

ARGUING WITH JESUS
WEEK 4: HAPPINESS IS HARD TO FIND

“All men seek happiness. This is without exception. Whatever different means they employ, they all tend to this end. The cause of some going to war, and of others avoiding it, is the same desire in both, attended with different views. The will never takes the least step but to this object. This is the motive of every action of every man, even of those who hang themselves.” (Blaise Pascal)

Matthew 13.44-46: "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. ⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, ⁴⁶ who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

Context of the passage: Most of what we have looked at to this point has been Jesus arguing with His opponents, mainly the religious leaders. But now, he's arguing with His disciples a bit. In chapter 12, the religious authorities, rather than throwing their support behind Jesus and seeing the rallying of the people to the Messiah, align Him with Satan and His work with that of demons. Now when Jesus' disciples look around, what do you think they see? What would their experience and expectation of a Kingdom be like? What do you think is worrying them?

Jesus tells 2 short parables here. Write out what is similar and different about them.

Similarities

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Differences

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

I. REAL TREASURE IS HIDDEN IN PLAIN SIGHT

What are the things or obsessions that we have in our culture that indicate that a person is successful, valuable, has made it, etc?

Fame: “I pity [celebrities]. No, I do. [Celebrities] were once perfectly pleasant human beings . . . but now ... their wrath is awful.... More than any of us, they wanted fame. They worked, they pushed.... The morning after . . . each of them became famous, they wanted to take an overdose . . . because that giant thing they were striving for, that fame thing that was going to make everything okay, that was going to make their lives bearable, that was going to provide them with personal fulfillment and . . . happiness, had happened. And nothing changed. They were still them. The disillusionment turned them howling and insufferable.” Then the last line... *“I think when God wants to play a really rotten practical joke on you, he grants your deepest wish.”*

“The sense that in this universe we are treated as strangers, the longing to be acknowledged, to meet with some response, to bridge some chasm that yawns between us and reality, is part of our inconsolable secret. And surely, from this point of view, the promise of glory, in the sense described, becomes highly relevant to our deep desire. For glory meant good report with god, acceptance by God, response, acknowledgment, and welcome into the heart of things. The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last. . . . Apparently, then, our lifelong nostalgia, our longing to be reunited with something in the universe from which we now feel cut off, to be on the inside of some door which we have always seen from the outside, is no mere

neurotic fancy, but the truest index of our real situation. And to be at last summoned inside would be both glory and honor beyond all our merits and also the healing of that old ache” (C.S. Lewis)

Avett Brothers, *Incomplete and Insecure*:

I haven't finished a thing since I started my life, I don't feel much like starting now.
Walking now lonely has worked like a charm I'm the only one I have to let down.
But watching you makes me think that that is wrong.
I can go on with my insecure nature I can keep living off sympathy.
I can tell all the people that all that sucks has a direct reflection on me.

What is important, what's really important?
Am I not to know by my name?
Will I ever know silence, without mental violence
Will the ringing at night go away?

Where do you think real treasure is found? Are you looking to the externals, to the things valued by kingdoms we know here or are you looking for the Kingdom of God to come in the plain and ordinary? Who are you making friends with? What are your goals and priorities in life? Do they line up with Jesus?

II. REAL TREASURE WILL TOTALLY REORIENT YOUR LIFE

Can you imagine being this guy's neighbor as you watch him liquidate everything he has to buy this seemingly worthless field? What would you have thought and said? Here's the deal, once he saw the treasure's real value, everything else changed priorities, everything else became less important. It was total reorientation—changed everything. The few dollars he had scraped together were once so precious; his little home was his jewel; his meager possessions were guarded with his life, but now he sees something that surpasses all of that combined and what does he do? He sells all the good things to get the best thing.

He that is spiritually enlightened truly apprehends and sees it, or has a sense of it. He doesn't merely rationally believe that God is glorious, but he has a sense of the gloriousness of God in his heart. There is not only a rational belief that God is holy, and that holiness is a good thing; but there is a sense of the loveliness of God's holiness....There is a difference between having a rational judgment that honey is sweet, and having a sense of its sweetness. A man may have the former, that knows not how honey tastes; but a man can't have the latter, unless he has an idea of the taste of honey in his mind. (Jonathan Edwards)

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he can never lose.” (Jim Eliot)

III. REAL TREASURE IS A PERSON

How do you get this experience? How do you see it? How do you find it? Look at the second parable that we've ignored. What were the differences initially?

“The door on which we have been knocking all our lives will open at last.” (C.S. Lewis)