

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Kingdom: A Study of Matthew 8–13

STUDY NINETEEN

Get It? Got It? Good!

Matthew 13:44–52

When I think of the kingdom, I'm thinking of kingdom life, the kind of life Jesus offered. Life abundantly.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

LIKE a master chef, Jesus served His most exquisite teaching in Matthew 13 in two banquets. First, to the crowd along the seashore, Jesus opened with the parable of the sower, seed, and soils (Matthew 13:3–9). And then, after pausing to explain this parable to His disciples (13:10–23), He laid out three more parables for the people: the wheat and weeds (13:24–30), the mustard seed (13:31–32), and the yeast (13:33).

Leaving the public for the intimate setting of a home, Jesus offered His second feast of teaching to His disciples. He set the table with an explanation of the wheat and the weeds parable (13:34–43). And then, as we'll see in this *Searching the Scriptures* study, Jesus delivered three parables (13:44–48), paused for explanation (13:49–51), and concluded with a final parable—a sweet finish to His day of teaching (13:52).

So, pull up a chair and join the disciples in the house with Jesus! Enjoy teaching that is certain to nourish your soul and whet your appetite for life eternal with our Savior.



PREPARE YOUR HEART

Whenever we read Jesus' words in Scripture, we sense Him speaking directly to us. Prepare your heart in prayer to respond to Jesus' call through this study.

Father, only Your Son has the words of life that can feed my deepest needs for hope, peace, and security. Nothing in this world satisfies my soul like Jesus, so fill me up with His grace and lead me in the way of His kingdom, amen.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

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Matthew 13:44–52



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

According to commentator Thomas Constable, Matthew 13 can be outlined in a chiasmic structure, a kind of symmetry in writing which is typical in Hebrew literature. Notice how the sections ascend and descend in the following diagram, focusing on the center section.

A Introduction (verses 1–2)

B The first parable to the crowds (verses 3–9)

C An explanatory interlude: purpose and explanation (verses 10–23)

D Three more parables to the crowd (verses 24–33)

E An explanatory interlude: fulfillment and explanation (verses 34–43)

D' Three parables to the disciples (verses 44–48)

C' An explanatory interlude: explanation and response (verses 49–51)

B' The last parable to the disciples (verse 52)

A' Conclusion (verse 53)¹

At the center of this symmetrical arrangement lies a gleaming jewel of truth from Jesus to all His followers: “Then the righteous will *shine like the sun in their Father’s Kingdom*” (13:43, emphasis added). What an encouraging hope! Nothing satisfies our soul more than the assurance of eternal life in the loving shelter of our Father’s kingdom. And, as Jesus teaches in Matthew 13:44–52, our life with God *begins now*, becoming our *most valuable possession*.



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Matthew 13:44–52

 **Observation: Treasure, Pearl, Net, Homeowner**

Observation is an important first step to putting together the pieces of a passage of Scripture. As you read, look for contrasts, comparisons, repeated expressions, and emphasized words.² Read the two parables in *Matthew 13:44–46*. What similarities and differences do you find in them?

Similarities	Differences

The parable of the fishing net is like the parable of the wheat and weeds. Read these two parables in *Matthew 13:36–43, 47–50* and fill in the five comparable features in the following chart.³

Wheat and Weeds <i>Matthew 13:36–43</i>	Fishing Net <i>Matthew 13:47–50</i>



Get It? Got It? Good!

Matthew 13:44–52

Before His final parable, Jesus asked the disciples whether they understood His teaching. “Get it?” He asked. “Got it,” they replied. “Good!” Jesus responded (in so many words). Jesus commends His disciples in *Matthew 13:52*. Restate this parable in your own words in the space below.

As the Lord swings wide His net, He catches us. You may remember how the Lord found you by His grace. He came to your rescue, and what a change He has made. The worth of the life He has brought you is immeasurable. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Interpretation: The Meaning of the Parables

The treasure and the pearl represent the kingdom of heaven and its inestimable worth. What is the *kingdom of heaven*?

In his commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll explains this phrase’s two-sided meaning. On the one hand, Jesus referred to “the long-anticipated kingdom that will come with the return of the Messiah.” At the same time, Jesus’ parables introduced a mystery—“an interim form of the kingdom between the first and second comings of the Messiah.”

Pastor Chuck continues,

During this in-between time, those who have accepted Jesus as their Messiah and have experienced the new birth by grace through faith are to live by a different code in anticipation of the kingdom coming fully on earth. In this sense, the parables refer to one aspect of the kingdom as a *saving and transforming relationship with God through Jesus Christ* in the present. (emphasis added)⁴



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In a nutshell, the glittering treasure and the precious pearl are metaphors for life with God through Christ, **now and forever!** Both the man and the merchant “sold everything” they owned to possess the treasure and the pearl (Matthew 13:44, 46). What do you think makes life with God in His kingdom so valuable?

What was Jesus teaching about the comparative value of worldly things?

What encouragement would these parables give Matthew's readers?



Get It? Got It? Good!

Matthew 13:44–52

The parable of the fishing net highlights the central duty of the disciples, of whom many were fisherman. What was the lesson for them (Matthew 13:47–50)? For help with the answer read page 290 of Pastor Chuck's commentary.

The final parable commends the disciples as true students of Torah because of their understanding of the kingdom of heaven. What do you think Jesus meant by saying they would bring home “new gems of truth as well as old” (13:52)?

Jesus offers kingdom life—life that is lived in peace with the Holy Spirit residing within. It's a life of power, a life that has reason to it, a life that has a destiny filled with hope.
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Correlation: When Paul Discovered the Pearl

Paul thought he was the top student of Torah until the day he met the Lord on the road to Damascus. His life changed instantly, and he sold everything in terms of status, credentials, and purpose to experience kingdom life with God through Christ.



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Matthew 13:44–52

Read about Paul's shift in values in *Philippians 3:5–9*. How did Paul resemble the merchant in Jesus' parable? How did he describe the pearl he found?

Describe the inestimable value of Christ in your life. How precious is Jesus to you?

Who else can heal a broken heart or a fractured marriage like Christ? Who else can give hope to a depressed soul? Who else can relieve guilt and remove shame like Christ in His acceptance of us and willingness to forgive? Who else can release our grip on money or fame or significance or selfishness? Only Christ. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: A Challenge for All Disciples?

Jesus encouraged His disciples that life with God in His kingdom was worth whatever they had given up to follow Him. They were as wise as the man who discovered the treasure and the merchant who found the pearl. He would encourage us in the same way, and perhaps add a challenge: *don't lose your passion*. What can you do to keep your eyes on Christ as your truest treasure?



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Matthew 13:44–52

Also, Christ taught His fishermen disciples to keep tossing the net. They are not responsible for the “catch,” only to be faithful to the task of sharing with others the good news of life in the kingdom. Who can you talk to about how much you value Jesus?

Our Savior prepared a wonderful meal for His closest disciples to savor. And we receive it as well, for it nourishes us with the truth of our forever relationship with God in His kingdom now and for eternity.



A FINAL PRAYER

The psalmist expresses our affection for Christ with his words of love for God. Make this your prayer as you close our study and repeat it through the day to remind you of the inestimable value of your life with God.

*Whom have I in heaven but you?
I desire you more than anything on earth.
My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak,
but God remains the strength of my heart;
he is mine forever. (Psalm 73:25–26)*

ENDNOTES

1. Thomas L. Constable, *Constable's Notes*, netbible.org/bible/matthew+13.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
3. The five comparative features are field/water, good seed/good fish, weeds/bad fish, harvesters/angels, sorting out/separating.
4. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 1–15*, vol. 1A (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 287, 288.

