

“The Hidden Treasure”

[Please show the video, “Where Is Your Treasure” after the Scripture Reading and before I begin the Sermon.]

The video reminds us (pause) the everyday life, which follows the way encouraged by the world, is only temporary! (PAUSE) Putting one’s life on that path (pause) will eventually lead to self-destruction, meaninglessness, depression and despair, sickness, and death. However, (pause) the video went on to point out, **“there is a way to store up treasures that live on.”** (PAUSE) Then, the video provided some examples of ways of living, which belong to God’s Kingdom – to the New Faith Relationship with God and New Life in Jesus Christ: “the hug you gave your hurting friend”, “an open ear for someone that just needs to talk is a priceless gift”, “the encouraging note sent to a struggling co-worker”, and “telling someone about Jesus”. (PAUSE) Remember, the video summed up, “the treasures of this world (pause) won’t last (pause) but God’s Kingdom will live into eternity.” It then quoted a teaching of Jesus,

which was reported earlier in Matthew – **Matthew 6:19-21**, ***“Do not store up treasures on earth where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven where moth and rust do not destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is your heart will be also.”*** (PAUSE)

Jesus said the phrase, ***“The Kingdom of Heaven is like”***, six times in our Scripture Reading, (pause) as he told five parables and then indicated with something like a parable (pause) how a Teacher of the Law, who becomes one of his disciples in the Kingdom, will function. (PAUSE) Obviously, (pause) Jesus’ central purpose for telling those parables had something to do with the Kingdom! (PAUSE) It is also important to understand, (pause) Matthew alone in the New Testament, usually put in Jesus’ mouth the phrase, “Kingdom of Heaven” (pause) when the parallels in the Gospels of Mark and Luke reported him using the terminology, ***“Kingdom of God”***. Interestingly, Matthew slipped and let Jesus say, “Kingdom of God” on five occasions. Further, (pause) the Gospel of John recorded

Jesus used the words, “Kingdom of God”, instead of “Kingdom of Heaven”. (PAUSE)

Matthew shared the predispositions of many Jewish Christians. They tended to believe a Christian should continue to follow the Jewish Law and practices. The Jewish religious elite encouraged spiritualizing the Kingdom, so they preferred using “Kingdom of Heaven”, instead of “Kingdom of God”. (PAUSE) However, (pause) it is clear to me, Mark, and Luke, (pause) Jesus used the phrase, “Kingdom of God”, to acknowledge the Divine Parent’s authority over us (pause) and to emphasize God’s purposes of Justice, Agape Love, Welcome, and the New Faith Relationship with God. Further, (pause) Jesus Christ was calling his followers – his disciples (pause) to live the life, which belongs to the Kingdom of God, in their everyday lives. (PAUSE) As the video suggested, it is the Kingdom and the Life of the Kingdom of God, that is the true Treasure hidden from the perception of most people. (PAUSE)

Thomas A. Pilgrim reports, “There is an ancient legend about some men who were on a long journey. They came across a great desert, and rode into a wilderness area. (PAUSE) At sundown they came to a river. They got off their horses and knelt down by the river to drink water. Suddenly (pause) a voice spoke to them. The voice said, ‘Fill your pockets up with pebbles from along the river. And tomorrow you will be both glad and sorry.’ So they did what the voice commanded. They got on their horses and rode away. (PAUSE) On through the night they rode. Finally (pause) the sun began to peek over the horizon. They stopped and reached into their pockets and there they found diamonds and rubies. (PAUSE) They held a treasure in their hands, and they were both glad and sorry. They were glad they had it, but they were sorry because they had not taken more.” (PAUSE)

Pilgrim concluded, “The good news for us is (pause) we can have all we want of the treasure of His kingdom, all we are willing to take. (PAUSE) If you will take that treasure (pause) you will learn it is the discovery of a

lifetime.” (PAUSE) (Thomas A. Pilgrim, *The Man From Galilee*, CSS Publishing Company, Inc.)

