

During our last devotional session we discussed the meaning and the essence of life. I mentioned that the true goal in life was to obtain the heavenly treasure, God's gift of salvation to anyone who sincerely seek after it.

The Bible illustrated how <sup>44</sup>“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.” (*Matthew 13:45-46 ESV*) The Bible then reaffirms this statement in the next two verses, <sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, <sup>46</sup>who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and **sold all that he had** and bought it.” (*Matthew 13:45-46 ESV*). These images portray to us the value of the kingdom of heaven and how we should give up all that we have to obtain it. I think this is summarized simply and beautifully by Jim Elliot's famous words, “**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.**”<sup>1</sup>

For this devotional, I want to expand on this idea. I want to first briefly explain how to get this treasure, and why we need to receive it in this manner. Please do not hesitate to interrupt me if you have any questions because this is an extremely important lesson, and if the Lord leads you, this could be the most important and joyous decision of your life.

To help bring things into context, I need to establish that we are all sinners and fall short of the perfect glory of God. The dictionary defines a **sinner** as someone that sins or does wrong; a transgressor; someone that goes beyond the limits imposed by a law, command, etc.; a violator; infringer.<sup>2</sup>

Because we are sinners<sup>3</sup> we fall short - far, far short of the perfect requirement of God, therefore we have no hope or even the slightest chance of earning our way into the eternity of joy and peace in heaven in the presence of the Lord, our God. God is a perfect, holy God, so he can only accept that which is perfect. The definition of **holy** is a having a spiritually pure quality, to be set apart and perfect. God states numerous times in the Bible, “...**You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.**” (*Leviticus 19:2b; 1 Peter 1:16b ESV*). Jesus, the son of God, tells us <sup>48</sup>“**You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.**” (*Matthew 5:48 ESV*).

I don't know about you, but if I am told that I must meet a requirement of perfect holiness – a holiness where the even loving tears of Mother Teresa are not pure enough to be accepted by God – well I would be pretty worried and a bit upset that such an impossible requirement has been set. Now, before some of you think, “that's not fair” let me also tell you about the good news, the good news of the gospel.

<sup>6</sup>“For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. <sup>7</sup>For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— <sup>8</sup>but <sup>9</sup>God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” (*Romans 5:6-8 ESV*)

<sup>16</sup>“For <sup>h</sup>God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>17</sup>For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him. <sup>18</sup>**Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**” (*John 3:16-18 ESV*)

I think it is important to take note of the verses that follows John 3:16, in particular the later half of verse 18, “**Whoever believes in Him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.**” Very often we hear about the how Jesus died on the cross as a sacrifice for all mankind, once for all, to make us acceptable and holy before God<sup>7</sup>. That is only half the story; what is sometimes overlooked is what happens to those who choose not to believe...they are **condemned already!**

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<sup>1</sup> Jim Elliot's journal (1927 - 1956, 29-yr), a modern martyr, gained international recognition when he died with four others at the hands of Auca Indians. His story and memoirs have become a source of missionary inspiration through the writing and speaking of his wife, Elisabeth.

<sup>2</sup> “Dictionary.com”, Lexico Publishing Group, LLC, [www.dictionary.reference.com](http://www.dictionary.reference.com) (accessed June 5, 2008)

<sup>3</sup> **Sinner:** One that sins or does wrong; a transgressor; **Transgress:** To go beyond the limits imposed by (a law, command, etc.); violate; infringe  
o [Luke 6:36] <sup>36</sup>Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

q [Lev. 19:2] <sup>2</sup>“Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.

[1 Pet. 1:14-16] <sup>14</sup>As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup>but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup>since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.”

l [John 3:16]

h [Romans. 5:8; Eph. 2:4; 2 Thess. 2:16; 1 John 3:1; 4:9, 10]

<sup>7</sup> [Hebrew 10:10]

I do not want to discourage anyone, because God provides those who do believe with a promise, “<sup>24</sup>Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (*Matthew 5:24 ESV*)

Now, all this being said...what is amazing, **and sad**, is that even though this treasure of salvation is available to everyone, many people continue to decline and refuse it. Some are even bold enough to denounce the very existence of God and Jesus Christ.

Before you say, “Well that’s not me,” I want to share a familiar parable<sup>8</sup> (or short allegorical story) from the Bible, often referred to as “The Parable of the Sower”, which will help us understand the types of people who hear about this treasure of salvation, the gospel, and how they respond to it.

