

# 10.1.2023 Sermon

## Enough: Entering God's Economy of Grace

### Matthew 13:44-46

#### **SUMMARY KEYWORDS**

god, abundance, mindset, receiving, pearl, heaven, preached, kingdom, striving, riches, sermon, idea, life, economy, picture, ice cream, fulfillment, desire, deficit, thinking

#### **SPEAKERS**

**Elder Matt Kistler**

Over the past few weeks, we've been doing a choose your own adventure series. What has stood out to me the most, and truly excited me, is how I see God leading us on one adventure. This is even though each of the preachers started with a blank slate. I've been seeing a story that's overarching through what each of us has been saying. It's really encouraging to see God moving through us independently.

So today, we're going to continue that message. We're going to talk about "enough." The adventure so far started with James, as usual. He was preaching on Romans 12. He was looking at how we walk out our faith, not being conformed to the world, but being transformed in how we interact with society. I'd summarize his sermon with this quote: "We all have something that we can offer, that if everybody had, would make us all better. If we were all engaging in an economy of sharing what we have, we would all be better."

Then we moved to Kevin. Kevin started his sermon by saying he wished he could have preached on Romans 12. But instead, he got a second-hand sermon and talked about work and rest. I really see this as a "how." If we're going to go out into the community and offer what we have, what is the spirit? What is the way we do that?

The reality is, we work and we serve not as a means to define us. Not as a way to prove our worth. We work from a place of rest. What stood out to me from Kevin's sermon was how this links to how the Jewish community thinks about the day starting at sundown and going until the next sundown. Instead of working all day, coming home exhausted, having a meal, and just feeling over it because maybe we've earned ourselves a rest, we start with the meal. We start

with time together with those we love. We rest, and then we are empowered to work. Then we have what we need to face the work that is in front of us.

Tracy then preached on her favorite verse, Second Peter 1:3-4. If you remember, she asked, "Who remembers what this verse is?" I called it out. Thank you. But the reason was, I was going to preach on that verse. I had already started preparing this sermon around that verse, and then she took it. So somehow, I'm going to have to spin this as a good thing, not just throw out what I'd done. She was thinking about it from an abundance mindset. She reminded us that all we need for the life we desire has been given to us. She looked at ways we can recognize patterns in our thinking that lead us to a mindset of scarcity, fear, and having to work to earn the fulfillment we desire.

Two weeks ago, Sophia built on this theme. She taught on Philippians 4, helping us understand anxiety. I really liked the idea of anxiety as things falling apart, focusing on the micro-scale of things fraying. Instead of zooming out and seeing the integration that God has for us, which is the peace that transcends all understanding. She helped us identify the scripts in our minds, the stories we tell ourselves that lead us to a place of anxiety. She gave us space to think about the truth that God is speaking over those narratives. We could insert the abundance God has for us over that anxiety, seeing the peace He has for us.

Now, I don't know about you, but one of my quirky traits is that I love taking things that are diverse stories and bringing them together into one. It's what I do for my job, actually. While I don't quite have the Kevin gift of a mile of context for every thought, I do have this desire to bring things together.

I see the adventure so far as screaming that this is one story. This is one thing that God is speaking to us. Yes, go and share what you have. Yes, go and do it from a place of rest. Yes, go equipped with a mindset that points you to the abundance God has for you, free of anxiety, filled with peace that reintegrates all your scattered pieces. God is showing us a template of life following Him.

Today, the word that has been on my heart for weeks, that would have been Second Peter 1:4, but we're going to switch it, is "enough." Enough is the word I want us to think about today. Do you have enough? Does your spirit acknowledge enough? Is that something you're able to handle?

So, I want to play a game called "What is Enough?" The first category of "What is Enough" is the Brandon Boyes Memorial category of ice cream. I don't know if you know Brandon, but he will eat Turkey Hill ice cream all day long. He has a separate freezer in his basement just for Turkey Hill ice cream. So, remind him of that the next time he decides to come to church. We

are going to vote. One finger for one scoop, two for two scoops, three for a large sundae, four for a quart. How much is enough ice cream? I want to see our votes. Okay, we got the idea.

Next is the families with kids in school edition. How many after-school activities is enough? One activity, two activities, three, or just lots of activities? How much is enough?

Now, this one is for James and our Pentecostal friends. How many church functions per week is enough? Sunday service, Sunday plus prayer, a Bible study on top, or at church every day? How much is enough?

Obviously, this was just a little fun. But all of this idea about "enough" started with a conversation I had with a friend. We were enjoying an Indian meal in Eagle view. He said something that stopped me in my tracks. We were talking about how more wealth doesn't always connect to more happiness. What he said was, "Of all the things I will ever have in my life, I already have the most important thing."

The passage for today is from Matthew 13:44-46. Two simple pictures that Jesus is sharing with his disciples about the kingdom of heaven. They emphasize this idea of "enough." The question that sticks with me after reading this is, do I have the pearl already? Do you feel like it is enough? Or do we turn up the radio and listen to U2's "I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For"? We might have the pearl, but we live in this place where we haven't found what we're looking for. This is the tension behind the game of "enough."

I believe we are called to more and more of God. There is never too much of God. We're never finished. We can never have all of Him. But I also believe that a mindset of never settling into the riches, the abundance, the peace, the identity God has for us, plagues us with a spirit of discontent. An empty restlessness. We accept "not enough" as our perspective of the world. We accept "it will never be" as our future, instead of recognizing that the pearl of great worth is in our hands. The hope for a better Earth is promised and sure.

