

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

What Faith Is Worth
Matthew 13:24-46

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Prepare containers with soil as described in Gathering Time. Use newspapers or a drop cloth to protect the floor and furniture. Have small digging tools (even large spoons will do).

Make arrangements to find the words to the song "**When We See Christ**" by Esther Kerr Rusthoi. Information is given in the Gathering Time instructions.

Bible Study Leader:

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What Faith Is Worth – 06-18-07-en

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Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

How Deep the Father's Love for Us, *The Worship Hymnal* #101; CCLI #1558110

Once Again, *The Worship Hymnal* #241, CCLI #1564362

Grace Alone, *The Worship Hymnal* #112, CCLI #2335524

When We See Christ, Volume Three of *Favorites*, #71, a publication of Singspiration, Inc, published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is Hymn #129 in *Hymns for the Family of God*, 1976, Paragon Associations. Words are available from CCLI.

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***What Faith Is Worth*****Focal Text**

Matthew 13:24-46

Background Text

Matthew 13:1-52

Main Idea

In spite of all appearances, the ultimate victory of Jesus' way is certain, making commitment to Him worth all one has.

Question to Explore

Why bother serving God?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to identify implications for their lives of ultimate victory of Jesus' way

Gathering together:

You may want to provide containers with several different types of soil. Provide small garden tools for digging the dirt. One may contain very hard soil; another may be rocky on the bottom with a thin layer of good soil; another may contain better soil filled with weeds. A third may contain good soil. Provide newspapers under the containers so that the children (or youth and adults) can dig in the soil and comment on the soil.

First thoughts:**It Will Be Worth It All**

The sermon given by the pastor was preceded by a beautiful musical solo. As this talented woman, singing from the heart, sang, the congregation was drawn into the spirit of the morning worship. She sang **When We See Christ**. As she reached the third verse of the song, she was singing with tears in her eyes, and wiping them with a handkerchief which she wrung with both hands. The line "It will be worth it all when we

see Jesus” was sung in the refrain and was the testimony of this woman. Today’s study will focus on faith and the challenges to faith that we will face in living out our lives.

It would be well to share the words of this song, especially the last verse, with your group. It is found in Volume Three of *Favorites*, #71, a publication of Singspiration, Inc, published by Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. It is Hymn #129 in *Hymns for the Family of God*, 1976, Paragon Associations. Words are available from CCLI.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won’t need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

What Faith Is Worth

Focal Text

Matthew 13:24-46

Background Text

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Introduction to your personal study:

My granddad was an avid fisherman. It was a special treat to be asked to go along fishing. As a little kid, I was always getting in trouble for talking too much and throwing rocks into the water. “Hush now, your voice carries around the lake”, he would say to me. In today’s lesson we witness the Creator of water using the setting of a lake from which to teach powerful lessons regarding the kingdom of heaven.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study**”, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

Another special note to the leader of this coming Bible Study: This passage contains lessons from eight parables. Please do not feel that you must cover all eight parables in this session. That goal may be reasonable or it may be far too much for your church. These sessions are only guides to help you study God's Word. Feel free to divide the session into two, or simply omit the teaching of one or more of the parables. You do not have to teach everything just because it is included in a session! You are the leader and your home church is probably quite flexible in its schedule. Allow God's Spirit to guide you in what and how you will deal with a theme and a particular session. If you choose to make two sessions from this, it will need to be coordinated with those leading the Gathering Time and the Worship Time as those parts of your worship experience will also need to be adjusted.

This study is part of the third major discourse in the book of Matthew. The section, Matthew 13:1-53, may be called the Parables of the Kingdom. It is the only major teaching found in the book of Matthew that is addressed specifically to the crowds that followed Jesus - Matthew 13:1-3. Jesus initially sat down by the lake to teach. However, because of the size of the crowds, Jesus climbed into a boat and spoke to the people who remained on shore. Likely the lake water served as a natural amplifier enhancing the sound of His message above the sounds of the multitude.

Jesus employed the common teaching method that relied on parables when addressing the crowds. The word parable comes from two Greek words which together mean "to throw alongside." Parables are word pictures in which the speaker compares a known truth with an unknown truth. Many are stories taken out of ordinary life and used to illustrate a spiritual truth. They may be as brief as a proverbial saying or an analogy. There are eight separate parables in this thirteenth chapter of Matthew alone. Jesus' reasons for using parables are explained more fully below in verses 10-17.

Parables are best understood when the reader identifies the one main principle or point. Jesus' parables illustrated specific principles in memorable ways. They allowed Him to preach to both His followers and those hardened to His message in a way that enlightened the former and challenged the latter.

