

What Did Jesus Purchase?

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, Proper 12[a]

July 30, 2017

MATTHEW 13:44-52

⁴⁴ [Jesus said,] **“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. ⁴⁷ Again, the kingdom of Heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. ⁴⁸ When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹ Have you understood all these things?”** They said to him, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of Heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

The Son of God has come to Earth and purchased for himself a field.

On the face of it, looking at the field, it doesn't seem like a particularly good purchase. But he has purchased a field not with gold or silver, but with his holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death.

The word “field” is metaphor. He has purchased, in reality, the whole Earth, lock-stock, and barrel—nothing left out.

“Behold,” John the Baptist had said of him, *“the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”* [John 1:29] “The sin of the world,” the prophet says. The world is everything—what sin or what sinner is left out of that? Jesus has purchased it all.

Because, there is something in this field, something in this world, that he considers to be a treasure, like a pearl of priceless value. Matthew 13:44:

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You and I are in that field, we live in that world that belongs to the promise John spoke: *“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”*

God the Son, the Lamb of God, shed his holy, precious blood, and with his innocent suffering and death, he purchased you and me and the whole world.

Now, “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, out of all the peoples on the face of the Earth.” [Deuteronomy 7:6]

And this is pure grace—not by any reason or strength by which we chose him, but it is by the gracious calling and choosing of the Lord, who gathers us into his holy people.

And we look at that word “holy” which our Lord applies to us. You are a people holy to the Lord. Holy not by your reason or strength, not by who you make yourself to be, but holy by the Holy Spirit making you holy, holy by all your sin and unholiness being forgiven, holy by the blood of Jesus.

You are to him a holy people, a treasure hidden in the field he purchased, a priceless pearl for which he sold all and paid the price of his own blood.

But he did buy the whole field. The whole world. He paid the redemption price for it all with his own blood. And this field is a bit of a mess.

It’s like a man buying a property, wanting the treasure buried in it, but with it he gets everything in it.

He gets the trash heaped up in one corner of the field, the stagnant pond, the pile of tires, the rotted shed, the rusting cars left in the gully, the rotting trees—he gets it all, the good, the bad, and the ugly. When the Son of God purchased the world with his own blood, he got everything.

Which determines the life of the Church—it determines our lives. We are those purchased not with gold or silver, but the holy, precious blood and with his innocent suffering and death. We are to him a treasure hidden in the field.

So our lives are lived right in the middle of the good, the bad, and the ugly. We are holy and precious, according to the blood, but we live in a world which has as its prince the devil.

We are holy to the Lord by the cleansing bestowed in Baptism, but we find ourselves drawn into the worst unholiness in our daily lives. We are sanctified by his blood and brought into the communion of his holy people, but our life of faith, our life of the cleansed heart, is hidden—hidden as a treasure in the field. It is hidden in the uncleanness and messiness of our own sinful flesh.

We are, by our Lord's oath and promise a holy people to him, a people for his own treasured possession, but this holiness and treasure, this heart of faith, is hidden always under the covering of our sinful flesh.

But it is there! Jesus did not purchase a pig in a poke. He purchased sinners, he purchased you and me, but he cleansed us with his own blood, holding onto us, then, as priceless pearls, even though these pearls hidden in the sin of this world and of our own sinful flesh.

So we are, by his oath and promise, a people holy to him. And as he gives us to live our holy lives of faith while still hidden in this sinful world and in our own sinful flesh, he gives us to live as his chosen people, bearing his holy Name.

Which means, when he says in the commandments, *You shall not murder*, in our life of faith we know that he is giving us not only to not murder another person, but to fear and love him, Jesus, so that we do not harm our neighbor in his body, but we help our neighbor and support him in every physical need.

When Jesus tells us, *You shall not steal*, he gives us to look at our neighbor's money and possessions, his wealth, his business and property, house and home, and know that we are given to help him improve and protect all his possessions and income.

When Jesus tells us, *Do not give false testimony against your neighbor*, in our life of faith we may hear our Lord giving us not to tell lies about our neighbor, not to talk behind his back or slander him, never to speak in a way to harm his reputation, but to speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

As those purchased by Jesus and named by him as a treasured possession he has hidden in the messy field of this world, in this world of death and violence of person against person, we are given to treat our neighbor as one who has been given life by the God of all life, and are given to protect and uphold our neighbor's life and name with all thankfulness to the God who has created every person.

In this world of thievery and fraud, where possessions are transferred from owner to thief by robbery, fraud, and oppressive confiscation, we are given to rejoice in the wealth, property, and possessions the Lord of life gives to our neighbor, and to not covet them, but to help him keep all which belongs to him.

In this messy world where people are slandered and names are torn down, we are given to uphold people's reputations, to honor their names, and to speak to them in encouragement and support, rejoicing in all the gifts the Lord gives to them.

We are given to go about our vocations serving our neighbor and rejoicing in the vocations our neighbor is given in service to us.

We set out to do this, we go about this in a field that is messy and often ugly, and filled with sin.

But we do it as those who are a treasured possession to the Lord, having been purchased and cleansed by his blood. We do it as those who are holy to the Lord, and who are continually forgiven of all sin and daily made holy by his Word and promise.

We do it as those who live in sinful flesh, but who know that there is in that flesh something which is hidden as treasure hidden in a field. There is in that sinful flesh, the beating heart of faith, a heart created in us by the Holy Spirit and the Word of Gospel, a heart unseen to the world (for the world can see only the flesh), but though hidden to the world, it is a heart daily repenting of sin, daily cleansed by the Lord to be his precious pearl, daily, then, being raised up to live before God in righteousness and

purity forever.

A righteousness and purity unseen by the eye, but held onto tightly by faith, as a man holding onto treasure.

And from this heart of faith, we confess not only our sin, but even more so our Lord, who has redeemed us from sin, purchasing us not with gold or silver, but with his own precious blood, and from this heart of faith, we intercede to our Lord for our neighbor.

For this Lord with his blood purchased our neighbor, too.

He bought the whole field. And he desires our neighbor, too, to hear of his redeeming death, to be cleansed by his blood, to be gathered into his holy people, and to know of the Lord of life who not only created all life, but who redeemed every person—for he is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and he desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of his Name. [1 Timothy 2:4]

IN THE NAME OF JESUS.