

## **A Taste of Heaven, Part III**

### **Heaven: A Place of Unspeakable Joy!**

Text: Matthew 13:44-46

#### **Introduction:**

Recently, I was sitting in a living room area, with my father-in-law, and he was flipping through the channels on the television. He stopped at a Baseball game, to see who was playing. When we had noticed that the teams were college teams, we were both tempted to collapse into a state of utter disinterest. Generally, I am not a big fan of watching Baseball games, at all, anymore, and my father-in-law, enjoys the Major League games. But then, we had noticed something, which had immediately took hold of our attention, and prevented him from changing the channel.

It was the bottom of the ninth inning (the last inning of the game), and the team at bat was losing by a score of 9 to 8. There were two outs, and the pitcher had just walked a man, loading up the bases. Suddenly, this game took on the life and value of a World Series game, to both of us. What would happen here? Will the pitcher walk a run in, and tie the game up, minimally, sending it into extra innings? Will he strike the batter out, and end the game? Will the batter get a hit, bringing in potentially more than one run, giving the losing team a comeback victory? Needless to say, we were glued to the TV. The count was 0 and 2, and the pitcher was one strike away from ending the game. Then, in but a few short, and tense moments, the count was full, 3 and 2, and the moment of glory was here. You tried to put yourself in the pitcher's and in the batter's position, imagining the great pressure, which was upon them. And it all came down to this pitch. And suddenly, the pitch is off, it is clearly a ball, but the batter swings. And he hits a blooper into the outfield, which lands in front of the outfielder. One run scores, and naturally, another is sent home. The outfielder wields the ball to the catcher, but the throw was a bit too high, and so, the winning run, slides safely into home plate, and the team that was losing, suddenly won the game, with a score of 10 to 9!

As you would expect, everyone charged the field, leaping up and down, heading, especially for the player, who had gotten the last hit. And everyone grabbed him and hugged him, as they jumped up and down, continuously, with a sense of elation and celebration! Now, suppose we take that exact moment of time, when that second run had scored, and everyone ran out to the batter who had just gotten the winning hit, and we freeze it right there for a moment. Suppose we could somehow freeze everyone right there, in their tracks, so that we could run out with a hypodermic needle, jam it into that batter's heart, and extract the level of joy and elation, which he felt right then and there, so that we could store it away somewhere, in a safe container. And then somehow, we could draw from it, whenever we like, as a sort of anti-depressant, in order to combat sadness and depression and sorrow. Now obviously, I am treading into the realm of the impossible, or maybe even into the realm of the insane, but haven't we all had those moments, where we have witnessed some major event, accomplishment or feat, in someone's life, and we coveted those moments of joy, wishing that we were the ones experiencing their experience? At some point in our lives, haven't we all wished that we were the ones jumping up and down, after the championship win, or after winning the lotto, or after inventing some great invention, receiving a particular job promotion, or reaching some emotional high, that we have witnessed in the lives of others?

We naturally crave the experience of joy, don't we? And it is not a bad thing to desire joy, in it's proper God-honoring setting, is it? We delight in delighting. We enjoy, enjoying! And we love to share the experience of it, when we experience great joy. God made us that way, didn't He? But, we know that, much to the ignorance of fallen man, the supreme joy that we all crave, can only be fulfilled in knowing our Creator! And because we are naturally alienated from our God and Creator, we search and search and search for joy and fulfillment elsewhere, among the created order itself; among things, which could never bring the kind of joy, we so long for! Even those most joyful experiences in this life, ultimately don't last, do they? I just spoke of "freezing that moment in time," because, if we waited just a little bit longer, we would see that joy begin to dwindle and deplete, fading off into a past history, a recollection, at best. Nothing temporal; nothing created could ever, ever, eternally satisfy! That is a fact! It all wears out, like a used piece of bubble gum.

But brethren, the Scriptures teach us that, in God, resides the fullness of joy. At His right hand there are joys forevermore! In His presence, there is not merely "joy," but there is joy, unspeakable! There is a quality of joy, which we have only but tasted in this life, of which we will plum the depths, when we see Christ, in glory! And the most amazing thing about it, is that, that quality of joy; that joy, which is at the highest possible pinnacle of joy, that a human being could possibly contain, is *unending* in its duration! It never dulls, not even for a moment! We are talking about, eternal, maxed to the fullness of capacity, elation! A joy, completely foreign to this world, to which even a frozen moment, of this world's *highest* joy, could not even begin to compare; could not even scratch the surface of! Indeed, if you could somehow take that frozen moment, of this world's greatest joy, and somehow stretch it out to the bounds of eternity, lining it up next to the joy experienced by those who are in Christ, that joy would be seen, as a great and grievous depression, in comparison! Brethren, we come now to our third portion of this devotional series, "A Taste of Heaven," to consider that, "Heaven is a Place of Unspeakable joy!"

### **I. Heaven: A Place of Unspeakable Joy!**

Our text, brings us into the middle of several parables, spoken by our Lord, which describe the "kingdom of heaven." And while these parables describe different aspects of the kingdom of heaven, the two short parables, which we will be considering, address the precious *value* of the kingdom of heaven. And while this value, especially reveals the glorious benefits obtained, upon entering the kingdom of heaven, by faith (in this life), the illustrative descriptions, given in the parables, broadly bring us to appreciate the whole and complete package. In other words, the great value of getting into the kingdom of heaven *now*, is clearly, due (in large part) to the fullness of what is anticipated by those who enter. Consider then, the value of the kingdom of heaven, as expressed by the two short, and yet, illustrative parables:

1) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field" (vs. 44).

