

## The Hidden Treasure

Matthew 13:44,45

I have found that many people who live in Whangarei are people like me who feel inspired, drawn closer to God by looking at what He has made all around us. My neighbour said when we moved into the Heads on our first day 'welcome to paradise'. I understood what she meant. I think for most thinking people when you look at the complexities of creation you just can't help but think, wow God – you are awesome. Consider the humble and slightly ugly spider for instance. Most spiders weave a sticky web to catch little bugs and insects. But have you ever wondered why a common spider doesn't get stuck in its own web? The reason is that at the ends of their tiny feet they secrete just enough oil so that their feet can't get stuck in their own webs. Amazing isn't it. God can make the most wonderful things in creation that cause us to go wow God. But to the cynic, to the agnostic, the question is rarely did God make everything; their question is that if God made everything then why is there so much suffering in the world. If he made everything, then why can't he maintain everything. If God is good and creator of all then why Ebola, why diseases, why Tsunami's, why famine, why violence and greed.

This morning I want to take you for a look at both ends of the bible then land at our two verses this morning in Matt 13 in order to answer that question and to help you see in a fresh light how wonderful the cross is and how special resurrection Sunday is.

In the book of Genesis God made everything and as He creates He constantly pauses, looks at what He has created and says "and it was good". As He creates the first people Adam and Eve He gives them authority over the world and responsibility for looking after the planet that He created. He gave man dominion/ ownership.

But what did man do with that right to rule? Adam, who specifically represents you and me. A man who was created by God, who had the Spirit of God breathed into him physically and literally. A man who was never polluted by sin. A man who was never born with a sinful nature but started out perfectly. He was in a sense a champion for you and I. What did he do?

Well Satan came to Adam and began to tempt him. Satan seduced him. And Adam submitted to him when he ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. By doing so Adam was rebelling against God. God is a God of love and

love must have the freedom to choose. Love must have options or it cannot be love at all.

By rebelling against God and submitting to Satan's seductions Adam handed over the dominion of Planet earth to Satan. And so the ownership of this world went from God, was given as a gift to Adam and then Adam then handed it over to Satan. In 1n Corinthians 4:4 the apostle Paul says that Satan is the God of this world. 3x in John's gospel alone Jesus called Satan the Prince of this world.

In Matthew 4 when Satan was tempting Jesus Satan himself said to Jesus if you would bow down and worship me, I will give you the world. At this point Jesus, did not say, no you can't do that. Jesus did not deny that Satan had that authority.

So when there is rape or hurricanes or disease or thousands of people starving in Syria. When you ask the question like the sceptic why is there such sorrow and suffering and pain in the world. The answer is not God did it or God cannot maintain it. It was never like this in the beginning and God never intended it to become like this. Adam has handed over the deed to this planet to the enemy of our souls and it is corrupted, broken, influenced.

For those of you that like studying Greek words I find it shocking to realize that the word Jesus uses to calm the storm while He is standing in the boat and the disciples are in fear of their lives, are "be muzzled." It's the same phrase that Jesus would use to silence those possessed by demons as well.

I get so bugged, so annoyed when insurance companies describe earthquakes, or Tsunamis or Volcanic eruptions as 'acts of God', nothing could be further from the truth.

So why is there rape and disease and disasters and such suffering in the world. If God made the world, then couldn't he maintain it?

Yes he could. But man turned the ownership of this planet over to the enemy of our souls, and it's he who is really behind all the problems and the divisions and the greed of this world. So if the title deed of this planet is in the hands of Satan, does that mean that it is going to stay in Satan's dominion forever?

Let's take a look into heaven at the end of time and Join John the Revelator as he witnesses a defining event in future world history.

***Vs1 5 In the right hand of the one sitting on the throne I saw a scroll[a] that had writing on the inside and on the outside. And it was sealed in seven places.***

Now what is the scroll that has writing both on the inside and outside sealed with 7 seals?

A careful reading of Jeremiah 32 will identify this for you. In Jeremiah 32 we see a scroll that was sealed. It was a title deed for a piece of property that was purchased by the prophet Jeremiah for a man named Hanameal. A title deed, a scroll, sealed with seals. When we view this scroll with John in Rev 5:1 this also is a title deed, the title deed to planet earth.

