

3. a realm we enter into and bear witness to.
“...sold everything he had and bought it.”

What does it look like to desire the Kingdom above all else?

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.

Philippians 3:8 (NIV)

What does it look like to be a surrendered community that represents the Kingdom of God?

Sign (something else) and **foretaste** (something yet to come)

Agent (authority) and **instrument** (action)

For we are co-workers in God's service; you are God's field, God's building. **1 Corinthians 3:9 (NIV)**

We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. **2 Corinthians 5:20 (NIV)**

“The church is not supposed to be a society of perfect people doing great work. It's a society of forgiven sinners repaying their unpayable debt of love by working for Jesus's kingdom in every way they can, knowing themselves to be unworthy of the task.”

“Jesus, to be sure, often spent long times alone in prayer. But he was also deeply at home where there was a party, a kingdom party, a celebration of the fact that God was at last taking charge.”

—N.T. Wright, *Simply Jesus*

NOTES:

THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF GOD'S AMAZING LOVE

ACT 3: THE FULFILLMENT

FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Matthew 13:44–46 (NIV)

“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. ⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.”

The kingdom of God is...

1. a **gift** received.

“When a man found it...”

“Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the king...dom.” **Luke 12:32 (NIV)**

How have you found a vital relationship with God, belonging with others, purpose beyond yourself?

2. a **“lucky”** surprise.

“...and then in his joy...”

Kingdom parables (Matthew 13)

Sower: Rocky, path, thorns, good soil that receives the word and bears fruit.

Weeds: Wheat and weeds grow together until judgment.

Mustard seed and yeast: Small things can have a great impact.

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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS—WEEK OF MARCH 1, 2020 THE FULFILLMENT—FINDING THE HIDDEN TREASURE

CONNECT:

- If you were present, reflect on your experience of Ash Wednesday.
- What "gift" did you receive from God this week?

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE: Visio Divina (The the practice of meditating on God's truth through art.) During this season of Lent we will reflect on three qualities that Jesus demonstrated in accepting the cross: *Humility, Surrender, and Sacrifice*.

Prepare: Make sure everyone has the photo of Pieter Bruegel's painting found in the bulletin handed out on Ash Wednesday and Sunday worship services (or look it up online).

Quiet: Take a moment of silence to calm your mind and heart to be in God's Holy presence.

Watch: Using the link in the Leader Notes, watch the explanation of Bruegel's painting (or read the summary on the back of the card). Review the whole practice aloud, before you begin. Allow time for individual reflection between the prompts.

Reader #1: Slowly read Matthew 13:44-46.

Art Reflection: As you reflect on the painting, journal your responses.

- **Individually (Humility):** Examine your heart; name something that is a source of pride for you. Confess whatever hinders you from walking humbly with Jesus. (Pause)
- **Reader #2:** Read aloud Colossians 3:12. What, in this passage, do you desire today?
- **Individually (Surrender):** What internal motivations, damaging desires, and crippling habits are keeping you from experiencing God's fullness? What would it cost you or what would you need to let go of today? (Pause)
- **Leader:** Recite the Lord's Prayer together.
- **Individually (Sacrifice):** What pain, sadness, or brokenness do you see or feel in your life today? How could you invest your heart in those people and places that break God's heart? (Pause)
- **Reader #3:** Read 2 Corinthians 5:20 aloud. Pray for whoever comes to mind. (Pause)

Share Together

What did you discover as you reflected on the scripture passages or the painting? What is one thing you could do to engage the season of Lent more meaningfully this year?

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION: Questions to stimulate discussion

- Read Mark 13:44-46 aloud. Is there a particular passage or idea that stood out to you in this week's worship service?
- How does a relationship with Christ and the Christian community fulfill basic human needs for identity, belonging, and purpose?
- What did you do when you first realized God was offering this gift to you?
- What does it mean to desire the Kingdom above all else? With what energy or passion do these parables suggest we pursue God's Kingdom?
- What does it mean to be a community that is a sign and foretaste of the Kingdom of God? What does it mean to be a community that is an agent and instrument of the Kingdom of God?
- What did you see that you didn't expect or that surprised you on Community Serve Day or at the celebration on Sunday?
- How does our service, our worship, and our relationships in Small Groups bear witness to God's Kingdom? Consider honestly, how will SBPC's witness in the world (as a sign and foretaste, as an agent and instrument) fall short if we ignore or devalue these things?
- How do all the "treasures" in our lives create a barrier to experiencing all that God has for us in Christ? If we take seriously the invitation to be on mission with God, how might the virtues of humility, sacrifice, and surrender be seen in us, as individuals and as SBPC?

PRAYER and BENEDICTION: Share current joys, hopes, or challenges

Pray for one another: What do you need from Jesus in order to let go of the false treasure and find the true treasure?

Closing Benediction: (Revelation 4:11)

You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

DAILY PRACTICE: Continue to spend time with God daily in scripture, prayer, and silence (see Reading Plan or APP).