

Matthew 13:44

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Soteriological Implications

The doors to the kingdom are opened freely to every man; you don't have to buy it; actually, you can't buy it. Salvation and redemption is a gift of God paid in full by Christ.

The story of Ruth is a classic Old Testament example of the law of redemption. In order to secure a bride, Boaz had to purchase the field. The Levitical Law articulated the guidelines for such cultural transactions (Lev. 25 & 27). As a widow and, furthermore, as a Moabite widow, Ruth was an alien to both legal and religious rights in the Jewish economy. She was essentially an outcast on many cultural levels. She and Naomi, both as widows, could not legally own property. Both had to sell out; however, what they did have was to secure some level of prosperity. Ruth, the Moabite, gave up all to follow Naomi. Naomi, a Jew, in turn, sold all of her deceased husband's property rights to Boaz, who was a distant family to Naomi's former husband, as part of the transaction to liberate Ruth from her deplorable social status as a foreigner destined to a life of immense struggle and most likely abject poverty. Boaz, as next of kin to Naomi, was willing to marry Ruth to produce offspring by her to preserve the posterity of his brother's name. He consequently bought Naomi out.

Boaz could not simply buy the land without marrying the widow. He could not morally marry Ruth without the intent of siring children with her. We remember what happened to Onan whenever he failed in his duties to continue the lineage of his deceased brother through the command of his father by "spilling his seed" before Tamar in Genesis 38. God severely judged him. It cost him his life to abuse Tamar for personal and lustful pleasures only. Onan never understood the big picture of his role as guardian-redeemer of the family name. He assumed no burden, vision, or responsibility toward the future of his family name. It was a vile display of gross selfishness. He ultimately paid the highest price.

Consequently, there was great moral accountability on Boaz's part regarding his responsibilities towards Ruth. Both the widow and the land were a package of one. The "treasure" (Ruth) and the "field" (property rights) or the overall purpose of the marriage were two-fold. First, to rescue the widow from her perpetual poverty, and second, to secure the posterity of the deceased family's name moving forward. Boaz became the guardian, protector, and provider for Ruth.

In New Covenant realities, we understand the redemptive order and purpose of Christ's earthly ministry. He was our near kinsman according to the flesh (John 1:14). As the son of man whose earthly lineage related all the way back to Adam, He held the legal right to become our guardian-redeemer. As the Son of God, Jesus also qualified as our spiritual redeemer by reconciling us back to God through deliverance from a life of sin and spiritual bondage. In short, Jesus paid it all. Through His incarnation, death, burial, and resurrection, Christ fully redeemed mankind (2 Cor. 5:19).

Eschatological Implications

The kingdom parables of Matthew 13 are prophetic in nature. Jesus was not only unveiling to His disciples the broader future work of the coming kingdom but, more specifically, the ongoing work of redemption through and during the church age. Jesus revealed in Matthew 13:44 that the ongoing work of redemption is intrinsically carried out through the church. Christ as a mediator between God and man, operates through the church. Believers are yoked up together with Christ in the redemptive work, becoming His physical voice, hands, feet, etc., to evangelize the world.

The Hebrew word for redeemer is "Go'el." Ironically we see the emphasis of redeemer placed on the word "Go." As Christ was the willing purchaser of the field, we, as the church, must also continue the earthly mission of Christ by selling out our all to the work of the gospel. Again, we uniquely find the word "go" in the word gospel. We, too, have much spiritual accountability to fulfill our command towards the harvesting of souls. We cannot use the church for our own social benefits and carnal pleasures. The call to the field is more sacred than church membership and more spiritual than church affiliation alone.

Joined with Christ in the spiritual work of harvest, Paul refers to our role as that of a yokefellow and fellowlabourers (Phil. 4:3). His mission and His burden becomes one with us within the spiritual yoke. As Christ did, we, too, must sell all we have and purchase into the redemptive program of the field. The work of the gospel. The work of the harvest.

Matthew 13:38 plainly states that the field is the world. The commission of the church is to go into all the world preaching, teaching, and baptizing. We are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bone. The treasure is in the field, it is not sitting on our neighbor's church pew. Twenty-eight chapters in the book of Acts and twenty-eight times the book records the word "go." An authentic book of Acts experience will always bear the fruit of a book of Acts spiritual works regarding harvest. The church's redemptive work and mission on earth are clear. Go, go, go.

It's as if some churches have signs posted around their church property that reads, "We've got it, you want it, come get it." They have never received the fullest revelation of their role as the caretakers of the vineyards of God toward a future harvest. To remove the "go" from our commission is to virtually send the future harvest into remission. Evangelism and outreach are residual works of laborers in the field. Therefore, we pull out every stop. Go for it all. Sell out all. We purchase into the work and spiritual labor of reaching the lost.

The burden and vision transcend outreach programs of local churches, but rather it is an all-or-nothing commitment towards the harvest or work of the field. Sell out everything that would distract us from the mission of redemption. Jesus was uniquely creative in His earthly mission while seeking to save that which was lost. Likewise, we have a mandate and example set before us.

Be biblically creative in our soul-winning efforts. Jesus commanded that we should pray to the Lord of the harvest that He would send forth laborers into the field. God only works through a church that is on the go. Our posterity depends on it. His name is on the line. Our fulfillment awaits us. The captives held in perpetual bondage are searching for it.

We must buy the field. The field is the world. We are the spiritual purchasers of the work of Christ in the world. The hidden treasure is the lost souls of men. Many want the treasure along with the plethora of spiritual benefits intrinsic to salvation, yet without the involved commitment or work of the field.

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Bill Pitman