For you to understand why it is written on the inside and the outside have a look sometime at Leviticus 25. Our Heavenly Father in those times gave to Israel some very clear instructions around the ownership of property. No one could lose property from their family indefinitely. If you had to sell or if you lost your family land that property would come back to you in the year of Jubilee, which happened every 50 years when all property was returned to their original owners and all debts were cancelled. There was another way that you or a family relative could redeem the family land and get it back.

When the land was lost the title deed to the land would be taken and then it would be rolled into a scroll and sealed with 7 seals.. On the outside of the scroll were written all the stipulations, the conditions that had to be fulfilled in order to get the land back. If a relative were to redeem the land they would have it opened in the temple and as each seal was broken the redeeming relative had to meet all the conditions on the outside. Once this was done the land owner had no choice but to return it.

In heaven, in the ultimate temple there is this scroll that John can see, the title deed to planet earth, sealed with 7 seals. This is the title deed that was effectively given to Adam, who passed it onto Satan and now we see in heaven this scroll once again.

***<sup>2</sup> I saw a mighty angel ask with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and break its seals?"***

In other words who can meet the requirements written on the outside of the scroll? Who is worthy to take back the title deed from the enemy?

**<sup>3</sup> No one in heaven or on earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll or see inside it.**

**<sup>4</sup> I cried hard because no one was found worthy to open the scroll or see inside it.**

If no one can take the scroll and redeem the planet, then starvation and violence and abuse and disease and disaster and pollution, man it will never change it will just keep on going on the way it is and getting worse. And John realizing this sobs in despair.

**<sup>5</sup> Then one of the elders said to me, "Stop crying and look! The one who is called both the 'Lion from the Tribe of Judah'<sup>[b]</sup> and 'King David's Great Descendant'<sup>[c]</sup> has won the victory. He will open the book and its seven seals."**

**<sup>7</sup> The Lamb went over and took the scroll from the right hand of the one who sat on the throne.**

And then chapter 5 continues as heavenly creatures and elders just burst into the most extreme worship service you could ever imagine.

Jesus alone is found worthy, the Lamb of God, who was slain in your place and mine for our sins. He is worthy.

In our text today, in a simple verse, Jesus gives a brief parable to explain to you and me how and why Jesus bought back the planet.

**<sup>44</sup> The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when someone finds a treasure hidden in a field and buries it again. A person like that is happy and goes and sells everything in order to buy that field.**

Friends, the most accurate way of interpreting the Bible is to use the Bible and so you ask the question, what is the field, where have I heard this language before. And the answer is just a few verses earlier in vs 38 where in the parable of the sower we see that the field is the world.

And so you ask yourself the question, who is it that comes into the field and finds a treasure and therefore sells all that he has, gives up everything in order to gain that field? And the answer is obvious – Jesus Christ. Now the Word as Jesus is sometimes called can create millions of galaxies with a word so why buy the field, God doesn't need another planet. So if Jesus is the person who came into the field and the field is the world then what or who is the treasure?

And the only answer is You are, and that person sitting beside you and in front of you. You are the treasure. He came into the world and saw you while you were still a sinner, still doing your own thing and said, I will give everything that I have in order to get that treasure and take it out of this world into eternity.

You are the treasure. You are the one that He loved so much that He gave up his life get. The treasure is not salvation because nobody can buy salvation. The treasure is you. He saw you and decided bringing you into His family was worth paying the ultimate price.

And when you here that as a kiwi who has been knocked around a little by other kiwi's you and I are inclined to think, who? What? Me? Heck, I don't feel like a treasure. I feel like a grain of sand in the cosmos. Just a little, faulty, insignificant, irritating grain of sand.

Now look at the next verse

***<sup>45</sup> The kingdom of heaven is like what happens when a shop owner is looking for fine pearls. <sup>46</sup> After finding a very valuable one, the owner goes and sells everything in order to buy that pearl.***

Friends, who is the Pearl?

It's not the gospel or salvation, you cannot buy salvation. It's you again. But, But, but I am nothing but an irritating little speck of sand in this vast universe. True but do you know how pearls are formed. A speck of sand or a piece of shell gets lodged in an oyster, the more irritating it is the bigger the pearl that will be formed around it. And that oyster then covers that irritating little bit of sand with a substance that is so valuable and so beautiful.

Did you know that when you were baptized the bible says you became hidden in Christ Jesus, that God clothed you with his righteousness, His holiness?