### *Matthew 13:1-9*

**The Parable of the Sower**<sup>9</sup> (planter, one who scatters seeds over land, earth)

<sup>1</sup> That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. <sup>2</sup> And great crowds gathered about him, so that he got into a boat and sat down. And the whole crowd stood on the beach. <sup>3</sup> And he told them many things in parables, saying: “A sower went out to sow. <sup>4</sup> And as he sowed, some seeds fell along the path, and the birds came and devoured them. <sup>5</sup> Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil, <sup>6</sup> but when the sun rose they were scorched. And since they had no root, they withered away. <sup>7</sup> Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. <sup>8</sup> Other seeds fell on good soil and produced grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. <sup>9</sup> He who has ears, let him hear.”

Before I continue and explain this parable, I want you all to picture these four different cases:

- 1) Seeds falling on the path and being eaten by birds
- 2) Seeds falling on rocky ground and being scorched by the sun, due to lack of deep roots
- 3) Seeds falling among thorns that are eventually choked away
- 4) Seeds falling on good soil and producing plenty of crop (grain)

### *Matthew 13:18-23*

**The Parable of the Sower Explained**

<sup>18</sup> “Hear then the parable of the sower: <sup>19</sup> When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is what was sown along the path. <sup>20</sup> As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy, <sup>21</sup> yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while, and when tribulation or persecution arises on account of the word, immediately he falls away. <sup>22</sup> As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. <sup>23</sup> As for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it. He indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty.”

What type of seed are you? What type of seed do you want to be?

Don’t be fooled into thinking that just because you attend church and consider yourself a Christian, you are automatically a seed that falls on good soil. Be careful to endure and persevere even through tough times; be careful not to let the cares of this world and its riches deceive you. I have seen many Christians swayed by the things of this world. And how these temporary things seem to entice them and cause them to make questionable “decisions for the Lord”. I remind you of Jim Elliot’s wise words, “**He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.**”<sup>10</sup>

### **Lessons/Applications:**

1. What treasure(s) are you striving after in your life? Is it one that brings everlasting joy?
  - Claim the blessed gift of salvation through Jesus Christ that is FREELY available to everyone.
2. What type of seed are you?

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<sup>8</sup> **Parable:** 1. a short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson. 2. a statement or comment that conveys a meaning indirectly by the use of comparison, analogy, or the like.

<sup>9</sup> **Sower:** Planter, one who scatters seeds over land, earth, for growth.

<sup>10</sup> Jim Elliot’s journal (1927 - 1956, 29-yr), a modern martyr, gained international recognition when he died with four others at the hands of Auca Indians. His story and memoirs have become a source of missionary inspiration through the writing and speaking of his wife, Elisabeth.

- a. Seeds on the path, that do not understand about the kingdom of God (do not seek to understand it) and are lost to the evil one, the devil.
- b. Seeds on rocky ground, lacking deep roots, falling away during times of tribulation or persecution
- c. Seeds among thorns that are choked away by the weeds, the things of the world
- d. Seeds falling on good soil and producing plenty of crop (grain) for the Lord

Where do you stand before the perfect God?

- <sup>7</sup> Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. <sup>8</sup> For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. (*Galatians 6:7-8*)

#### **ADDITIONAL NOTES & BIBLE VERSES**

##### ***Hebrews 10:3-10***

<sup>3</sup> But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sin every year. <sup>4</sup> For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

<sup>5</sup> Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said,

“Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired,  
but a body have you prepared for me;

<sup>6</sup> in burnt offerings and sin offerings  
you have taken no pleasure.

<sup>7</sup> Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come to do your will, O God,  
as it is written of me in the scroll of the book.’ ”

<sup>8</sup> When he said above, “You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings” (these are offered according to the law), <sup>9</sup> then he added, “Behold, I have come to do your will.” He abolishes the first in order to establish the second. <sup>10</sup> And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

##### ***Matthew 13:10-16***

###### **The Purpose of the Parables**

<sup>10</sup> Then the disciples came and said to him, “Why do you speak to them in parables?” <sup>11</sup> And he answered them, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. <sup>12</sup> For to the one who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance, but from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. <sup>13</sup> This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. <sup>14</sup> Indeed, in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled that says:

“ ‘You will indeed hear but never understand,  
and you will indeed see but never perceive.

<sup>15</sup> For this people’s heart has grown dull,  
and with their ears they can barely hear,  
and their eyes they have closed,  
lest they should see with their eyes  
and hear with their ears  
and understand with their heart  
and turn, and I would heal them.’ ”

<sup>16</sup> But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. <sup>17</sup> Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it.