

## Lectionary Bible Study Our Savior Lutheran Church

### Lectionary 17 Readings

1 Kings 3:5-12, Psalm 119:129-136  
Romans 8:26-39, Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52



[Click here](#) to join Pastor Mark for a Live Zoom conversation each Wednesday at 10am.

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### Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52 (NRSV)

31[Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.”

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”

44“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; <sup>46</sup>on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

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This passage continues Jesus’ teaching in parables to describe the kingdom of heaven. The first two parables (v31-33) draw attention to a great growth from something that begins so small. First, we see a tiny seed become a bush so large it can be a home for bird’s nests. Next, we see a tiny bit of yeast mixed in with 3 measures of flour – and all of it rises.

1. *Where have you seen a small act of faith magnified into something greater?*
2. *What are the implications of the kingdom of heaven being a home for nesting birds?*

3. *The yeast is used with triple the regular amount of wheat – enough to make bread for 100. What does this say about the kingdom of heaven?*

The next two parables deal with discovering something so valuable that one sells everything to buy it. The treasure in the field invites the hearers to think back to the sermon on the mount in Matthew 6, where Jesus proclaims to “store up treasures in heaven.” Likewise, the pearl of great price should also remind us of the sermon of the mount, where in Matthew 7 we hear not to “cast your pearls before swine.” These discoveries of pearl and treasure are holy, but they also disrupt daily life and involve the risk and sacrifice of “selling it all.”

4. *What are the implications for the kingdom of heaven? What sacrifice is involved? What is the kingdom of heaven worth?*

Our last parable includes a fisherman with a bountiful catch. But not just a full net, the net burst with fish of *every kind*. But then we see the parable expand, to correlate with the prior parables about weeds and wheat. The parable concludes that the fishermen will sort the fish “good” and “bad,” and this has eschatological ramifications.

5. *What is the good news here?*

Each of the 5 parables have a main character: a farmer sowing seeds, a woman baking, a merchant, a commercial fisherman.

6. *Why would Jesus tell a parable with these characters?*
7. *What does that mean for their participation in the Kingdom of heaven?*

These successive parables give us a glimpse into the Kingdom of heaven:

- *It may start small, but grows*
- *It is a place of shelter*
- *It rises and fulfills the hunger of all*
- *It takes time*
- *It is costly, but so worth it*
- *It is for all people*
- *Even ordinary people like bakers, farmers, merchants... me and you!*

What other things did you discover about the kingdom of heaven?