

Jesus often spoke of the kingdom of heaven using parables and strong statements that show it is both priceless and costly. It is freely given by God's grace (Ephesians 2:8-9, NIV), yet it demands total surrender (Luke 14:33, NIV). This tension shows us that salvation is not cheap grace; it is costly grace, as Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote.

1. The Struggle for the Kingdom

Matthew 11:12 (NIV) says:

"From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and the violent take it by force."

Here, Jesus is not speaking of physical violence but of spiritual determination. Theologians explain that this verse shows the urgency and intensity required to enter God's kingdom. One cannot drift into eternal life casually. It takes repentance, faith, perseverance, and sacrifice (Acts 14:22, NIV: *"We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God."*).

2. The Hidden Treasure and the Pearl

Matthew 13:44–46 (NIV) says:

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

The hidden treasure and the pearl of great price teach us that the kingdom of God is worth more than everything else we own.

Theologically, these parables emphasize:

- The incomparable worth of salvation. Eternal life in Christ surpasses all earthly possessions.
- The necessity of total surrender. Both men *sold all they had*—a picture of denying self and taking up the cross (Luke 9:23, NIV).
- Joyful sacrifice. Notice the man sold everything *with joy*. When the Spirit opens our eyes to the glory of Christ, sacrifice no longer feels like loss but gain (Philippians 1:21, NIV).

3. The Example of Moses

Hebrews 11:24–26 (NIV) explains Moses' choice:

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.”

Theologically, Moses foreshadows the Christian life:

- He abandoned Egypt's temporary pleasures—symbolizing sin and worldly gain (1 John 2:15–17, NIV).
- He embraced suffering with God's people—pointing to the fellowship of Christ's sufferings (Philippians 3:10, NIV).
- He valued Christ's reproach above earthly wealth—showing that true faith looks beyond the present to eternal reward.

4. The Example of Paul

Paul testifies in Philippians 3:7–8 (NIV):

“But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.

What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.”

Paul’s theology is clear: Christ is supreme. Anything that competes with Him is “garbage” compared to the eternal riches of salvation. In Romans 8:18 (NIV), he adds:

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

This reflects the doctrine of future glory: temporary suffering is outweighed by eternal reward.

5. The Warning to Laodicea

We live in the Laodicean age described in Revelation 3:17–18

(NIV):

“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.

I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see.”

The Lord’s counsel is theological: we must exchange worldly pride for true spiritual wealth. To “buy” from Christ means repentance, surrender, and obedience. Just as in the parables, we must “sell” all that hinders us—sin, pride, self-reliance—so we can “purchase” eternal riches.

6. What Is the Kingdom Worth to You?

The disciples once asked Jesus what their sacrifice meant. He answered in Matthew 19:28 (NIV):

“Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

Theologically, this shows that eternal reward is based on present sacrifice. Some will reign as kings and priests with Christ (Revelation 20:6, NIV). Others will be least in the kingdom. But all will see that the cost of following Christ was worth it.

Conclusion

The kingdom of heaven is free because Christ paid the ultimate price on the cross. Yet it is costly, because it requires us to surrender everything that competes with Him.

Theologian Jim Elliot once said, *“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”*

So the question remains: What is the kingdom worth to you?

As Jesus said in Matthew 11:12, *“the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and the violent take it by force.”* May God

give us the strength to value His kingdom rightly, and the grace to pay its cost joyfully.

Amen.

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