Part of Jesus’ purpose for telling those parables about the Kingdom (pause) was to encourage his followers – his disciples (pause) to recognize the Hidden Treasure aspect of the Kingdom and of the Life, which belongs to the Kingdom of God. In fact, (pause) Jesus sought to emphasize the importance and the value of the Kingdom and Life (pause) in the final two parables of today’s Gospel Lectionary Reading. For example, Jesus said in verse 44, *“The Kingdom of heaven is like this. A man happens to find a treasure hidden in a field. He covers it up again, and is so happy that he goes and sells everything he has, and then goes back and buys that field.”* (PAUSE) The urgency (pause) Jesus described, is often absent when followers of Jesus receive his call. (PAUSE) Is it urgent for you? (PAUSE)

Jesus’ parables about the Kingdom encouraged his followers to take speedy action. (PAUSE) We are to live the Life of the Kingdom – the

New Life in Christ – to give up the world’s way of self-centered living!
(PAUSE) We are to recognize the far greater value and truth (pause) of
the New Faith Relationship with God and the Life of Citizens of God’s
Kingdom – the New Beginning or New Life (pause) demonstrated by
Jesus Christ, the Only Son of God. (PAUSE) The following video
provides us a glimpse at that Hidden Treasure. [Please show the video, “A
New Beginning”.]

Being welcomed into the New Faith Relationship with God now – living
the Life of the Kingdom of God – the New Life in Christ, includes (pause)
recognizing our Divine Parent’s Authority over us. It means we give up
our bondage to all the false gods, which we are tempted to allow to control
us, and to, instead, put our Trust in our Creator and God’s Word – Jesus!
(PAUSE) Yes, it is like selling everything else to obtain the Hidden
Treasure! (PAUSE) As that last video reminded us: **“No matter what
happens, [God] is there. And what’s more, [God] is there for you.”**
“[God] wants to guide your path and help you navigate stormy waters.

(PAUSE) Every day is another chance at a new beginning – a fresh opportunity to rely on God. And when you rely on [God], (pause) you can go through any change or turmoil and come out victorious. (PAUSE) That doesn't mean it will be easy (pause) but God will carry you through.”

(PAUSE) The nature of the Life of the Kingdom of God is extremely valuable and important! (PAUSE) But, what is it? (PAUSE) Will you and I allow God and Jesus to lead us to live it? (PAUSE) Jesus promised us, we can (pause) and his concluding teaching in today's Reading (pause) points out that even his adversaries could live it. (PAUSE) He said in verse 52, ***“This means, then, that every teacher of the Law who becomes a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like (pause) a homeowner (pause) who takes new and old things out of his storage room.”*** (PAUSE) Yes, even the Teacher of the Law (pause) could become a Disciple of Jesus in the Kingdom (pause) and follow the old of the Law – Love the Lord Your God with all you have and are and your neighbor as yourself (pause) in addition (pause) to the New Insight and Example (pause) of the Revelation

of God's Agape Love and Forgiveness for all people (pause) in God's Only Son, Jesus Christ! (PAUSE)

So, the Hidden Treasure, which is so valuable (pause) that we will give up the tempting ways of the world, (pause) is living out the New Faith Relationship with God and one another! It is ours (pause) because of our Divine Parent's Agape – Suffering and Sacrificial Love for all people, which is manifested in the Almighty (pause) Forgiving and Welcoming us into God's Kingdom, (pause) as revealed and proven in the Birth, Life, Ministry, Death, and Resurrection of God's Only Son, Jesus Christ!

(PAUSE) We are called to live this gift of the New Faith Relationship with God – New Life in Christ – Life of the Kingdom of God (pause) following Jesus' Teachings and Example (pause) in the way we relate with one another and with all people. (PAUSE) We are to be guided by our Divine Parent through the Holy Spirit, so we live under God's authority (pause) and are instruments of God's Agape Love. **Reveal to everyone (pause) you have received and are living the Hidden Treasure. Amen.**