

## **GOD'S SHOWROOM**

Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 Text: vs. 52 *“He said to them, “Therefore every teacher of the law who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.”*

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown how something small and invisible to the naked eye can spread so quickly and explode into a destructive force that can consume all our attention and resources. Individuals, communities, nations, even the whole world has suffered from it. But our lesson today offers a different picture of such a force. In this parable, Jesus described how the Kingdom of Heaven can appear out of something that's invisible to the eye yet, grow into a treasure worthy of your attention and possession.

Matthew 13 contains eight parables which focus on *Kingdom building*. And after Jesus told these parables to His disciples, He asked, *“Have you understood all this?”* They answered, *“Yes.”* He then told how Scribes, who were Israel's teachers of the Law of Moses, studied and interpreted Scripture. They told people how to live by the Law. But Jesus was teaching these disciples deeper truths about himself (Matthew 13:10–11). He wanted them to be like Scribes who were trained to teach truths to others. (Matthew 28:19–20) He uses "old" and "new" to mean God's revelation both in the Old Testament Scriptures and the New Revelations being made through Him.

To do that He used the image of someone wealthy who shows the treasures of his household to others. Some items are old, like antiques and family heirlooms. Some treasures are newly acquired, but still of great value. Jesus pictured the teachers of *these great truths* as those who would need to show how these treasured truths all fit together. Now, when you say *“Yes”* it means you understand.

And if we as a church are asked if we understand about *Kingdom building*, and we answer *“Yes,”* then we need to be doing it! Verse 52 says Jesus wanted His disciples to know that Kingdom-building is what you do to move the Kingdom forward, and that it reaps big dividends. The Kingdom of God is like an excellent investment. You need to put it in your *spiritual portfolio*. Because being a citizen of the Kingdom guarantees that you are a *treasure finder*. You're dependable. You can be counted on. And our text for today says, *“Kingdom citizens bring out of their treasure what is old, and what is new.”* But to do that, you first must find it! And you can't find your treasure if you don't know where to look. When you look in the Bible, the Word of God, you will discover that's where you discover directions on how to find your *treasure*. If you've been looking for your treasure, and haven't found it yet, you've probably been like the song says, *“Looking in all the wrong places.”*

But if you're in this church, you're in the right place to look. We have a mission program in Baja Mexico. We're addressing social concerns at the Shelter for Abused Women and Children. We receive grants of money to purchase food for the food we distribute every Wednesday to 120 families in our community. We have a worship experience here every Sunday. There's a feeling of being part of a family here! But first, and most important of all, you need to *“look to Jesus, the author and finisher of your faith.”* Not only will you find your *treasure*, but you will also want to *“open your treasure for all to see.”*

But a treasure's no good if you can't get to it. For too long, this church has had treasures. But we haven't told many about them. We've never really opened the treasure chest for others to see what's here. It's as if we lost the keys. We have good treasures here. We have good people here. Some have become old. Some are brand new. But just because a treasure is old, doesn't make it useless. In fact, the older a treasure becomes, the more valuable it becomes.

I was looking for a broom in our broom closet not long ago. We have some old brooms. And we have some new brooms. The old brooms work fine. Just as well as the new brooms in getting the job done! But when old brooms finally wear out, new brooms are needed to take over in getting the job done. But too soon, new brooms will become old brooms. That's when the old brooms can begin teaching the new brooms how to keep the house in order. In other words, rather than break the link in our church, we must *“make the link”* between yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We don't need to set the old against the new. Or vice versa. We don't dismiss the old in place of the new. We need to blend the two! We must weave a common thread from our past into our present. And then move forward from our present into our future.

That's where our church is today! We are being challenged to move from our past, into our present, and into our future, remembering God placed this church on this circle in Everglades City 97 years ago as a constant reminder of God's divinely designed destiny! God granted us rich treasures in the past to help meet any challenge facing us in the future. We must learn from our past. We must interpret our present. And we must build for our future.

