

SERMON FOR JULY 26, 2020

TEXT: MATTHEW 13:44

THEME: A PRECIOUS TREASURE

**44** “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.

In the name of Jesus:

A jewelry store in Washington Township, Michigan, has created a buzz in designing a modern day treasure hunt. Johnny and Amy Perri have retired as owners of J and M Jewelers after being in business for over 23 years. The store had to close due to the recent Pandemic. In closing their store, the owners decided to give away the rest of their inventory. To do so, they have buried about \$1million in jewelry to create a statewide treasure hunt in the state of Michigan. Some of the buried treasure includes vintage engagement rings, gold, silver, precious coins and other family heirlooms. These treasures have been buried from Detroit in Southeastern Michigan all the way up to the Upper Peninsula. Each treasure has a GPS tracker attached to it, so that the owners can tell when they are located and found.

The Perris are selling tickets for \$49 each for treasure hunters to participate in the hunt, which has been named Johnny’s Adventure Quest.

Those who participate in the hunt will receive clues as to where the buried treasures are located, each marked with an X, because, as you know, X marks the spot. Now, what will those who find these treasures do? Many will keep what they find. Others might end up selling the item back to the Perris for a predetermined price.

Much of what has been buried has been passed down from Johnny Perris' late father. When someone asked Johnny what his father would have thought of this, Johnny remarked: ""He would think I'm nuts. But he'd be all for it. He was a big giver."

So, beginning August 1, in the state of Michigan, hundreds of people will be participating in a statewide treasure hunt. And I would suspect many more may be on the lookout for the buried treasure, even without paying the entry fee of \$49, because, as they say, finders keepers.

Jesus in our text for today speaks about a hidden treasure. Listen to what He says: **44** "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." Now what is the hidden treasure that Jesus speaks about? The hidden treasure is you!

Just listen to what Moses writes in the Old Testament lesson for today: ““For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession”. Moses spoke these words to the Jews reminding them that God had chosen them to be His people. The nation of Israel was not chosen by God because they were a people of great number, they weren’t, they were a small nation. Nor were the people of God chosen because they had any quality that would make them special in God’s sight. They were chosen to be God’s people by grace, sheer grace, without any merit or worthiness in them.

So too you have been chosen by grace. For as the Bible says, by grace you have been saved through faith in Christ, it is not of works so that not any one of us can boast about it. God has chosen you to be His child. He didn’t choose you because of your looks, your income, your ability, or your potential. Your standing with God isn’t rooted in anything you could, did, or will do. You have been chosen by God by a free gift of His love. He chose you by grace. And you are the hidden treasure that Jesus talks about in our Gospel lesson and text for today.

Jesus came down from heaven at great cost to Himself. He paid a great price to make you His own so that you would belong to Him. From our birth,

we have belonged to Satan, each of us have been conceived in sin, we are by nature enemies of God. Jesus came down from heaven, for as the Bible says “ for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.. Jesus was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. “ (Hebrews 12: 2; Phil. 2: 6-8). Jesus paid a great price to make you His own, purchasing you not with silver or gold but with His holy precious blood and innocent suffering and death, all so that you would be a part of His kingdom.

And you are! For Jesus has called you by name in your Baptism. You belong to Him! He set aside His glory for a time to make certain that you would be with Him now and in glory forever. Now you are God’s prized possession. A holy people! Called by God by name to be His people. Just listen to the Apostle Peter when he says: “**9** But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his

marvelous light. **10** Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

You belong to Jesus! And unlike modern day treasure hunters, who may misplace their new found treasure, store it away and forget about it, or go out and sell it to spend it on themselves, God assures you that you belong to Him and nothing will separate you from Him for you are His beloved treasure. And He is at work in your life, to bless you and keep you in His care. It is just like the Apostle Paul says in our Epistle lesson for today: **28** And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. So if God is for us, who can be against us? **32** He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? What love God has for you! You are His prized possession, you are precious in His sight! The Lord God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession. In a world and a culture that is literally changing before our very eyes, and we wonder and worry about what the future holds, God assures you that He is there for you.. The Lord your God is faithful and keeps His promises. He has chosen you in Christ to be a people for His treasured possession. You belong to Him both, now and forever.

And so we can say and live with confidence: For **35** Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? **37** No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. **38** For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, **39** nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Amen