



The law & Gospel method of Bible study is the Church's traditional way to study the Bible, which was popularized by Martin Luther. Law & Gospel Bible study makes a distinction between God's two main Biblical themes: law & Gospel. God's law theme identifies our sin, by revealing what God wants us to do that we don't do. God's Gospel theme identifies our need for Jesus the Savior, and reveals how God's love offers us salvation through Christ.

STEP ONE PRAY FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT TO REVEAL GOD'S VOICE THROUGH THE TEXT:

"Father, let your law and Gospel voice renew our love, faith, and hope."

STEP TWO READ THE TEXT REPEATEDLY UNTIL YOU CAN TELL IT IN YOUR OWN WORDS:

Matthew 13:44-52 (See the reverse side of the worksheet for the printed Gospel text)

STEP THREE REVIEW A STUDY BIBLE TO DETERMINE THE TEXT'S THEOLOGICAL MEANING:

Buried Treasure A man somehow finds a treasure buried in a field. How he finds it we do not know. What he was doing when he found it, we are not told. Unexpectedly, he came upon a treasure he wasn't looking for. He covers the treasure up in great excitement and goes to find some way to buy the field so he could own the treasure in it. The kingdom of God, Jesus says, is such a treasure. We happen upon it in an unexpected place, and we are surprised and overwhelmed when we find it. Immediately we know that we must have it, even if it requires giving up all that we have to obtain it. For him, the discovery of the treasure is an experience of transforming joy. It is an aspect of the Gospel that is often overlooked. **The Perfect Jewel** A merchant, after years of searching, finds at last the perfect jewel. He is probably a rich man, in contrast to the poor man of the first parable. Pearls were the most valuable things in the ancient world, even more precious than gold, and this merchant has found one of extraordinary perfection and value. A perfect jewel is worth having for the purely aesthetic pleasure of handling it, admiring it, contemplating its perfection. The implication of the parable is that there are other attractive things in the world, but the kingdom surpasses them all and by comparison makes them of little worth. The beauty and perfection of the kingdom of heaven surpasses all other objects of beauty and loveliness. **The Dragnet** There is a third parable in this Gospel, and it presents an old theme, something that we have heard before. Like last week's parable of the weeds, the parable of the net teaches that we must wait until the end for the final separation of the good from the wicked, and that until then we must have patience. The kingdom is like a fishnet that is dragged through the sea and catches every kind of fish in its path, some good, some worthless. The net of the kingdom will not be full until the close of the age, and then the separation will take place. The time of transition between the appearance of the kingdom and its fulfillment must occur. The fullness and perfection of the kingdom will be achieved only at the final period of history. In the meantime, we must be patient. Finally, after telling these parables, Jesus asks the apostles whether they have understood "all this." They say they have. *Kingdom* is the key word in today's Gospel. The kingdom of God, or of heaven, is the central theme of the teaching of Jesus. It involves his whole understanding of his own person and work. The kingdom means the "kingship" or "kingly rule" or "reign" or "sovereignty" and expresses the lordship of God over his people and over the world that he has made. The kingdom of God is where God reigns. It cannot be the product of our own efforts. It is an act of God himself to break the power of evil and to establish his rule in the world. God rules eternally, but in the person of Jesus God rules in a new way. In Christ, the kingdom has arrived though it is yet to be completed. The kingdom is both "now" and "not yet."



Matthew 13:44-52 ⁴⁴The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. ⁴⁵Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it. ⁴⁷Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁵¹Have you understood all this? They answered, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."

STEP FOUR COMPLETE A LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY TO *Restore Hope in the Savior*

Law Question: How does this text reveal our sin (self-centeredness) and how we do not live as God desires?

Answer.....

Gospel Question: How does this text reveal God's gift of Jesus as the Savior who freely offers us salvation?

Answer.....

Please send your "answers" to Pastor Bob: Schmalzle@yahoo.com which he likes to incorporate into the sermon.

STEP FIVE PRAYERFULLY MEDITATE UPON GOD'S GOSPEL VOICE: *Restoring Our Hope*

A. Quietening Our Inner Sanctuary: We quiet our hearts (souls) by focusing on our breathing. Breathe in slowly to the count of five (J-E-S-U-S)...hold your breath to a count of six (C-H-R-I-S-T)...exhale to a count of seven (T-H-E-L-O-R-D). Repeat this pattern of breathing until you are relaxed.

B. Dwelling within Our Inner Sanctuary: We meet the Lord Jesus in the sanctuary of our hearts (souls), which is a place created within our mind's eye for us to be with the Lord. Using our favorite sights, sounds, smells and feelings, we visualize our inner sanctuary as a place of peace where the Lord Jesus meets us.

C. Listening to God's Voice in Scripture Speak to Us through Jesus: As Jesus meets us in our inner sanctuary, he lovingly shares God's Gospel message of hope from the Scripture text we have just studied. Listening to God's Gospel voice restores our trust and hope that Jesus' death and resurrection freely offers us eternal Salvation. When Jesus speaks to us, our souls are nourished and refreshed.

STEP SIX SHARE THIS LAW & GOSPEL BIBLE STUDY WITH A FRIEND:

Forward this via email, give a printed copy, or post on social media