In a later Unit of 13 studies in the Gospel of Luke, you will study a whole series of parables taught by Jesus in much more depth—focusing on only one or two at a time.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Parable of the Sower (13:3-9)

13:3-9 Jesus' first kingdom parable is perhaps the best known, that of the farmer sowing seeds into various types of soils. This parable teaches that those whose hearts are open to the truth of God will receive it most fully and yield the most fruitful ministries.

Jesus' Reason for Teaching in Parables (13:10-17)

13:10-17 The disciples apparently approached Jesus in private to discover why His teaching to the crowds was so different than when he was with them alone (Matthew 13:10). At least one of the functions of parables is that they present the truth in a veiled way. The truth Jesus is exploring is that the Kingdom of God, particularly as prophesized by Daniel, has now come to the world and is in fact working in their very midst. See Daniel Chapters 8-12. God is disclosing to all what was previously unknown, however only those who have faith really understand (Mark 4:11-12). Obedient to God and His timing, Jesus' use of parables effectively concealed the truth from persistent unbelievers and prevented His enemies from comprehending the full significance of the His words (Matthew 13:13-15, Isaiah 6:9-10). God orchestrated even the events of Jesus accusation and arrest so that they did not happen before His time.

Jesus further emphasizes the significance of the message which He has entrusted to the disciples (Matthew 13:12, 16-17). The essential elements in the revelation of God were actually taking place in the person and work of Jesus with whom the disciples lived and worked daily. Jesus promises that, those who are receptive will be given even more understanding (Mark 9:24).

In keeping with His desire to share the message with the multitudes while protecting it from chronic unbelievers, Jesus spoke most often to the crowds in parables. By doing so He was able to present the truths that the Kingdom was at hand, which effectively challenged the hearts of the hearers. Their various responses to these truths revealed either their openness to Christ or their hardness of heart.

A further reason for Jesus' use of parables is that it was a common teaching method for the rabbis.

Parable of the Sower Explained (13:18-23)

13:18-23 Jesus explanation in fact addresses the various responses to His message. His hearers may be those who don't understand, like seed sown along the path, the evil one will snatch it away before it takes root (Matthew 13:19). Others may receive it with joy but have no root. They will fall away when trouble or persecution comes (Matthew 13:20-21). Still others may be choked by the worries of this life and deceitfulness of wealth so they are unfruitful (Matthew 13:22). However, there will be those like the disciples themselves who hear and understand and produce a bountiful harvest (Matthew 13:23). God's Kingdom will prevail, in spite of hard hearts, competing pressures and even crop failure.

Parable of Weeds (13:24-30)

13:24-30 Jesus' second parable to the crowds discusses the need for His believers to live with the world until the time of judgment. Here He compares the kingdom of heaven to a field in which the farmer sows good seed (Matthew 13:24). The cunning, malicious enemy takes advantage of the opportunity to sabotage the field by sowing weeds

among the wheat (Matthew 13:25). Some weeds, such as darnel look like wheat until it heads out. The image is that some may play at Christianity until the time comes to bear fruit, then the truth will be apparent (Matthew 7:16-20).

The owner of the field knew instantly that an enemy had planted the weeds (Matthew 13:28). In order to protect the wheat from damage, he tells the servants to wait until the harvest to pull up the weeds. Matthew uses the harvest as an image for the final judgement (Matthew 9:37-38).

Parables of the Mustard Seed and the Yeast (13:31-35)

13:31-33 Jesus uses these two parables to show that in His hands, what appears very small in the beginning can result in enormous growth if yielded to God. The Jews of Jesus day had not been praying for nor anticipating small and insignificant beginnings for the Kingdom of God. Yet this was precisely the Kingdom that was ushered in to the world in a humble stable. As prophesied by Ezekiel, God can and will bring down the lofty and exalt the lowly (Ezekiel 17:22-24).

While the Parable of the Mustard Seed depicts extensive growth, the Parable of the Yeast speaks to intensive transformation within (Matthew 13:33). Committed believers can no longer be conformed to the world but we need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we can discern God's will (Romans 12:2).

13:34-35 Again we are reminded that Jesus used parables extensively in His public ministry. Here Matthew quotes Psalm 78:2. Although Jesus is teaching about things hidden since the creation of the world, they are only understood by those whose hearts are open, who have **“ears to hear.”** Matthew 13:16. The kingdom parables recorded by Matthew bring together various pieces of prophecy into a new perspective through the lens of the person and ministry of Jesus Himself.