The point my friend was making was that it is too easy to consume the riches we have and only hunger for more. I believe that's what Romans 12 is talking about. Don't be conformed to the pattern of the world. Don't be conformed to never finding peace in the life you have in Christ. Society has a progression: move out of your parents' house, get a condo, then a townhouse, then a single-family home, then a 2000 square feet home, then a 5000 square feet home, then a vacation home, then a jet, then a yacht. It will never be enough. Capitalism isn't built on "enough." It's built on "more, more, more." We will never find what we're looking for unless we have a mindset of abundance, knowing that what we need, we have in Christ.

In the kingdom of heaven, instead of striving from a place of deficit, we adventure from a place of abundance. Instead of striving from a deficit, we adventure from abundance. Think of a time when you've had enough. How does that feeling of abundance change how you act and interact?

When we have enough, we can relax. As a parent of children who love to eat, I've somehow fallen into this pattern of eating food as quickly as possible. I sometimes live with a "not enough" mindset because I know there aren't enough noodles, meat, or watermelon. So, I feel the need to get my share quickly. However, if I know there's another half of a watermelon in the fridge, I feel content. Knowing I have enough changes how I act and interact.

Another example of this is when someone asks to pass the potatoes. If there's only one scoop left, you might take it for yourself and pass the empty plate. But if you're aware there's another casserole dish filled with mashed potatoes in the kitchen, you can generously share. This abundance changes our interactions. Living in a mindset of scarcity, as Tracy pointed out, alters how we approach one another and limits our ability to experience the grace of abundance.

Before we delve deeper, I'd like to reflect on the concept of "enough" that Jesus shared through the parable of the pearl. How would you describe it? What are the things that come to mind when you think of the abundance God provides, symbolized by the pearl? What represents the kingdom of heaven for you? I'd love to hear your thoughts.

From the audience:

"You get access to a natural space. There is like, there's enough and more than enough of everything like there's always enough flowers and trees."

What else represents the "enough" symbolized by the pearl? Love, oxygen, patience, self-worth, hope, forgiveness, and friendship are some thoughts. Joni once said that if people don't speak up immediately, give them time, and they'll share. Life is another aspect, though it might be perceived differently by some. Here are some things I considered: purpose, wisdom, patience, fulfillment, being known, love, grace, and salvation. These are the riches we possess, yet our hearts often feel unsatisfied. We sometimes focus on what we lack instead of appreciating what we have.

For instance, at work, we might prioritize wealth over the purposeful vocation God intended for us. In our quest for knowledge, we might strive to discern good from evil rather than embracing God's wisdom. In relationships, we might seek control over others instead of valuing the gift of truly knowing someone and being known in return. We might yearn for pleasure over love,

comfort over grace, and respect over salvation. We hold a precious pearl, yet we risk it, hoping to gain more. This mindset is destructive and leaves us perpetually unsatisfied.

How can we adopt a mindset of abundance if we constantly feel we lack? Such a mindset traps us, preventing us from experiencing the abundant grace God wishes for us. Others become threats rather than allies. Time turns into an adversary rather than an opportunity. This is the result of discontent; the opposite of the bountiful feast God invites us to.

When I mention striving from a place of lack, I'm not suggesting we should passively wait for heaven. Jesus didn't imply that we should merely admire the pearl. The kingdom of heaven isn't just for personal possession; its value multiplies when shared. This reminds me of another parable, Matthew 25's Parable of the Talents. It's not about Jesus pressuring us but how we respond to the riches we're given. Those who act out of fear stagnate, while those who embrace abundance freely invest and benefit their master. The Kingdom of Heaven's value grows when shared.

Being an economist, I often think in terms of economies. We can operate from an economy of grace or one of deficit. The economy of grace begins with receiving God's fullness. This fullness, once experienced, flows to others. We give away temporal things like time, money, and power, and in return, gain eternal joys like love, purpose, hope, and fulfillment. This draws us closer to God and others, allowing us to remain full even as we give. In contrast, an economy of scarcity keeps us in a cycle of wanting more, leading to feelings of inadequacy and discontent.

Today, I believe God invites us to recognize where we find our "enough." While it's easy to acknowledge, it's challenging to practice, especially under stress. As we approach Communion, let's reflect on areas in our lives where we've felt we're striving from a deficit and recognize the abundance God has provided.

And one thing we pointed out was that many of you may come from an experience with a church. When you hear somebody say something, it's often along the lines of, "If you don't do this, you're going to hell." Right.

I want to clarify: God is not condemning us for not having an "enough" mindset. Instead, God is inviting us to a table of abundance. And I can tell you, it's good. So, as we're thinking about these things, I just want to make it clear. Don't add another layer of "here's another thing where I fall short." Let God speak to you and point out, "Here is a place where you might feel like you don't have enough, but I can be your enough."

I didn't put these thoughts on slides, but I was even thinking about the "enough" game at the beginning. What is enough income? What is enough house? What is enough car? What is enough entertainment? What is enough relationship? These are all places where we might feel like we have a deficit.

So, let's just take some time to listen. Joni if you want to go up and play a little something, do that thing you do. And let's hear what God is speaking to us.