And so, in our first illustration, we find the kingdom of heaven represented by a scenario, to which all people could relate and appreciate. Somehow, a man, happens upon a hidden treasure in a field, of which no one (including himself) was aware. And when he finds it, the

value of it, is so high and precious, that it exceeds the value of everything else that he has gathered and obtained in his life. Notice, that "for joy over it," after hiding it again, he goes and sells *all that he has* (an emphasis, which we will see again, in the following parable), so as to buy the field, and obtain the rights to the treasure. He has unexpectedly located something, which he had never anticipated to be so precious and valuable, until he found it. And now, seeing its great value, he sells all of his other possessions, so as to obtain the field, and by that means, the treasure. You see, the joy over this treasure is so great, that everything else that he owned, combined, had lost its value, in comparison to it.

2) "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (vs. 45-46).

Though very similar to the first example, here we find this merchant "seeking" fine pearls. In the first example, we don't necessarily find the man "seeking" the treasure. Here, a merchant; a businessman/salesman, is out looking for beautiful pearls. Pearls, hold different values, according to varying factors: size, purity, beauty, luster, splendor...etc. And so, there is a comparative emphasis here, again, signifying the idea of "value." He is looking for "beautiful pearls." And finally, he finds one that knocks his socks off! It completely blows him away! He finds this pearl of great price, and when he sees it, suddenly, everything else he had owned; all of his prized and most precious possessions, combined, could not come close to the value of this one pearl of great price. And so, overwhelmingly desirous to obtain this one pearl, he goes and sells "all that he had" (a repeated emphasis, given in the previous parable), so as to purchase this one pearl of great price!

What then is the message here, brethren? What is our Lord emphasizing, concerning the kingdom of heaven? The picture here represented by these two parables, is profoundly glorious! It hits right home with the plight of mankind. Man, being alienated from God, is always in search of a "God-replacement." He is always looking for something to fulfill the urgent, longing desires of his soul. But he fills them with all manner of idols and man-made things, that can never truly satisfy. In the first parable, the man, kind of unexpectedly finds a treasure, which reveals to his mind a particular value that is so overwhelmingly precious, that it leads him to forget all else; indeed, to sell all else, so that he might ultimately obtain the treasure. Such is the

value of the kingdom of heaven! That is the type of experience realized by all who see and discover the reality of God's hidden kingdom.

And in the second example, man, is represented as pursuing all manner of fine treasure. Like that merchant, we spend our whole lives, searching for that one, true and lasting joy, which can fulfill our "wanting" souls, in an ongoing and undiminishing way. And we gather all manner of pearls in this life; we build a storehouse full of idols, but none of them ever, really satisfy. And so, we shelf them, in search for more fine pearls. But, when one finds the kingdom of heaven; when one finds reconciliation with the Creator through Jesus Christ; reconciliation unto our true purpose and glory, the value of that kingdom is so great, that we sell all that we have; we release all of our idols and those things, which formerly, deceptively, laid hold of our hearts; we turn from our sinful lusts, and we embrace new ideals; we experience a new birth, leading to a new life in Christ! For the joy that we have found in Christ; for the joy anticipated in a life in union with Christ; for the joy anticipated in the glory of heaven, where what we have begun to taste in part now, will find its eternal apex, we have sold all else, and have become willing servants of Christ, in the present. And we find this very process, itself, not to be a drudgery of any sort; indeed, it can and will be very difficult and painful at times, but it entails the joyful results of pleasing, glorifying and being conformed into the image of, our blessed Savior, who loved us, and gave Himself for us!

Indeed, brethren, we willingly take up our crosses in this life; we endure hardship and shame; we are willing to sacrifice all, to lay down this life, for the glory of the next. Like our blessed Savior, for the glory that is set before us, we despise the shame, and we endure the cross! Speaking of this incomprehensible joy, which we begin to experience in this life, but which reaches its pinnacle of perfection and unending duration in the next, the Apostle Paul states in 1 Corinthians 2:9-10, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." You see, brethren, the hidden treasure of the Gospel, and all it freely provides, has been hidden from the world. Had the Jews of our Lord's Day, understood these things, Paul tells us in this very context, "they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory." But the Holy Spirit of God, who

knows the heart of God, has graciously revealed them to us! He has led us to the treasure in the field! He has led us to the Pearl of Great price! And so, we see! We understand! And therefore, we rejoice, with joy unspeakable!

Indeed, brethren, heaven is a place of unspeakable, unending joy! Not a single moment will lapse, where we can document a single frown, in eternity! And a culmination of numerous joys, will immediately strike us, when we soon arrive there! The joy of rest! The joy of righteousness! The joy of perfect peace! The joy of perfect fellowship with God, with Christ, and with the people of God! The joy of perfect health and well-being! The joy of pure worship! The joy of celebration! The joy of victory! The joy of an unhindered understanding of the magnitude of God's grace and mercy! The joy of beholding heavenly beings! The joy of beholding a new heavens and a new earth! The joy surrounding all manner of things, of which we are presently unaware! The joy of the realization of never having that joy dwindle for a moment...ever! Oh brethren, is there not enough value to the substance of our eternal hope in Christ, to motivate us unto a life of joyful obedience, *now*, in the present? Consider your end, brethren! Let go of everything else, and consider your end! And live your short stay here, for the glory of Christ!

AMEN!!!