now.

There's not sub-nations within the great kingdom. My point being, when people want to say, and I mean great gray heads with whom I have enormous respect, have said, the church is the mystery form of the kingdom. And I understand why they're saying that because we observe, we interpret, and we apply from these kingdom parables.

We know that there are terrors amongst the wheat. We know that we should be looking for that pearl of great price. We know that in the best of churches, there are going to be birds that will nest in the branches.

We get that. But in my humble opinion, and these guys got a lot more letters after their names than I do, but I think it's a mistake. It's like when Israel said, well, God said, nail his commandments to the door so that you remember when you go out and tie them to your hand and your forehead so that you'll remember them.

It'll be a part of your life. And they literally did so. There's been a bit of literalism in the church.

I think ordinances have been over-literalized. I think the idea of the kingdom has been over-literalized. The principles of the kingdom certainly pertain, but that doesn't make us a mystery form of the kingdom any more than understanding and applying the principles in the Old Testament makes us a mystery nation.

You see my point? I think the kingdom language and Jesus as king and the mystery form of the kingdom pertaining right now misses the mark a bit. As long as all you do with that is to say, I need to understand kingdom principles and put those into practice in my individual life, the problem with kingdom is as soon as you say it's a nation and it's governed by laws, you want to start enforcing them on other people. The beauty of understanding that this is not a mystery form of the kingdom, but that we are to learn, imbibe, and practice the principles that lead to possession and inheritance and fruitfulness and service and function and reflecting the glory of God in the future kingdoms, is it's individual.

I need to focus on my responsibility, keep my house clean, swept, and occupied so that the demon doesn't return with a bunch of his friends. I need to pay attention to my own desires of the heart and ensure that I don't have mixed motives, that I'm not getting really joyful, but inadvertently ignoring conscience and standards from the word of God. All of these principles are very pertinent, very applicable, very necessary for us, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

But the fact that those principles pertain to us doesn't make us a kingdom, even in a mystery form, any more than understanding and applying the principles of the Old Testament Israel makes us a mystery nation. I think it's important to recognize that

distinction because we can set aside distraction and we can avoid beginning to build a structure. As you find in many denominational churches, there's a whole traditional structure.

There's hierarchy, there's creedalism, there is formalism, there is a lot of humanly authored tradition that has inadvertently crept in by not paying close attention to the fact that that's not in scripture. Kingdom terminology, King Jesus for the church, is not in your Bible anywhere. Jesus doesn't appear as king with the church in his periphery until Revelation chapter 19, and that's after the tribulation.

That's preparing for Armageddon and the inception of the actual kingdom where he is the king of kings. He is not presented that way to the church and it just takes up necessary space on our shelves where we ought to be putting doctrines and principles and promises that are individually and collectively pertinent. If we can learn the 59 one another commands, you don't need Jesus to be sitting on a throne to prioritize those.

We don't need to be doing kingdom work if we are cultivating the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, waiting on him, watching for his leadership, looking for his guidance, and focusing on that. As soon as you start thinking kingdom, that's programmatic, it's structural, there's government, there's laws, and you slip silently and unconsciously into sideline. What defines the church? It is the body of Christ indwelt by the spirit of Christ.

That's what you and I should be, and we've got our hands full doing that. So as we look at this parable of the dragnet, we're going to see the application of this, this separation at the end of the age. There's all kinds of fish swimming in the sea, just like there are two different kinds of things growing in the field, but here there's all kinds.

And the separation happens at the judgment. This judgment is at the end of the millennial kingdom and it is performed by angels. That doesn't take place in the church, and so, but can we observe, interpret, and apply from this? There is going to be a reckoning as what kind of fish are you? It's really interesting the word fish isn't in here.

If you look, I don't know if it's in your King James or not, but see it says, some of every kind. A lot of the versions say every kind of fish, but New King James does it right. There is no word for fish.

There's some of every kind. We have the choice of what kind we are, and when the equivalent of the dragnet comes at the judgment seat of Christ, I want the judge to reach in and pick me out and put me in the barrel of what is good. Gather the good into vessels, into containers.

The biggest and best of those containers is the New Jerusalem and the kingdom of the Father. If you want to sell everything you have and purchase a pearl, that's that. Remember the New Jerusalem? What are the gates made of? Every gate is a single pearl.

That's where you want to sell everything you've got and be looking for that. That is a kingdom. That is the kingdom of the Father.

The kingdom of the Son is for Israel. Kingdom of the Father is for all of us. We're already possessed of the Holy Spirit.

We already have the Word of God. This is not kingdom time. This is redeem the time time.

So that's my take on it. Feel free to give me feedback on your thoughts, but it's a wonderful thing to see the Lord Jesus presenting these things just as the law and prophets and writings did in the Old Testament. Jesus does it but as a final observation when Jesus says, have you understood all these things? They say to him, yes Lord.

Really? I think everyone gets a smile out of that. But look at what he says in verse 52. Every scribe instructed concerning the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure things new and old.

It goes right back to verse 17. You are getting new things and you need to put them with your old things. There are things that were revealed in the Old Testament, these kingdom mysteries that are being revealed in these parables.

If you're instructed in the kingdom, you're going to know the new and the old. The new are going to line up with the old. They're going to compliment and fill in and be a fabric and an entirety.

So if you are instructed, every scholar, every student instructed in the kingdom is going to have the old and the new and put them together. Jesus is very gracious to not say, really? Well, here's your pop quiz. But that brings to a conclusion that section of parables and you will notice the very next section labeled in your New King James, Jesus rejected at Nazareth.

We're in a new section here and the reason he's talking in parables, the strategy has changed. The reaction has been measured and now it's going to be parables. There's going to be reserved.

There's going to be avoidance because the atmosphere is hostile. We live in a hostile age and it is time to be reserved and to maybe not be as open and as forthright as we once were. The Lord Jesus has set for us an example and when things get a little too hostile, improvise, adapt and overcome.

That's what he did. That's what we'll do. But we'll close here for tonight in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for the truth of your word and the wonderful guidance it gives us, the

light that it shines on our path. We thank you most of all for the Lord Jesus Christ, not only his earthly ministry, his teaching and his faithful and obedient life, showing us what the power of your word and the presence of your spirit can do for a human being, but in sacrificing himself on our behalf, being raised again the third day. And in his life, we find our life.

In his resurrection, we see the hope for our own. We pray that as we reflect on these things, your Holy Spirit will impress them on our hearts, enliven our fellowship. And as we speak the truth to one another in love, may each of us be a blessing to the others.

We ask and pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.