



The Process of Discovering the Joy of the Kingdom of Heaven: An Analysis of Matthew 13:44-46

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Abstract

Matthew is a book full of richness in it. Matthew 13:44-46 is one of the parts of the book that has a central theme in Christian life, namely the kingdom of God. This article is written to discuss the process of discovering the joy of the kingdom of heaven. We conducted a biblical analysis of this book, with a focus on interpretation to understand the text and context of Matthew 13:44-46. The results show that there are three stages in the process of discovering the joy of the kingdom of heaven. The first stage is the discovery stage. In the discovery stage believers find a life value that brings believers to the joy of the kingdom of heaven. The second stage is the awareness stage. The awareness stage is when the believer realizes the value of life that has been discovered in the discovery stage. In this stage the believer realizes that the value of the kingdom of heaven is very precious, thus leading to the next stage. The third stage is the decision stage. The decision stage is the final stage after believers discover and realize the value of the kingdom of heaven. At this stage believers take action on the discovery by denying themselves as a form of giving their best for the sake of something more valuable, namely the kingdom of heaven.

Abstrak

Matius adalah kitab yang penuh kekayaan di dalamnya. Matius 13:44-46 merupakan salah satu bagian kitab yang memiliki tema sentral dalam kehidupan Kristen, yaitu Kerajaan Allah. Artikel ini ditulis untuk membahas proses menemukan sukacita kerajaan surga. Kami melakukan analisis alkitabiah terhadap buku ini, dengan fokus pada penafsiran untuk memahami teks dan konteks Matius 13:44-46. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa ada tiga tahapan dalam proses menemukan sukacita kerajaan surga. Tahap pertama adalah tahap penemuan. Pada tahap penemuan orang percaya menemukan nilai hidup yang membawa orang percaya pada sukacita kerajaan surga. Tahap kedua adalah tahap kesadaran.

Tahap kesadaran adalah ketika orang percaya menyadari nilai kehidupan yang telah ditemukan pada tahap penemuan. Pada tahap ini orang beriman menyadari bahwa nilai kerajaan surga sangat berharga, sehingga menuju ke tahap berikutnya. Tahap ketiga adalah tahap keputusan. Tahap keputusan adalah tahap terakhir setelah orang percaya menemukan dan menyadari nilai kerajaan surga. Pada tahap ini orang beriman melakukan tindakan penemuan dengan menyangkal diri sebagai bentuk memberikan yang terbaik demi sesuatu yang lebih berharga, yaitu kerajaan surga.

Introduction

Human life is a process. Human growth occurs in the physical, mental and spiritual aspects. Humans must experience various stages of life, some of which are happy and some of which are sad. Joy in life is a process of search and discovery in human beings. Harianja revealed that in Paul's letter to the Philippians there is an encouragement to continue to rejoice (Phil 4:4).¹ Mustika and Objantoro in their research on the text of Psalm 57 found that David experienced joy in the process of discovery in the midst of sorrow. The discovery happened when David shifted his focus to God's design in his person.² Joy is also a deep delight in the goodness given by God.³ According to Wiersbe, joy is a sense of peace and contentment in the heart.⁴ Then according to Martasudjita, joy is the gift of God and the surest manifestation of God's presence in human life.⁵ So joy is a deep excitement because of the grace of God and the presence of God's work in human life. In the Bible there are several texts that describe human joy including finding the Kingdom of Heaven.

Kingdom of heaven is a precious treasure that human seeks. Those who found the Kingdom of Heaven feel rejoice. In Jesus' sermon at the mountain, He delivered the beatitudes emphasizing that there is joy in the Kingdom of God.⁶ The discovery of the Kingdom of Heaven brings man deep joy. But the discovery of the kingdom of heaven is a process that brings great joy to man. Both parables in

¹ Sorta Harianja, "Bersukacitalah Senantiasa! Sekali Lagi Kukatakan, Bersukacitalah," *JURNAL APOLLOS* 3, no. 1 (2017), accessed February 16, 2021, <http://jurnal.sttapollos.ac.id/index.php/apollos/article/view/2>.

² Maria Benedetta Mustika and Enggar Objantoro, "Pemanfaatan Mazmur 57 Dalam Konseling Krisis Di Masa Pandemi COVID-19," *Davar: Jurnal Teologi* 1, no. 1 (June 27, 2020): 1–8, accessed July 11, 2021, <http://e-journalsangkakala.ac.id/index.php/DJT/article/view/1>.

³ Febriaman Lalaziduhu Harefa, "Spiritualitas Kristen Di Era Postmodern," *Manna Rafflesia* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 1–23, http://journals.sttab.ac.id/index.php/man_raf/article/view/107.

⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Free, An Expositions Study of Galatians* (Wheaton, Illionis: Victor Books, 1981).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Yohanes Enci Patandean, "Pengajaran Tuhan Yesus Mengenai Berbahagia Dalam Matius 5:3-12," *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 2, no. 2 (July 31, 2018): 115–134, accessed November 12, 2018, <https://journal.sttsimpson.ac.id/index.php/EJTI/article/view/103>; Yohanes Enci Patandean and Bambang Wiku Hermanto, "Tema-Tema Theologis Khotbah Yesus Di Bukit Dalam Injil Matius 5:1-7:29," *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 3, no. 2 (2019): 123–135, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://journal.sttsimpson.ac.id/index.php/EJTI/article/view/140>.

Matthew 13:44-46 have the same point about how one discovers and how happy one is to obtain the kingdom of heaven. The word joy in Greek *χαρά* (chara) means full joy, from the root word *χαίρω* (chairo) meaning to rejoice. This joy shows how happy a person is who gets a very valuable treasure. Dilla reveals that joy is produced by God's grace and is not a momentary happiness.⁷ Therefore, it is necessary to obtain the meaning of Matthew 13:44-46 about the stage of mankind getting the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

A study on Matthew 13:44-46 has previously been conducted by Nurwindayani.⁸ Her research focuses on introducing the kingdom of God in Javanese culture. She tried to find points of contact between the kingdom of God and Javanese culture. Another research was conducted by Dekker who discussed about reading Matthew 13:44-46 after Barth's 'Nein!' His research also discusses the usefulness and relevance of the systematic-theological debate of Matthew 13:44-46 as an interpretative lens in biblical exegesis. In our opinion, the study of Matthew 13:44-46 can still be enriched by conducting exegetical studies to find other meanings on different sides.

From the above background, the formulation of the problem of this research is how do human stages get the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven based on Matthew 13:44-46? The purpose of this study is to explain the stages of man's joy in the Kingdom of Heaven based on Matthew 13:44-46.

Methods

To find the stages of humanity's joy in the Kingdom of Heaven, the author uses the hermeneutic of the biblical text. This kind of research is theological research with a qualitative approach, because the author wants to find the meaning behind a text.⁹ The Bible text is not written just as a piece of writing, but has relevance and implications for the lives of Christians.¹⁰ Therefore, an analysis of a text must be done in order to find meanings that relate to the lives of Christians today. An expositional approach is used in this study to find the meaning behind the text of Matthew 13:44-46. Literature sources such as commentaries, concordances, and lexicons were used to find the meaning of the text. The research process finally explains the stage of the process of finding the joy of the kingdom of heaven so that the meaning of the text can be understood by the reader. The results of the study are presented in two parts: first, the text analysis of Matthew 13:44-46, then the second part is the process of finding the joy of the kingdom of heaven.

⁷ Minggu Dilla, "Makna Buah Roh Dalam Galatia 5:22-23," *Manna Rafflesia: Jurnal Teologi Kristen* 1, no. 2 (January 1, 2015): 158–166.

⁸ Efi Nurwindayani, "Memperkenalkan Kerajaan Allah Untuk Suku Jawa," *PASCA: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Agama Kristen* 17, no. 1 (May 17, 2021): 30–42, <https://journal.stbi.ac.id/index.php/PSC/article/view/135>.

⁹ Sonny Eli Zaluchu, "Strategi Penelitian Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif Di Dalam Penelitian Agama," *Evangelikal: Jurnal Teologi Injili dan Pembinaan Warga Jemaat* 4, no. 1 (2020): 28–38, accessed February 21, 2020, <https://journal.sttsimpson.ac.id/index.php/EJTI/article/view/167>.

¹⁰ Grant R Osborne and Elifas Gani, *Spiral Hermeneutika: Pengantar Komprehensif Bagi Penafsiran Alkitab* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2012).

