

St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church  
Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz  
July 29, 2018  
The Tenth Sunday after Pentecost  
CW Year A EHV®  
Gospel Matthew 13:44-52



<sup>44</sup>“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid again. In his joy, he goes away and sells all that he has and buys that field. <sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls. <sup>46</sup>When he found one very valuable pearl, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. <sup>47</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. <sup>48</sup>When the net was filled, they pulled it onto the shore. They sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw the bad ones away. <sup>49</sup>That is how it will be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous who are among them. <sup>50</sup>And they will throw the wicked into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” <sup>51</sup>Jesus said to them, “Did you understand all these things?” They answered him, “Yes.” <sup>52</sup>He said to them, “Therefore every expert in the law who has been trained as a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure both new things and old things.”

People of God~rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

Do you know where Milan, Illinois is? Me neither – at first. Imagine in your head a map of Illinois. You know how it’s flat as

a pancake under Wisconsin. If you go to the West side of Illinois at first it goes in – making room for Iowa. Then it goes back out – kind of rounded – where the Mississippi River goes. That’s where Milan is – like straight south of LaCrosse--as the crow flies – as they say. Milan, Illinois – population 5,000 last time they counted. A girl named Alicia – just 12 years old – lives in Milan. My granddaughter Hannah is 13! Alicia was on that Duck Boat with her Grandma the other day down by Branson. A retired pastor was driving the boat. Did you know that? The Duck Boat began to sink. Nobody had on their life jacket! Alicia tried to pull down 2 life jackets – one for her and one for her Grandma – but they wouldn’t come down. In a few moments there was only a little air in the top of the cabin. Everybody was screaming. Then the water broke through – and Alicia felt her Grandma’s strong hands around her – pushing her hard – toward the surface. The last thing her grandma did – was push her to safety. In the simplest way – Grandma saved her life. Grandma’s only thought was to save her Grand-daughter! I get that – don’t you! Grandma would push Hannah out! What a very pale-*pale* picture of Jesus’ forgiving love – that brought Him to the  $\dagger$  to rescue us! Jesus willingly endured the pain and shame of the  $\dagger$  to rescue us! Jesus’ unconditional forgiving love suffered to save us. Today God’s Word has a very simple and powerful message of law and gospel. Today God’s Word says:

### **You Are Precious To Jesus!**

- 1. Treasure the Gospel**
- 2. Share the Gospel!**

The part of God’s Word we are concentrating on today is part of the Gospel of the Tax-collector Matthew! We have been reading

through Matthew for many weeks now. We have been reading parables – *earthly stories with Heavenly meanings*. It's good for a moment to remember some of our Hermeneutical Principles. When you go to our Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary we take a class called Hermeneutics! I have a little paperback book called Hermeneutics! When studying a Parable – it is essential to look for the tertium – the Δ--the point! What's the point! The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who went out to sow his seed! How is the Kingdom of God like a farmer? What's the point – *thee* point of comparison? Back in the day there were some very clever and very creative Professors and Priests and Pastors. They would try and make literally a zillion points of comparison. The Farmer represented this – the farm house represented that – the barn represented this – the tractor represented that – the clods – the fertilizer – the rain – the sunshine – the *everything* represented something – sometimes as many as 7 layers of interpretation! Like I said it was all very clever – exceedingly creative! The problem is – it isn't Scriptural. If we begin to confuse law and Gospel – there is danger. Danger of what Luther called, "*misbelief – despair and other great shame and vice!*" That's nasty! It endangers our immortal soul and eternity! We need to be very careful when we say, "**This is the Word of the LORD!**"

Chapter 13 started with the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. Remember? The farmer scatters the seed – the Gospel is preached. There are many different results. The Evil One comes and snatches away the Gospel from people who hear but don't understand and don't believe. Seed that sprouts in shallow soil also fails when trouble or persecution comes along – people fall away. Seed in thorny soil is choked out by the worry of this world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word and it produces

no fruit! Did you hear that? It is tempting to think – get a good education so you can get a good job and make lots and lots of money! Then you can get so many “toys” you have to build bigger and bigger garages to store them! It is amazing – homes with three and four car garages and more. And when that isn’t enough – there are rows and rows of *rent a garage* for all our *things and stuff*! There is danger – God’s Word says – there is danger that when we get so caught up in our stuff – we lose sight of the one thing needful-the Gospel of Christ crucified and risen! By the grace of God – the Gospel sown in our ♥s will bear sweet fruits of **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control!** These sweet fruits of faith give glory to Jesus – and to Jesus alone!

**44**“The kingdom of heaven is like... The kingdom of heaven here is not some Millenium – some literal 1,000 year reign where Jesus is King here on earth with a literal throne literally in Jerusalem – ruling with all his angels on earth – a second chance for people to come to saving faith – so that in the end nobody ends up in Hell – or at least nobody ends up in Hell except Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin – and serial killers and murderous terrorists! The Kingdom of heaven talked about here is not a *place*! The kingdom of heaven here is the Gospel powerful and active in the ♥s and minds and lives of God’s people. It is the power of the Gospel – working change in the lives of people *changing everything!*