Several years ago, *USA Today* (10/24/97) reported the results of a *Roper Starch Worldwide Survey* conducted among the wealthiest one percent of U.S. households. At that time, one million households each had an annual income of \$250,000 for a net worth of each having at least \$2.5 million. And they were asked, what they would be willing to pay to *be happy? To be president? To have a place in heaven?* To them some items on the list were worth less than \$100,000. But at the very bottom of the list was *“being president.”* It was worth only \$55,000! *“Great beauty”* was rated a little

higher at \$83,000. The next three items went up to the \$200,000's. Some were willing to pay \$206,000 for a "reunion with a lost love." \$259,000 for "eternal youth." And some would pay \$285,000 for having a "talent." "Great intellect" was worth \$407,000. "True love" was \$487,000. But the most expensive, and most prized item on that rich folks' list was, "a place in heaven." It was worth \$640,000! More than twice what they were willing to pay for "eternal youth" or "talent" or anything else. More than eight times the value of "great beauty." More than eleven times the price tag for "being president."

But that's not the point! A place in heaven? Why, you can't buy it! *It's free!* All you have to do is ask for it! Those folks were *wrong* about the worth of heaven. It's worth more than \$640,000! It's priceless! Money can't buy salvation. It can't be *bought!* It must be *sought!* That's why Jesus compared salvation with finding lost, buried, or hidden treasures, because salvation in heaven is more precious than money and possessions on earth! A place in heaven is the dearest, most essential crown jewel of all precious stones. And we need to tell others about that! We need to be out in our community *like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old* showing everyone that it's possible for them to have a place in heaven!

Remember what I said earlier? After Jesus had told the parables to His disciples He asked, "*Have you understood all this?*" And they answered, "*Yes.*" Well, saying "Yes" to a question like that means you understand what's necessary to get the job done. And we have a job to do. Right here in our community. Our job is to tell others about the Kingdom of God.

A man went to church one Sunday. He frowned when the organist missed a note during the opening hymn. He stared at two teenagers talking to each other when the congregation was at prayer. During the Scripture readings he kept looking at his watch. When the collection plate was passed, he thought the usher was watching to see how much he put in. During the sermon, he snickered when the preacher made a slip of the tongue. He didn't open his mouth during the hymn singing. And as he slipped out a side door during the closing hymn, he muttered to himself, "*That was terrible. Never again!*"

Another man went to the same church. He was blessed by the organist's moving rendition of "*Amazing Grace.*" He gazed in awe at the sight of a father hugging the little child draped over his shoulder. He had but one thought when the collection plate was passed: "*Some of what I give will be used to serve the needy. Am I giving enough?*" He listened to Scripture being read telling of God's incredible love for the human family. He heard something in the sermon that helped him with a question that had bothered him for a long time. He eagerly joined in the singing of the closing hymn of praise. And as he left the church, he said to himself, "*How good it is to be here and be in the presence of God with all these wonderful people! I could never do it by myself!*"

And that's our job. Get that first man back into church so he will become like the second man. Has anyone in our city ever had a church experience like that first man? Can someone here today express their *Love of God* and then tell it others? I pray that is so. And remember, wherever you go, whatever you do, you always leave an impression. As a Christian you are called to leave a positive impression on people you meet. Even after you're gone, your life will still make an impression on those who have known you. They will long be saying, "*Do you remember . . . ?*"

In our city there are those who may live on your street who need to hear someone tell them about Jesus. Their marriage is falling apart. Their home is in turmoil. The doctor has given them no hope. But to them, someone like you can make an impact on them for the kingdom of God. "*Like the owner of a house who brings out of his storeroom new treasures as well as old.*" Look beyond their sins. Look beyond their lifestyle. Look beyond their sickness. Look beyond their hopeless situation. Tell them what they can become in the Name of the Lord. It's your job to invite someone to come with you to this church next Sunday. COVID-19 and Hurricane IAN hit us hard! Let's fill these pews again. We did it before! Now, let's do it again so all can see the treasures of God's Kingdom that can be found *here*.

You will be blessed for doing it. And so will they! AMEN