



## Matthew 13:44-52

**44** Jesus said to the crowds, 'The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field which someone has found; he hides it again, goes off happy, sells everything he owns and buys the field.

**45** 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls; **46** when he finds one of great value he goes and sells everything he owns and buys it.

**47** 'Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet cast into the sea that brings in a haul of all kinds. **48** When it is full, the fishermen haul it ashore; then, sitting down, they collect the good ones in a basket and throw away those that are no use. **49** This is how it will be at the end of time: the angels will appear and separate the wicked from the just, **50** to throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.

**51** 'Have you understood all this?' They said, 'Yes.' **52** And he said to them, 'Well then, every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom things both new and old.'

Other readings: 1 Kings 3:5,7-12 Psalm 118 (119) Romans 8:28-30

The Liturgy of the Word this Sunday celebrates the treasure we receive in the teaching which comes from God. Our gospel reading, from the chapter in which Matthew has collected many parables of Jesus, offers us three separate parables. Two of these, the treasure hidden in the field and the pearl of great price, provide rich images of the teaching of Jesus and what a great gift it is. The first reading, from the first Book of Kings, considers how king Solomon received the gift of a discerning heart from God. Jesus teaches with a wisdom which fulfils and surpasses the wisdom of Solomon.

The final parable, the dragnet cast into the sea, has similarities to the parable of the dandelion in the field which we heard last Sunday. The harvest from the sea contains both good and bad and these will only be separated at the judgement. Once again Matthew reminds us of the 'blazing furnace', symbolising the place where God can no longer be found. The anguish of the loss of God is expressed by the image of fire and in the phrase, 'there will be weeping and grinding of teeth'.

The parable discourse of Jesus comes to an end with the question 'Have you understood?' The wise disciple of the kingdom of heaven treasures both what is newly discovered and what is old.

*Do I consider the gospel preached by Jesus to be a unique treasure?*

*Do I seek wisdom and understanding as God's greatest gifts?*

*We pray for the wisdom truly to embrace and live the gospel of Jesus.*

*We pray for balance in dealing with what is new and what is old.*