**44**“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid again. In his joy, he goes away and sells all that he has and buys that field. What is the tertium Δ – the point of the parable? It’s not a shady real-estate deal – where you know there is buried treasure – and don’t tell the land

owner – you buy the land – then seize the treasure – saying – “It’s mine! All mine!” No – the point is – there is nothing more valuable – more precious than the sweet Gospel! It’s worth giving up – sacrificing everything – for the sake of the Gospel! Think about *world missionaries*! Did you see the recent WELS Connection? The missionaries who literally rode horses and donkeys onto the Apache Reservations? Do you know about heat in Arizona-- – temperatures like 114°? I don’t think *it’s dry heat* makes it ok! Missionaries who lived in Nigeria – during the rainy season! Do you think it rains a lot here lately? When it rains in the Rain Forest – it literally *literally* pours! The joke is the humidity never goes over 100%! In Nigeria their electric company is called NEPA – the natives say *Not Enough Power Always*! Have you seen the news lately? There are literally riots in Haiti. The United States Embassy says, “Don’t go out between sun down and 5 in the morning. It’s so dangerous the Embassy workers will **not** come out to rescue you! There is literally heaps of trash baking on street corners. When you land in the airport you should get away from there as fast as you can. There is danger not only from thieves and robbers but human traffic-ers! Imagine no TV – no Internet – no Smart phone connections – no refrigeration! Who gives up everything for the sake of spreading the Gospel! World missionaries will tell you it is well worth it – to share the essential Gospel now – before it’s too late! We are in many senses so spoiled! We have Churches and Pastors and Bibles and Bible Class and Sunday School and our day school and our Lutheran High Schools! They are truly priceless! Nothing in all creation is worth as much as the good news Jesus loves me this I know! There are not enough Pastors to go around! Pastors my age are retiring all over the place – most of them – because their health is

failing – painfully failing – and still they help in countless ways! Where is the next generation of Pastors and teachers? Who will go and whom shall we send? God grant that you say with Isaiah,

**“Here I am! Send me! Send me!”**

**<sup>45</sup>“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls. <sup>46</sup>When he found one very valuable pearl, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.** If you go to a very nice Jewelry Store on the corner of Main and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street--while they put a new battery in your wrist watch – you can watch this really interesting video about pearls! People opening shells and very carefully putting this little piece of grit inside that will be covered again and again until all the translucent layers make a pearl! Once the pearls are harvested – they are sorted according to color and size and all kinds of aspects! Just one more incredible invention of the LORD. Not the result of *evolution* – and so? If you appreciate pearls – I mean really appreciate them – what would you pay for the perfect pearl? The sky is the limit! Again – what is more precious than the Gospel? What is more precious than God’s Word! Read your Bible! Crack it open and read! Read the Gospel of John – what Jesus said to the disciple He loved! Read the Letter to the Romans! Read the good news we are saved by grace through faith and not by being good! Read and ponder the Psalms! Read and ponder the wisdom of Solomon – the Proverbs! Read Ecclesiastes – and appreciate growing old full of grace – and kindness and patience and generosity. Don’t be the angry crabby bitter judgmental person who always and only complains and finds fault and tears down and picks at people until you literally make them cry! Reflect the Gospel by being generous and thoughtful and helpful – building up and making your little

corner of the world a better place for Jesus' sake – because Jesus died to redeem you!

**Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. <sup>48</sup>When the net was filled, they pulled it onto the shore. They sat down and gathered the good fish into containers, but threw the bad ones away. <sup>49</sup>That is how it will be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from the righteous who are among them. <sup>50</sup>And they will throw the wicked into the fiery furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."** Believers and unbelievers – sincere children of God and hypocrites – *make believe* believers – people who only *pretend* to believe in Jesus! Hypocrites are not people who go to church on Sunday – then make mistakes and do sins Monday morning. That would include all of us. We **all sin and fall short of the glory of God.** Hypocrites pretend to love Jesus with their lips – with their words – but their ♥ is far from Jesus. Only Jesus knows who these people are and it's not for us to judge. Remember the parable of the wheat and the weeds? Only Jesus knows the weeds. And Jesus will take care of the weeds on Judgment Day! They will be thrown into the fiery furnace – weeping and gnashing their teeth forever! In the 1300s a man named Dante wrote this incredible poem. Perhaps the most famous line of all says: **"Lasciate ogne speranza, voi ch'intrate"**. **"Abandon hope~all who enter here!"** I think it's almost impossible to imagine the unspeakable horror and unending grief of eternal destruction – it never ends – *ever!* People say "eternal destruction" all the time – it's as hot as – as cold as – as amazing or incredible as eternal destruction. They throw it around as if it means next to nothing. Eternal destruction is painfully real and lasts forever. There are few things in all

creation more serious and more horrible than eternal destruction – and so?

**Every expert in the law who has been trained as a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the owner of a house who brings out of his treasure both new things and old things.”** I saw a picture of Alicia – safe from the horrible waters that swamped the Duck Boat she was in. Alicia was hugging a Yorkshire Terrier – a Yorkie. They are little dogs – with perky ears and wet little noses – and lots of very long brown hair. This little Yorkie is what you call a comfort dog. And I get that. Puppies – from very small ones like Kirby – to huge ones like Bailey – love you with an unconditional love that is seldom found in people. **God is LOVE!** Jesus is the ultimate unconditional forgiving love. Jesus loves us and forgives us. He holds us close in His nail marked hands. He will never ever leave us. He will never ever forsake us. Jesus’ forgiving love never fails. Thank you, Jesus! Amen!

**To God alone all glory!**

*Rev. Anthony E. Schatz*