

# Searching for Wisdom

a sermon preached on the

## 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

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at

### St Luke's in the City, Christchurch

by Fr Jim McKenna  
priest assistant at St Luke's  
& chaplain to Bishopspark

Lection: 1 Kings 3:5-12; Matthew 13:31-33; 44-52

The parables of the treasure and the pearl have the same message, that is, the Kingdom of Heaven is worth everything. We have to acquire it, but we need the wisdom that comes from God to see this. The parable of the fishing net has a similar message to that of the wheat and the weeds (which Fr Peter spoke about last Sunday).

From the beginning of time people have been looking for treasure. They have searched paddocks, mountains and sea bed, gambled on lotto, the TAB, and many other methods, to find gold, diamonds, pearls, or large sums of money. Even some of the old-time children's books implanted the search for treasure in children's minds. Remember "Treasure Island"? In Ireland there was a more exciting way. The children would try to reach the end of a rainbow to find the leprechaun's pot of gold. All the poor little mites got was the flu or pneumonia from tramping through the wet bog, and a hiding when they returned home for getting their clothes soaking wet.

It was all the same theme. "If only we could get rich we would be happy".

In one way or another, we are all treasure hunters. All of us are looking for something that will make us happy. There is nothing wrong in this. Jesus encourages us in our searching. As the two stories in today's Gospel show us, Jesus had sympathy for those who were searching, even though they may have been looking in the wrong places and for the wrong things. He was able to point them in the right direction.

Jesus compared the kingdom of God to a rare pearl or a priceless treasure. The Kingdom of God is a very simple concept.

1. It means to know that one is a child of God.
2. It means to know the meaning of life, and how to live it.

To taste the joy of the kingdom involves a letting go of the dependence on material things and not making them the be all and end all of our lives.

To have faith is not to have all the answers. It doesn't mean that God will do all the work for us. Faith commits us to a life of yearning, searching and discovery, and it is not only in such places as churches, or only on religious occasions, that we find God and feel close to God.

The treasure we search for is hidden in the place in which we stand. Apart from the gift of love, the most precious treasure a person can have is the gift of wisdom. Without it all other things are in a jumble because we don't know how to use them. As we heard in our reading from 1 Kings, on being told by God that he could have anything he wanted, Solomon asked for the gift of wisdom which God granted to him.

However, this doesn't mean that wisdom was given to him on a plate. Wisdom is not acquired overnight. It is acquired gradually, and often painfully. It is the task of a lifetime. Wisdom is like dew – it comes to us in tiny droplets without our knowing it. The wisdom we are talking about is deep and precious. It means knowing what is truly important in life, and being able to live the way God wants us to live. Wisdom is not the same as knowledge. Knowledge is "something we have". Wisdom is "something we are". Through the gift of wisdom God communicates to us the meaning of life.

Wisdom is the pearl of great price. Once found no-one can take it away. Let us keep searching.  
Amen.

Ref: F. McCarthy, SDB

[j.p.mckenna@xtra.co.nz](mailto:j.p.mckenna@xtra.co.nz)