

# An Order of Worship for the Home

August 30, 2020

Metaphors for the Kingdom from Matthew 13, week 4

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*This service is written for two speakers. Ideally, family members can speak and declare God's grace to one another following this format. For those who live alone, this worship outline can be followed with a brother or sister in Christ over the phone. You may call on a friend to fill this role, or your elder or pastor can worship with you by phone.*

*There is an "offering prayer" included in this outline. As we shelter in place, please continue to worship through giving. You can mail offering envelopes and checks to Calvary or visit [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org) to give online.*

## Invocation

Reader 1: The kingdom is where the King reigns.  
Reader 2: He reigns in our hearts. The kingdom of heaven is here!  
Reader 1: We gather in the name of the King who is...  
Reader 2: Father, Son and Holy Spirit...  
Together: Amen.

## Psalm 135:1-4

<sup>1</sup> Praise the Lord!  
Praise the name of the Lord,  
give praise, O servants of the Lord,  
<sup>2</sup> who stand in the house of the Lord,  
in the courts of the house of our God!  
<sup>3</sup> Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good;  
sing to his name, for it is pleasant!  
<sup>4</sup> For the Lord has chosen Jacob for himself,  
Israel as his own possession.

## Confession & Absolution

*Make sure each person present has opportunity to confess to a brother or sister in faith. Go through both parts as many times as needed to accommodate all who are gathered.*

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:19-21)*

Christian Confessing: I have treasured the wrong things, and I have sought to build my own kingdom. I am sorry for this. God, you alone are my King. I humble myself before your rule, and I ask that you would allow me to serve in your kingdom. Forgive me for the sake of your Son, Jesus, and his suffering and death.

Christian Responding: Your King has heard your confession. You are loved and forgiven! He welcomes you home as his child. The faith on which your confession is founded is a gift from your God, and in this faith you are saved. As Jesus said, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear." (Matthew 13:16)

Together: Amen.

### Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.  
Amen.

### 1 Peter 2:20b-25

But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup> He himself bore our sins in his body

on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup> For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

### Message and Gospel Reading (Matthew 13:44-46) **Some Things Are Worth Everything**

*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.  
(Matthew 13:44)*

It can be hard to get past the cultural differences between Bible times and our own setting. We can read this story and quickly get caught up in questions about trespassing, right? If this guy doesn't own the field, why is he snooping? I've heard this expressed before, and it's a question worth engaging.

At Jesus' time, there were no barbed wire fences to divide parcels of land. In fact, if you wanted a fence your options were non-treated lumber (which would require almost yearly rebuilding) or stone walls (which meant collecting lots and lots and lots of rock by hand). Fences were occasionally built around vineyards and other small parcels, but not every property line was marked by a fence.

Plus, God's people were instructed to allow the sojourner and the widow to glean from their fields. God clearly told his people to allow others to come onto their property and share its produce. This was a different relationship to property lines and ownership of land than what we're accustomed to.

Jesus tells a story about a man who finds hidden treasure in a field which is not his. I can picture a man cutting across a field and discovering a small sinkhole which reveals the opening to a hollowed out cave. Inside he finds works of gold, precious stones, maybe even weapons and armor acquired in battle and hidden by whomever had taken the plunder. Apparently, the original owner was never able to return to his trove. It's now thick with the accumulated dust of many years. It's obviously unknown to the owner of the field. The man who makes the discovery sells whatever property he has, along with the home he's built there, and buys this otherwise empty field. He knows it's worth it.

The meaning of the story is easy enough to discern.

***All things are worth something.  
Some things are worth everything.***

After this, Jesus continues with another story.

*“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it.  
(Matthew 13:45-46)*

I remember selling my 1997 Isuzu Rodeo while we were living in St. Louis. We had two cars at the time, and decided we really didn't need both. The Rodeo was in need of several repairs, and it was not going to pass inspection when it came time for renewal. Plus, we didn't have the money to fix it. So, I listed it for sale. I remember how I felt when a potential buyer finally came to look at it. I was really hoping he was willing to pay what I had asked. I was willing to part with my Rodeo; would he be willing to give up five hundred bucks in exchange?

This is how buying and selling works. Value has to be determined. My story, and the parable Jesus tells, both present a very basic principle in economics. The value of a good or service is determined by what the buyer is willing to give up.

The cost of buying my Rodeo was actually a small price to the man who bought it. He didn't have to give up much. The cost of the pearl in the story Jesus tells was quite different. The value of the pearl was extremely high, as evidenced by the merchant selling everything in order to gain this one item.

