

**The Question of the Week**

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure buried in a field.”

Matthew 13: 44

Jesus liked to tell stories. He liked to use familiar images to get his point across to the people. He knew that not all of his teaching would be agreeable to everyone. But he wanted to put it all out there and see what the reaction was. So he uses the image he uses today. The kingdom of God is like buried treasure. Now just stop there for a moment and consider what you know (in the twenty-first century) about buried treasure. For me, it sounds like the 18<sup>th</sup> century pirate ships stealing gold from the new world along with jewels and silver ornaments.

Pirates stole stuff. They gave some of it to their crew as salary, a portion of the take. The rest belonged to the Captain and his mates. They did not use—or have access to—banks. For obvious reasons. So what do you do with the extra loot? Do you lug it around? Well, then maybe someone comes along stronger than you, hits you over the head, and steals what you have stolen. It happens. With no banks and a decision not to carry it around what is there left to do with it? Bury it. Bury the treasure. But bury it where no one else can find it. Make a map but guard the map very carefully.

But there is a risk to this burying thing. Suppose someone comes along and accidentally discovers the buried treasure. Realizing what is there, that person makes arrangements to buy the field, the place where the treasure is buried. Why? So the person can rightfully and legally dig up the treasure and claim legitimate ownership of the treasure because it was dug up on their own land. (A little bit like discovering oil back in the day).

That is the scenario that Jesus uses when he says that the kingdom of God is like the treasure that has been buried in the field. You—or I—find something not just valuable but really valuable, life-changing valuable. And it is available to us but it will cost us. What is the cost? Everything. Everything? Can anything be worth that much? Can anything be worth everything? What about living forever in heaven? What is the alternative? Do we really grasp just what Jesus is offering to us? That is the question of the week.