Results and Discussion

Matthew 13:44-46 Analysis

Matthew 13:44-46 tell us is about treasure hidden in a field and precious pearls. The first part of the parable tells of treasure hidden in a field. According to Barclay, in the context of Matthew 13:44-46, people kept their money in banks, only the concept of banks was not the same as in modern times. People kept their money using land.¹¹ This can be seen from the parable of the talents, where a servant hid his talent in the ground (Matthew 25:25). This action was taken to secure their wealth when the Palestinian Territories were in a situation of war and various other threats. According to Barclay, this is confirmed by Thomson's findings in *The Land and the Book* published in 1876. In Thomson's discovery, there was the founding of a treasure in Sidon. The treasure was found when workers were digging a garden on the road. During the excavation, several copper pots full of gold coins were found. The coins found were those of Alexander the Great and his father Philip. The coins were probably hidden when Alexander unexpectedly died in Babylon, so when news of the death reached Sidon, some Macedonian officials buried the coins in order to retrieve them one day. According to Barclay, when Jesus told this parable, he was telling a story that could be easily understood by anyone in Palestine and the east in general.¹² The act of Jesus teaching by telling a parable that was easily understood by his audience was a common practice of Jesus.¹³

Then Henry explained about the parable in Matthew 13:44-46 that Jesus compared the kingdom of heaven to small things. The Wycliffe commentary explains that in general, the treasure in the parable in Matthew 13:44-46 describes Jesus.¹⁴ The same opinion is expressed by Henry that the true treasure is Jesus, because in Jesus there is abundance. In Jesus there is wisdom and knowledge, love, and peace.¹⁵ This treasure is hidden in the gospel, and the gospel is offered to people. Everyone must come and dig into the gospel to find this precious treasure. The treasure is hidden in the gospel so it must be found by digging in the gospel field.¹⁶ Calvin reveals that often the gospel is undervalued because it is hidden and man places a high value on what is visible. This parable shows that man cannot value the riches of

¹¹ William Barclay, *New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew*, vol. 1 (Hymns Ancient & Modern Limited, 2013).

¹² William Barclay, *Pemahaman Alkitab Setiap Hari; Injil Matius Pasal 11-28* (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2009).

¹³ Karnawati Karnawati, H Hosana, and I Putu Ayub Darmawan, "Lingkungan Proses Pembelajaran Yesus," *Veritas Lux Mea (Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen)* 1, no. 2 (2019): 76–89, accessed October 8, 2019, <http://jurnal.sttkn.ac.id/index.php/Veritas/article/view/48>.

¹⁴ Charles F Pfeiffer and Everett F Harrison, *Tafsiran Alkitab Wycliffe Vol. 3* (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2008).

¹⁵ Fenius Gulo, "Makna Teologis Mengumpulkan Harta Di Surga Berdasarkan Matius 6:20," *Phronesis: Jurnal Teologi dan Misi* 5, no. 2 (December 14, 2022): 139–151, <https://jurnal.sttsetia.ac.id/index.php/phr/article/view/222>.

¹⁶ Matthew Henry, *Tafsiran Matthew Henry: Injil Matius 1-14* (Surabaya: Momentum, 2007); Matthew Henry, "Matthew Henry Commentary on the Whole Bible (Complete)," *Bible Study Tools*.

God's grace according to the world's view, or according to its outward appearance, but by looking at it like a treasure that although hidden, is preferable to the appearance of vain riches.¹⁷

The second part of Matthew 13:44-46 is the parable of the pearl. In the second parable, Jesus describes great value, and great profit for those who receive it, and are willing to fulfill its requirements.¹⁸ Calvin explains that although the pearl is small, it is so valuable, that skilled merchants do not hesitate to sell houses and land to buy it.¹⁹ Henry explained that Jesus Christ is the Pearl of great price. Jesus is the priceless Pearl, so that everyone who possesses it becomes rich, truly rich, rich in the sight of God.²⁰ That means that having Jesus, the believer has enough to make him have great joy for all eternity.

According to Henry, the merchant in the parable is the Christian. The true Christian is a spiritual merchant who seeks and finds the Pearl of Great Price. The true Christian is a Christian who is determined to be spiritually rich, so he buys the pearl and does not bargain for it.²¹ A person who knows Christ, will make Christ his own and surpass all earthly possessions. It is not enough for a man to know and recognize Jesus, but to possess him. A true merchant does not simply know the pearl is valuable, but possesses it as his own and above all his possessions. Henry explains that a person who has an interest in salvation in Jesus is willing to separate himself and leave all to follow Jesus. According to Henry, this attitude leads to an attitude of willingness and pleasure in leaving everything that is contrary to Christ, even if it is very dear to him.²²

The Process of Discovering the Joy of the Kingdom of Heaven

The process of finding joy in Matthew is a gradual process. There are three clear stages in this parable:

Discovery Stage

The discovery experienced by the person who found the treasure in the field is a sentimental state. The emotions felt by the two people led them to the next stages. Looking at verse 44, there is the word "found". In the original language (Greek), the word "found" comes from the word *εὕρισκω* (*heurískō*) from the root *εὕρεω* (*heureō*) which means: to discover, get, acquire, feel and see.²³ This shows that the two people did not just find, but also got, obtained and felt part of the property.

