

**Welcome to the  
Common Ground Café!**



**Sunday, July 1, 2018**

**Finders, Seekers  
A Study of Matthew 13:44-46**

**[www.hillcrest.church](http://www.hillcrest.church)**



Do you like rummaging around in garage sales, estate auctions, antique stores, and such? If so, describe one of your favorite “finds.” Or describe a time you *weren’t* shopping but found something of value unexpectedly (Example: A lost \$20 bill in an old pair of jeans, or a diamond earring in the park, or a valuable coin in a box of junk.)

Some find God even though they were not really looking for him. Some find God after a long search. Jesus describes this beautifully in his twin parables about the farmer and the merchant.

### **Finding the God You’re Not Looking For**

Read Matthew 13:44.

The farmer wasn’t looking for treasure when he stumbled over it. The following are descriptions of people who aren’t looking for God. Identify someone you know who fits one of the following descriptions. Or discuss how *you* once fit one of these descriptions before you became a Christian.

- ❖ Sally is contented with her successful and happy life and she feels no need for God.
- ❖ Ben’s self-identity is his job, and he’s pouring all his energy into climbing the corporate ladder. He doesn’t feel that attending church with his family is important to that single goal.
- ❖ Michael wonders what the purpose of life is, but has given up trying to find out. He just gets through each day, doing what is expected of him.
- ❖ Denise once hoped that maybe there was a God who cared about her life, but she’s long since given up trying to find out if such a God exists. As far as she’s concerned, she’s just doing the best she can to make life work until she dies.

## Desperately Seeking God

Read Matthew 13:45-46.

The pearl merchant had spent his life looking for the perfect pearl. He went to bazaars far and wide in search of the perfect one. The following are descriptions of people on a spiritual search. Identify someone you know who fits one of the following descriptions. Or discuss how *you* once fit one of these descriptions before you became a Christian.

- ❖ Jim knows there just has to be more to life than a good job and a house in the suburbs. In hopes of living a more purposeful life, he's read a few books by Tim Ferriss on Stoicism. He likes some of the insights, but he's still searching.
- ❖ Trish got introduced to Buddhism by her roommate in college. She's listened to a lecture by the Dalai Lama online and she respects the teachings. Still, some of her deepest spiritual questions remain unanswered.
- ❖ Sandy has co-workers and neighbors from different world religions. Like most of Austin, she finds good in every religion. But still she sees so many sharp differences in what the religions say about who God is and how to relate to him. She wonders if there is a "right" answer to these questions.
- ❖ Steve has started to attend Hillcrest. He's not convinced about Christianity yet. But still he comes most weeks, and he's intrigued with the lessons and also with the examples of the people he's getting to know.

### The Two Parables Together

How is life in God's kingdom like the greatest "treasure" and the most precious "pearl"?

One found a treasure he wasn't looking for, and one found a treasure after a long search. But they both reacted to their treasures in the same way.

What did the farmer and the pearl merchant do in order to possess their treasures?

Read Ephesians 2:8-9. While Paul called our salvation a free gift, in Jesus's parables the farmer and the pearl merchant each "sold all he had" to get the treasure.

- ❖ Is there a contradiction here?
- ❖ If not, in what way must we "sell all we have" in order to have a relationship with God?
- ❖ Right now, today, what do *you* know you need to "sell off" in order to fully experience the life God wants you to have with him?

What is the word Jesus used to express the emotion the farmer and the pearl merchant felt? Was this emotion connected to (pick one and explain)...

- ...finding the item?
- ...selling all he had to get the item?
- ...both?

Does the emotion of the farmer and the pearl merchant accurately express *your* relationship to Jesus and *your* willingness to give up everything to have a relationship with Jesus? Why or why not?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests