

SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Many adult children spend years searching for something that will finally bring peace. We look for security through achievement, acceptance through pleasing others, worth through performance, or safety through control. These pursuits often begin as ways of surviving childhood, but over time they become the places where we seek our identity. Recovery invites us to ask whether what we have been pursuing is truly capable of giving us the life we long for.

This Sunday's gospel presents several brief parables about the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 13:44-52). In two of them, Jesus describes a man who discovers a treasure hidden in a field and a merchant who finds a pearl of great price. In both stories, each person joyfully sells everything to possess what is truly valuable.

Jesus invites us to ask a deeply personal question: What treasure has been shaping my life?

For many adult children, the answer is not always obvious. We may believe we are simply trying to be responsible, helpful, or successful. Yet underneath those efforts, we may be seeking approval, trying to avoid rejection, or believing that our worth depends on keeping everyone else happy. These patterns often served a purpose in childhood, but they cannot provide the lasting security our hearts desire. What once helped us survive can quietly prevent us from living freely.

Recovery gradually reveals a different treasure. Our deepest value does not come from what we accomplish, how well we manage relationships, or whether others approve of us. It comes from belonging to God. We are His beloved sons and

daughters. This identity does not have to be earned because it has already been given.

The first reading offers a beautiful example of rightly ordered desire. When God invites Solomon to ask for anything, Solomon chooses wisdom instead of power or riches (1 Kings 3:5, 7-12). He recognizes that the greatest gift is not getting everything he wants but learning to see through God's eyes. Adult child recovery invites the same prayer. Rather than asking God to make life predictable or comfortable, we ask Him for the wisdom to live with honesty, courage, and trust.

The Twelve Steps help us discover this new way of living. We begin telling the truth about our past without allowing it to define our future. We become willing to examine old beliefs, fears, and resentments that have shaped our relationships. We practice prayer, inventory, and healthy fellowship so that our identity becomes rooted less in survival and more in God's grace.

This work takes time. We may still feel the pull toward perfectionism, people pleasing, or overfunctioning. Recovery does not ask us to pretend those patterns are gone. Instead, it teaches us to recognize them more quickly and choose a different response. As our trust in God deepens, we become less driven by fear and more grounded in the freedom to live authentically.

Over time, we notice quiet but meaningful changes. We become more comfortable saying no without guilt. We receive love without feeling the need to earn it. We make decisions based less on fear and more on discernment. We

discover that peace comes not from controlling life but from trusting the One who holds it.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the pearl of great price because nothing compares to knowing we belong to God. As we continue in recovery, we are invited to let go of the false treasures that once shaped our identity and choose, each day, the lasting freedom found in Christ.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What "treasure" have you most often looked to for your sense of worth or security apart from your relationship with God?
- Which old survival pattern is God inviting you to surrender so that your true identity can grow more freely?
- How has recovery helped you experience the freedom of living as a beloved son or daughter of God rather than trying to earn your value?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING 1 Kings 3:5, 7-12

RESP. PS. Psalm 119:57, 72, 76-77, 127-128, 129-130

SECOND READING Romans 8:28-30

GOSPEL Matthew 13:44-52