



SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Family recovery often begins with a single hope: that someone we love will change. We pray for it, work toward it, and sometimes organize our lives around it. While that desire is natural and good, recovery gradually teaches us that our deepest peace cannot depend on another person's choices. Lasting healing begins when our relationship with God becomes the greatest treasure we seek.

This Sunday's gospel presents several 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 cases, each person joyfully sells everything to obtain what is truly valuable.

These parables invite us to consider what we treasure most.

For those affected by a loved one's addiction, it is easy for recovery itself to become centered on someone else. We tell ourselves that life will finally settle down when they stop drinking, using, acting out, or making destructive choices. We postpone our own peace until they change. Without realizing it, their recovery becomes the treasure we pursue, while our own spiritual life slowly moves into the background.

Jesus invites us to a different way of living. The greatest treasure is not another person's sobriety, as deeply as we desire it. The greatest treasure is life with Christ. When that relationship becomes the center of our lives, everything else begins to find its proper place. We still love deeply. We still pray faithfully. We still hope for healing. But our identity and peace are no longer determined by circumstances we cannot control.

This perspective reshapes the way we practice recovery. Step Three invites us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God. That surrender includes releasing the illusion that we can direct another person's journey. We remain responsible for our own decisions, our own healing, and our own relationship with God. This is not giving up on those we love. It is trusting that God loves them even more than we do.

The first reading offers a beautiful example of rightly ordered desire. When God invites Solomon to ask for anything, he chooses wisdom instead of wealth, power, or long life (1 Kings 3:5, 7-12). Solomon recognizes that the greatest gift is not getting everything he wants, but learning to see through God's eyes. Family recovery asks for that same wisdom. We begin to distinguish between what belongs to us and what belongs to God.

Recovery slogans reinforce this truth in practical ways. "First things first" reminds us to place God before our fears. "Let go and let God" calls us to release outcomes we cannot control. "One day at a time" helps us remain present instead of becoming consumed by an uncertain future. These simple phrases become daily acts of trust.

Over time, we discover that choosing Christ as our treasure changes us. We become less driven by fear and more grounded in hope. We establish healthier boundaries without withdrawing our love. We respond with greater peace because our security rests in God rather than in another person's progress. Ironically, this healthier way of

living often strengthens our relationships because they are no longer shaped primarily by anxiety or control.

The Kingdom of Heaven is the pearl of great price because nothing compares to life with Christ. As we continue in family recovery, we are invited to choose that treasure again each day. When God becomes our greatest good, we find a freedom that no circumstance and no other person can ever take away.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What have you been tempted to treat as your "pearl of great price" instead of your relationship with Christ?
- How has your understanding of surrender changed since beginning your own recovery?
- What is one practical way you can put "first things first" in your recovery this week?

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