

Rev. Paul A. Hottinger

Total Commitment Seventeenth Week in Ordinary Time Wednesday, July 27, 2016
8:15 AM Jer 15:10, 16-21; **Mt 13:44-46** (There has to be some sort of seeking and finding. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure.)

Today we are reading metaphors about the kingdom of heaven or literally the kingdom of heavens. **In the ancient world** it was thought there were seven dimensions, **seven heavenly dimensions**. They have to do with **human consciousness as we ordinarily don't experience it**. The whole point of Jesus is he is trying to elevate people to see things in a higher way, in a fuller, richer way. And he calls this the kingdom of heavens, different from ordinary earthly life that is very one-sided. **Often people simply live day-to-day and regard as real what they see or what they need or what they feel without much examination.**

Jesus believed himself and sensed himself to be directly connected to the Father. He felt himself coming from the Father and, moreover, he wanted everyone to experience that, that connection. This is **being truly conscious, being connected to God, living in God**. That's what the kingdom of the heavens is about ultimately, living in God. And there is something about the mindset of ordinary life as it's constantly being created in our media, in our experiences, overloaded with all kinds of stimulation of one kind and, therefore, impoverished, impoverished of a stimulation of another kind, the other side so to speak, **the inward side of human experience**.

Now this is something **Carl Jung** noted very clearly. **He said the unconscious was more conscious than the conscious**. That sounds goofy, but what he meant is **our ordinary mind doesn't pick up the depth of life**, but it's there, it's within us, it's part of our psyche, our soul, but we don't pay attention to it. We are connected actually already, but we don't notice. So badly do people not notice that today many even bright, intelligent people are avowed atheists. How can one be an avowed atheist and be aware of the depths of the universe and our connection to

those depths? The universe is a creation, and **we are also connected to the Creator.** “Apart from the Word nothing came to be.” Jesus said **we are just branches on a vine.** Are we aware of this? We are members of a body according to St. Paul. Are we aware of this, or do we just live our little, isolated lives—often in fear and/or anxiety and/or something else: anger or indifference? Pope Francis said, **“The great scourge of the modern period is indifference.”** I think he is right.

So what to do about this? Jesus is trying to say, well first of all, **there has to be some sort of finding, seeking and finding. The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure.** It’s a treasure. It surely is really worthwhile, not only really worthwhile, **worth absolutely everything.** So if you find this and it comes to you as a serendipity—and it does, which we call grace; one of its real meanings of grace is serendipity. You find something like **a treasure buried in a field.** Well, what do you do? Think about it? No. Write in your journal? No. Pray about it? No. **You go and sell everything you have and buy that field.** Now that’s a teaching of **total commitment.** And most people are very uneasy with this total commitment idea because, well after all, we have to live in the here and now. And the people who are totally committed to this sort of thing as Jesus was end up the way Jesus did: rejected, spurned, and so on. Who wants that? Or the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant searching—searching—for fine pearls. **“When he finds a pearl—a pearl, one—of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it.”** Again, total commitment—that’s what Jesus is talking about. It’s not that the grace of God isn’t at work in your lives; the problem is **we are not responding with a total commitment.**