Parable of Weeds Explained (13:36-43)

13:36-43 Again we are a bit relieved to note that even those who walked and talked with Jesus daily sometimes required a further explanation. The disciples are not characterized by instant understanding but by their persistent desire to know Jesus and His teaching more fully (Matthew 13:36). Significantly, Jesus taught that the One who sowed good seed is the Son of Man (Matthew 13:37). He is both the One who sows and who directs the harvest. Moreover, the field is the world, which would include both Jews and Gentiles (Matthew 13:38). Although the weeds are now preserved, they will be pulled up and destroyed at the end of the age (Matthew 13:40). Note that the Son of Man will send out His angels and direct the harvest (Matthew 13:41). In contrast with the destruction of the wicked, the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Matthew 13:43). Jesus is also warning that until the end of time His true children will live and work among those who are of the evil one. Further the enemy will employ all the powers of evil to resist the kingdom, yet in the end the Kingdom will prevail.

Parables of the Hidden Treasure and the Pearl (13:44-46)

13:44-46 This pair of parables teaches the incalculable worth of the kingdom. Jesus teaches that this kingdom is already present and available to those who are willing to commit to Him. The kingdom of heaven is worth infinitely more than the cost of discipleship. The one who knows the Source of the treasure joyfully abandons everything else to gain it (Matthew 13:44). In each of these parables, Jesus shows that the kingdom of God is the only lasting reality so incalculably precious that one who discovers it immediately and joyfully makes any necessary sacrifice to obtain it, even the loss of possessions, friends or life itself (Matthew 13:46).

Parable of the Net (13:47-50)

13:47-48 This parable is very similar in theme and structure to that of the weeds (Matthew 13:24-30). However the parable of the weeds emphasized the long growing period prior to the harvest in which the righteous and the evil co-exist. This parable focuses on the end of the age when all kinds of fish will be caught in the net, then the good kept and the bad thrown away (Matthew 13:47-50).

Responsibility of the teacher (13: 51-52)

13:51-52 Assured by the disciples that they at last understood His teaching, Jesus admonished them that every teacher of the law who had been instructed about the Kingdom of Heaven must bring out of their storerooms the treasures they now embrace so as to teach others (See 2 Timothy 2:22).

Prophet Without Honour (13:53-58)

13:53-58 The chapter ends with Jesus moving on to His hometown where He faced much criticism and disbelief on the part of the townspeople (Matthew 13:54-57). Perhaps some were genuinely seeking to understand how their hometown carpenter gained the authority to do the miracles they had heard about. However they couldn't overcome their lack of faith and in the end took offence at Him (Matthew 13:57). Because of their faithlessness, He did not do many miracles there (Matthew 13:58).

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

The kingdom of heaven came into this world with the ministry of Jesus. Through His parable we learn that it is worth everything we have give to obtain its treasure. Yet the enemy is eager to divert the harvest and to dilute the message. We must be diligent to guard our hearts and to cultivate the soil in which the truth will be planted.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

What Faith Is Worth

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Matthew 13:24-46

Background Text

Matthew 13:1-52

Main Idea

In spite of all appearances, the ultimate victory of Jesus' way is certain, making commitment to Him worth all one has.

Question to Explore

Why bother serving God?

Teaching Aim

To lead participants to identify implications for their lives of ultimate victory of Jesus' way

Connect with Life:

Say: The two oldest daughters of the writer of this Bible study became Junior Master Gardeners last summer after completing a six week course learning the basics about gardening. Each of them had "helped" in the garden for several years but through this course they gained valuable knowledge about planting, cultivation and especially about soils and the importance of soil testing. Even the best seed won't produce well in poor soil.

Say: As we study Jesus' parables in this lesson think about the garden of our hearts. What can we do to make it more responsive to the truth of God's Word?

Guide the Study:

Set the context of this lesson in the third major teaching section in the Book of Matthew.

Say: Today we will study the Kingdom Parables that Jesus taught in Matthew 13. This is the only major teaching in Matthew that Jesus addressed primarily to the crowds that followed Him.

Share what is meant by a parable and suggest reliable principles for interpreting parables from the information found in the Bible Teaching Guide.

Discuss Jesus' reasons for using parables especially when He addressed the crowds in Matthew 13:10-17.

Explore the importance of concealing the truth from persistent unbelievers while presenting it to those with open hearts.

Say: Jesus promised that those who are receptive will be given even more understanding. We are truly blessed in our society to have an abundance of Bible Study helps, as well as, various versions of the Bible itself to study.

Ask: How does this availability of scripture impact our responsibility to study today?

Have someone read Matthew 13:3-9.

Suggest that another volunteer read Matthew 13:18-23.

Discuss the various types of soils. Have the participants ask themselves, "What soil type am I?"

Look to your group for examples of ways to increase the fertility of soil. Apply the answers to spiritual life. Note that the soil that only produces a small crop is also called "good".

Read and discuss Matthew 13:25-30 and Jesus' explanation in Matthew 13:36-43.

Explore what is meant by "while they were sleeping."

Describe the enemy from this verse and 1 Peter 5:8. Emphasize the importance of being on our guard against distractions from our God-given purposes.

Note the importance of asking questions and seeking further explanation. Matthew 13:36.

Say: Even the disciples required a further discussion. Discuss the fact that the judgment of sinners apparently involves physical agony. Note that the job of separating belongs to God; the workers are not to make judgments.

Ask someone to read Matthew 13:31-33.

Note that the seed depicts extensive growth and the yeast points to intensive transformation.

Have someone read Romans 12:2.

Discuss the call to no longer be conformed to the world but to be transformed.

Ask: How do we apply this verse in our community?

Read Matthew 13:34-35.

Explain: Jesus is quoting Psalm 78:2. The kingdom parables bring together various pieces of prophecy into a new perspective through the lens of the person and ministry of Jesus Himself.

Ask someone to read Matthew 13:44-46.

Note that in both parables the one who discovered the treasure and the pearl was looking for something. Emphasize the joy experienced by the one who finds such treasure.

Share or have someone share the joy that comes with a commitment to Jesus as Lord. Note that in these parables each went out and sold all he had in order to obtain the treasure.

Ask: How does this apply to our lives?

Have someone read Matthew 13:37-50.

Note the similarity with the parable of the weeds. Matthew 13:24-30.

Read or have someone else read Matthew 13:51-52.

Now have someone read 2 Timothy 2:22.

Comment: Each of us is to entrust what we have learned to others who will in turn teach others.

Ask each participant to think of at least one person with whom he or she can share what God has taught that person in this lesson.

Urge someone to read Matthew 13:53-58.

Note the failure of those who knew Jesus best to accept Him. Discuss the difficulty in overcoming our preconceived beliefs about a person.

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Share: The kingdom of heaven is worth all we have to gain it. Jesus wants us to experience the joy of extensive spiritual growth as we become more and more like Him.

Pray, asking God to forgive any preconceived beliefs that hinder our spiritual growth. Ask Him to open our hearts to the truths from this lesson and to help us identify others with whom we can share those truths.

NOTE: You may want to recommend the excellent children's book of Jesus' parables: *Stories Jesus Told* by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen, 1994, Gold'n Honey Books ISBN 0-88070-633-3.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

What Faith Is Worth **Matthew 13:24-46**

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Some Good Questions

Why is a parable a good way to teach a deeper truth?

Why do you think Jesus used so many parables in his teaching?

Can you see how parables allow for deeper levels of understanding – the upfront truth, the underlying meaning, and the even deeper meaning?

Unlike any other kind of book, Biblical truth continues to reveal itself to us as we read it over and over.

Think about today's lesson:

How did you understand it as a child?

Do you see a deeper meaning now that you are older?

Think of a current movie or book that has a story line, but has a deeper, underlying meaning as well. Do you enjoy trying to figure out what the deeper meaning is?

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***What Faith Is Worth***
Matthew 13:24-46**Beginning the Service:**

Choose from the songs suggested: **How Deep the Father's Love for Us, Once Again**, and **Grace Alone**

Offering:**Praying for the World:**

A couple had mobilized groups from their church to take mission trips. On one of the trips which they were a part of, they served in India. It was miserable and hot, but they saw a spiritual void which people were filling with idols. On the way home, the wife said, "I could never serve in India" However, by the end of the trip home, she was in tears. She said that she realized that she trusted God to care for her children in a safe place like her home, but she did not trust him enough to care for them in India. "We're just paying lip service" she said. "If not us, who? If not now, when?" (See *Missions Mosaic*, December, 2005, p. 17).

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

What Faith is Worth**Introduction:**

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***What Faith Is Worth* – 06-18-07-en**

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The thirteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew is composed of seven parables, or stories to make a vivid point. Six of these parables speak of the worth of Faith. Verse 18 picks up on the first parable.

