



# REFLECTIONS

November 20, 2022

**But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness,  
and all these things will be given to you as well.**

*Matthew 6:33*

## Seek First the Kingdom

As the saying goes, "One bad apple spoils the barrel." Without the bad one the barrel would be perfect. We all are one of those, *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (Romans 3:23-24) Without knowing it, maybe the kingdom is what we are in search of in our journeys through this world.

Along the way we learned about the mustard seed. "*Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches.*" And "*The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.*" (Matthew 13:31-33) And that "*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.*" (Matthew 13:44)

In the mustard seed, Jesus describes heaven as expansive and strong; He describes the penetrating qualities of yeast; and we found the kingdom so precious that we are willing to sell everything we have to possess it. But for me Jesus hit reality with this parable:

*"Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. When it was full, the fishermen pulled it up on the shore. Then they sat down and collected the good fish in baskets, but threw the bad away. This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*" (Matthew 13:47-50)

Heaven is a perfect place. No. Heaven is *the* perfect place. No bad apples allowed.

Yes, unworthy me, clothed in filthy deeds, infected with shameful thoughts, and driven by selfish desires. I'm the guy who spots the speck in the eyes of my brothers and sisters but can't see the log in my own. As a bad apple I will be tossed away with the bad fish.

"*Seek first the kingdom and his righteousness,*" Jesus said. But how?

*Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts. Let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on him, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.* (Isaiah 55:6-7)

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*" (John 14:6)

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."* (John 8:12)

*You are the light of the world,*

*Richard +*

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