¹⁷ John Calvin, *Calvin On Matthew: John Calvin's Bible Commentary, Volume 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Etherial Library, 1994).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Henry, *Tafsiran Matthew Henry: Injil Matius 1-14*.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Hasan Sutanto, *Peerjanjian Baru Interlinear Yunani - Indonesia Dan Konkordansi Perjanjian Baru (PBKI) Jilid 1* (Jakarta: Lembaga Alkitab Indonesia, 2004); James Strong, "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament," in *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Nashville, Atlanta, London, dan

When a person finds treasure and then shares in the joy of that discovery, there is a joy that cannot be described. The same applies to one who finds treasure in the fields and pearls. The discovery in this section can be said to be the initial process of the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the discovery stage, believers discover the value of life in different situations and conditions. Joy cannot be measured by when and where the believer finds it.

The man who found the treasure in the field may not have found it by accident. The pearl merchant also accidentally found a beautiful pearl. The process of one's discovery of the value of life is often "accidental". Inadvertence in the discovery of a life value is not a mistake. The two people found a precious treasure, giving rise to a feeling of joy. The feeling that arises from the discovery of the treasure symbolizes that accident is a stage of finding joy.

Awareness Stage

The man in the field and the merchant both realized that what they had found was different from what they had before. The man in the field realized how valuable the discovery was, just as the pearl merchant also realized how great the value of the pearl was. In verse 44 the word "seek" appears. In general, "seeking" can be interpreted as a series of processes in making a discovery. In the original language (Greek) the word "seek" comes from the word *ζητέω* (*zētēō*) which means: to search, plan, desire, endeavor, inquire and need.²⁴ This means that the merchant searching for the pearl realized that he wanted and needed the pearl.

The realization of the value of the treasure and pearl also arises from the knowledge of the treasure value of the pearl. Both could not have realized without knowing the value of the treasures and pearls they found. According to Suheru, even though in the awareness stage the person in the field and the trader found the treasure and pearl by accident, both of them would already have basic knowledge of the value of the treasure and pearl.²⁵ The understanding of a value raises awareness that will later result in action on that awareness.

At the awareness stage, both people have full awareness of the value of the treasure. In verses 44; 45 it is known that both of them have an awareness of the value of the treasure. In addition, both of them also really mastered the understanding of the treasure. The person in the field knew very well that the buried treasure was an expensive treasure. The same applies to a merchant who finds a pearl, knowing full well that it is an expensive item and much sought after by others, so he dares to take further action for the sake of the pearl.

Vancouver: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1982); James Strong, "The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible," *The Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible* (Iowa: United Bible Publisher, 1984).

²⁴ Sutanto, *Peerjanjian Baru Interlinear Yunani - Indonesia Dan Konkordansi Perjanjian Baru (PBKI) Jilid 1*; Strong, "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament"; Strong, "Exhaustive Concord. Bible."

²⁵ Stefanus Suheru, "Karakter Warga Kerajaan Allah Berdasarkan Ucapan Bahagia Dalam Injil Matius 5: 3-12," *Kingdom 2*, no. 2 (2022): 113.

The process of realizing the value of treasure as well as pearls is an awareness of the value of life. One's realization of the preciousness of the Kingdom of Heaven arises from the knowledge of the value of the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus with believers today, the realization that arises from prior knowledge of the Kingdom of Heaven will bring great joy.

Decision Stage

At the decision stage two words are found that indicate an action, namely the words "go" (v.44) and "go" (v.46). Go (v.44) from the original word (Greek) is *ὑπάγω* (*hypágō*) which means: to lead oneself, withdraw, go and walk. Then "go" (v.46) from the original word (Greek) is *ἀπέρχομαι* (*apérchomai*) which means: to come, go, and go out.²⁶ Both words indicate an act of discovery and awareness on the part of the two people. In addition, from both words, it is found that there was an effort to lead themselves to make a decision, namely to go sell the other's property.

The man of the field decides to buy the treasure with his possessions. The pearl merchant decided to buy the pearl with all he had. The decisions that the two people made made them both get more valuable treasures. The discovery of the treasure by the two men brought them happiness. The joy gained after the discovery of the treasure led the two men to sell their possessions. According to Moris, the act of selling property by the two men did not teach that the Kingdom of Heaven could be bought, but was a spontaneous act of both of them towards happiness over the discovery of more valuable treasures.²⁷

According to Wycliffe, the decision taken by the two people came from their awareness of the value of the treasure they would have in the future. The decision was a form of their happiness towards the awareness of the treasure and pearls.²⁸ Even Henry said that the decision taken by the two people was a full belief in the happiness that would be obtained next. This is shown by their reaction by letting go of their previous happiness.²⁹ The decision taken by the two people is a full belief in happiness and their form of happiness in the awareness of treasures and pearls.