But faith does not come into focus immediately. So we look elsewhere in scripture for words that define faith. Ephesians 1 and 2 speak of seeing all that God has for believers, and “seeing” is another word for faith. Salvation (the kingdom of God) and its appropriation by faith are gifts of God. Hebrews 11:1-3 gives the best definition of faith in the New Testament. In both passages faith is a way of seeing, a way of hearing. The kingdom of God is seen only by faith; the words of Jesus are heard, only by faith. When we speak about what faith is worth, and reflect on our text about what the kingdom of God is, we are talking about that very topic.

So, faith is of great worth because it is a way of seeing the kingdom of God, of hearing the words of Jesus.

These stories were told to make the kingdom of heaven understandable to disciples, i.e. to portray the Christian life in such a way that there could be no doubt about the nature of the Christian life.

1. Sowing seed and harvesting the produce (13:3-9, 14-30).

- A. A farmer went out to sow his seed (vv. 3-9). The seed fell upon four types of soil: a hard path, rocky ground, thorns, and good soil. This parable is not about the seed, nor about the sower: it is all about the soils upon which the seeds fall. It is about hearing the message of the kingdom of God. We can find ourselves and our acquaintances and family members somewhere in these four types of soil. Do we dare to make the effort to determine which type of soil we are?
1. The soil identified as the pathway illustrates the person whose sensitivity to the message of the kingdom is completely lacking and therefore the message of the kingdom does not make its way into life.
 2. Jesus quickly moves on to the soil said to be rocky. This term is descriptive of soil that is hard just below the surface of soil. This word describes the situation where there is thin topsoil, but just below the surface is rock, which the seed's roots cannot penetrate.
 3. The third type of soil is the soil in which the seed can germinate, and grow, but which also contains the seeds of destruction of the life of faith: the soil in which weeds are also present and capable of forcing the good plants from making it to harvest time. In his explanation of this type of soil, Jesus pictures the life which receives the message of the kingdom, germinates, and grows. But, the thorns also are there with the power to crowd out the good plants. The worries of life and the deceitfulness of

wealth choke out the good plants. How often does this occur in churches? Young people who have invested their teen years to church and bible study, missions and service, often find the world outside home is full of thorns, and saps the spiritual energy.

4. The last type of soil is the good soil - soil in which the seed can germinate and be productive of fruit.

Faith, real faith, is worth all it costs to encourage the reception of the message of the kingdom and to see to it that the message receives all the nourishing and care that enables that message to be productive. Jesus pictures the life that truly “sees” the kingdom and makes the effort to be productive.

B. An additional parable is given that speaks of planting seeds. The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good (clean) seed in his field, but an enemy came in at night and sowed weeds (13:24-30).

1. Nothing is said about the soil into which the seed was planted in this parable: it is all about sowing both good seed and bad seed.
2. Jesus later explains this parable to his disciples, and the sower, the seed, and the weeds are parts of the daily life of the believer.
3. The point of this parable is that the kingdom of God and the kingdom of evil exist in human culture, and the children of the kingdom must exist in a bad world until taken from it, or until the end of time.

2. Parables on the Kingdom of God

These two parables are given to the crowd and explanations are given the disciples: the parable of the mustard seed and the parable of the yeast in a batch of dough. Believers can learn much about the kingdom of Heaven from these parables also.

3. What is faith worth?

Can a price tag be put on faith? Without speaking the word “faith” Jesus puts a tag on faith which speaks about its worth. It costs to enter the kingdom of Heaven, and faith is the cost. It is a great cost, involving openness to the word of God and perseverance in the word of God. In three additional parables this great worth is spelled out even more clearly.

- A. We read the parable of the treasure hidden in the field and the great price a person gave in order to own that piece of ground (v.44). To “have” the kingdom, to “see” the kingdom (John 3:1-3), and to “enter” the kingdom calls for faith—and this faith is not cheap grace.

- B. A pearl merchant was willing to sell all he had in order to own “the pearl of great value.” The teaching is obvious: the kingdom of God is obtained at great cost.
- C. Another truth is taught in the parable of the net thrown into the sea to catch fish. The problem with net fishing is that you catch all sorts of fish in the net, and you can’t be selective with a net like you can with a single fishhook.

Call to Commitment:

What is faith worth? Jesus seems to be saying in this passage of scripture that faith is worth it all: culture that would harden the heart, the pleasures of life that would choke out the word of God, the hardness of life that prevents the word from taking root, giving up everything in order to be in the Kingdom of Heaven. “It will be worth it all, when we see Jesus.” The greater truth is that it is worth it all, here and now, because we have the promise of his presence today and tomorrow and to the time of his return.

Concluding the Service:

If you used the words to **When We See Christ** as an introduction to today’s study, read or sing them again to conclude the worship time.