We see the same truth from earlier emphasized in this second story.

***All things are worth something.  
Some things are worth everything.***

This truth isn't new to you. You know it from your own personal experience. In fact, many of you know this from your experience with faith and church life.

The something you've sacrificed is time.

- You have your own projects at home and at work, but you also give time to help a neighbor with their projects, or to volunteer at church.
- Some of you give time from your retirement. You haven't seen retirement as a chance to enjoy life while the world serves you. Instead, you've seen this season as an opportunity to serve others, to take a new and bigger role in God's mission.

- Some of you even gave up an hour this week – an hour of housework, or hobbies, or entertainment, or maybe sleep – in order to pray as part of our 6x2x2 prayer campaign.

***All things are worth something.***

At times, the something you've sacrificed is money.

- You tip generously for the service you receive (like pizza deliveries) because you know it's appreciated, and it's your way of being "salt and light."
- You contribute to local charities because you value the work they're doing for others.
- You bring an offering to church, because you're thankful for what your God has done for you.

Whether you think in terms of time or money, or both, you can recognize this: If you assigned value to the things you give up, some sacrifices are on par with a cup of coffee or a movie rental, while others put major purchases on hold. Some of your sacrifices might even mean you give up entirely on things you desire.

Remember, value is established based on what someone is willing to give up. As I think about that, let me tell you what I find truly amazing. The people I've met who give most sacrificially are the people who seem least concerned about the sacrifice they're making.

***All things are worth something.***

We've considered the stories Jesus told his disciples. I've given you opportunity to think personally about sacrifice, and about value. But as we think about our own lives and actions, we are actually drawn further and further from what Jesus is trying to teach us.

Yes, our own values should come to mind. Self-reflection is always good, even when that self-reflection is challenging. When it comes down to it, our self-reflection always reveals how we fall short.

We give up some comforts for the sake of service to others. That's good. We sacrifice some things for the sake of God's kingdom. That's appropriate. However, we fail to give *everything*. There's always more we can do.

That's our disconnect from these two parables. You and I are not like either of the protagonists who give up all for the sake of a singular desire. These characters don't point to us; they direct our thoughts to another.

***All things are worth something.  
Some things are worth everything.***

Jesus taught this to the crowds. He also lived it out for all to see.

*And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:8)*

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (1 Peter 2:24)*

“By his wounds you have been healed.” That’s a statement of value. That reveals *your* value.

You are worth everything! You’re not the man who stumbled upon hidden wealth. You’re the priceless treasure! You’re not a merchant in search of pearls. You’re the pearl without equal!

That’s how your God sees you. That’s why Jesus came for you. God became a weak and vulnerable human being. That was a cost, but not the full price. He suffered ridicule, lies, even beating. These serve to increase the cost, but they don’t reveal the full value. Jesus was betrayed by one of his closest friends, and executed by the people he came to save. Jesus gave everything for you!

***Some things are worth everything.***

You are worth everything to Jesus. You are the treasure in the field. You are the pearl worth more than any other. Jesus would give everything for you... and he has!

This is what these stories are really about. The kingdom of heaven is seen in Jesus. If we place ourselves in the wrong place in these parables, we attempt to take the place of Jesus. We try to be the savior.

Instead, you are invited to once again allow Jesus to be your Savior. Let him remind you how great a love he has for you.

***Some things are worth everything.***

In the eyes of Jesus, *you* are worth everything.  
Now, that’s something!

Amen.

### Offering Prayer

*If you have an offering present as you worship, you may place your hands over it during the offering prayer.*

Reader 1: With thankful hearts we receive from you, O Lord.  
Reader 2: With thankful hearts we respond.  
Reader 1: Receive our thanks and praise.  
Reader 2: Receive our offerings.  
Together: Receive us as your own.

### Prayers and the Lord's Prayer

*Share prayer requests with one another. Pray over the requests shared, then pray the Lord's Prayer together.*

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

### Blessing (Matthew 28:19-20)

Reader 1: The kingdom of God moves forward, and you move with it.  
Reader 2: So make disciples, baptize, and teach.  
Reader 1: Do this in the name of the King – the Father, Son and Spirit.  
Reader 2: And know that the King goes with you. Always!  
Together: Amen.

*As applicable, please share this resource with others who would benefit. An electronic version is available at [www.calvaryslz.org](http://www.calvaryslz.org). We can also add friends to our mailing list if that is preferred.*

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