The decision for a more precious treasure requires sacrifice. The choice to accept the Kingdom of Heaven is not an easy one. To have the joy of discovering the Kingdom of Heaven requires sacrifice. One must choose the precious and forsake the worthless. Calvin explains that the decision of the two men instructs believers today to dare to deny themselves of worthless earthly desires.³⁰

²⁶ Sutanto, *Peerjanjian Baru Interlinear Yunani - Indonesia Dan Konkordansi Perjanjian Baru (PBKI) Jilid 1*; Strong, "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament"; Strong, "Exhaustive Concord. Bible."

²⁷ Leon Morris, *Tafsiran Injil Matius*, ed. Irwan Tjulianto (Surabaya: Penerbit Momentum, 2016), 368.

²⁸ Charles F. Pfeiffer and Everett F. Harrison, eds., *Tafsiran Alkitab Wycliffe*, 3rd ed. (Malang: Penerbit Gandum Mas, 2008).

²⁹ Henry, *Tafsiran Matthew Henry: Injil Matius 1-14*.

³⁰ Calvin, *Calvin On Matthew: John Calvin's Bible Commentary, Volume 1*.

The Implications in the Life of a Believer

The process of discovering the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven has implications for believers. There are two emphases that can be implications for believers today:

Joy Should Be in a Believer's Life

The man who found the treasure in the field and the merchant who found the pearl went through a gradual process. The stages of the process resulted in the action of selling their treasures to obtain more valuable treasures. The actions taken by the man in the field and the merchant were reactions to the sense of joy that arose from the discovery of the treasure and the precious pearl. According to Wycliffe, the joy experienced by the man in the field and the merchant who found the pearl was the joy of realizing the value of the treasure and the pearl.³¹ Then Henry adds, that both people had an extraordinary experience. They not only saw but they also knew the value of the treasure and the pearl, resulting in joy.³²

The joy experienced by the two men was a clear sign that the treasure and pearls they found were precious. Just like the two men, joy should be present in the life of a believer. The joy experienced is a sign that the person is living in the Kingdom of Heaven. The value of the Kingdom of Heaven is so precious, it cannot even be bought with anything. So, when a believer realizes that he is living in the Kingdom of Heaven, he will also feel tremendous joy.

Joy is a Characteristic of Believers

The possession of a precious treasure is a great joy. The joy experienced by the man in the field and the merchant who found the pearl was also great joy. According to Henry, the joy experienced by the man in the field and the merchant was not a momentary joy. The joy that the two people experienced was a continuous joy. This happened because both people realized that the treasure, they found would belong to them.³³ The man who found the treasure in the field and the merchant who found the pearls not only realized that the treasure and pearls had great value, but they also became the owners of the treasure and pearls.

The realization of the possession of a treasure and a precious pearl brought joy to the man in the field and the merchant who found the pearl. Joy characterizes both people. The man in the field and the merchant who found the pearl both responded to the discovery with joy. Then the joy they experienced was not just a feeling, but the joy they experienced led them to the next action, which was to sell their property. The act of selling one's possessions to obtain more valuable possessions is an act of sacrifice. It is also a characteristic of people who experience joy.

³¹ Pfeiffer and Harrison, *Tafsiran Alkitab Wycliffe*.

³² Henry, *Tafsiran Matthew Henry: Injil Matius 1-14*.

³³ Ibid.

Just like the man in the field and the merchant who found the pearl, joy is also a characteristic of believers. When the man in the field and the merchant who found the pearl realized that they were the owners of the treasure, they rejoiced. So, with believers, joy is a characteristic of the life of believers, who have become citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Heaven's work is a place reserved for believers, so joy will be in their lives. The joy is not only felt, but results in an act of sacrifice, namely denying oneself for the precious Kingdom of Heaven.

Conclusion

Obtaining the kingdom of heaven is a joy. Many people want this joy, but not all of them get it. The parable of the man who found the hidden treasure and the lost pearl is a teaching on the process of obtaining the joy of the Kingdom of Heaven. Both people in the parable have shown how to respond and act upon the discovery of the treasure and pearl.

The responses and actions taken by the man in the field and the merchant searching for pearls result in a process. The process must be interpreted by believers. The joy of obtaining the Kingdom of Heaven is a gift from God, which must be done by discovering, realizing, and deciding to get it by leaving all possessions in this world.

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