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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1639 ~ The Kingdom of Heaven.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

In today's Bible Adventure, we're looking at the Kingdom of Heaven, or 'the Kingdom of God' as it's often referred to. As we go through life, from time to time we need to ask ourselves what is the most important thing right now that will aid our future? Some may answer with regard to their possessions, family or friends; even wealth or being famous. But missionaries who've served God faithfully until their very last breath are known to have staked their lives on the truth of the Gospel. They pointed to the greatest prize for any human being – to be accepted by the Lord Jesus Christ and to be welcomed into His Kingdom of Heaven as a faithful servant.

One such person was a man called Charles Studd, known around the world as 'C.T. Studd'. He was born into a rich English family in 1860 and by his university days, he was known for his fine cricketing skills. After making a profession of faith when he was 18 years old, C.T. spent the next 6 years in a backslidden state. He said: "Instead of going and telling others of the love of Christ, I was selfish and kept the knowledge to myself. The result was that gradually my love began to grow cold, and the love of the world began to come in." After those unhappy years, the Lord met C.T. and restored to him the joy of His salvation.

The Lord continued His work in C.T.'s life and led him to China. In 1885, he sailed there to work with Hudson Taylor. While in China, C.T. reached the age of 25 when according to his father's will, he was to inherit a large sum of money. Through reading God's Word and after much prayer, C.T. felt led to give his entire fortune to Christ for His work.

After he'd given most of the fortune away to Christian organisations, he met his wife-to-be and gave her the small remaining amount. However, she encouraged him to give it all away as he had originally intended. They would depend entirely on the Lord for His provision for them. It was C.T. Studd's public testimony before God and the people that he believed God's Word to be the surest thing on earth. He believed the hundred-fold interest which God has promised is an actual reality for those who believe it and act on it.

After 10 years in China, the Studd family included four daughters but as their health wasn't good, they returned to England. As C.T.'s father had made his fortune in India, C.T. thought it would also be right to spend some time there. In 1900, the Studd family moved to South India to pastor a church for 6 years. After their return home to England in 1906, C.T. was stirred by the need for missionary pioneer work in Central Africa.

Yet he faced difficulties getting started. His doctor refused to give him a medical clearance. The committee of businessmen who had agreed to support him then refused to do so. Once more, C.T. Studd risked his life in obedience to God. Leaving his family behind, he sailed for the heart of Africa in 1910, where he continued to work until his death in 1931. Were his many sacrifices worth it all? Is the Kingdom of Heaven really the most valuable treasure that we should all be searching for?

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

These parables about the kingdom of heaven are listed together in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 13, verses 44 to 50. Matthew is the only Gospel writer to use the term 'Kingdom of Heaven' but at times he also uses 'Kingdom of God'. Although they seem to mean the same at times, their full meaning depends on the context in which the words are used. Some people think that because Matthew was a Jew writing to the Jewish people, he respected their custom of using the word 'God' as little as possible.

When Jesus said that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure, the value of the Kingdom of Heaven is to be held higher and above all other types of treasure. Jesus expects us to dispose of all our other valuables against the priority of pursuing His kingdom. And the reason for this is simply that where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

In the parable of the pearl of great price, Jesus emphasized that the Kingdom of Heaven is of great value and is worth selling everything else to get it. Do you feel alarm at the possibility of giving away your earthly valuables? Don't be. God is never any person's debtor. God always gives more to us than we can possibly give to Him. We need to seek His wisdom and direction in how we may honour Him the most with our lives and possessions.

In the third parable, the Kingdom of Heaven is likened to a fisherman's net full of all kinds of fish. The good fish are kept but the bad ones are thrown away. At the end of the age, the angels will separate the wicked people from the righteous ones. And then the wicked will be destroyed.

If this prospect frightens you, remember the words of the Apostle Paul at the end of 1 Thessalonians, Chapter 1 - Jesus has delivered all those who repent, love and serve Him from God's intense anger towards all those who continue to sin and do evil. Yet God is not willing for any to perish; He gives the wicked time to hear and believe the Gospel message and turn from their sins.

In the last four centuries, there's been a gradual decrease in the number of books and sermons written and preached about heaven and hell. And much more time has been spent teaching on hell than heaven. Maybe Christians' thinking has become foggy about heaven because they don't really know what they'll be doing for eternity in that wonderful place?

The Bible gives us five different occupations that believers will be doing in heaven.

1. Worship and singing
2. Service
3. Faithful servants receive authority from the Lord upon His return
4. Fellowship with other believers
5. Learning from the Lord Jesus how to love God fully.

And there's a 6th: We also expect to have some time for rest.

In modern times, the philosophy that regards reason as the only basis for beliefs or actions ignores the great seriousness of moral and immoral behaviour. Reason excludes God's standards of right and wrong conduct. Yet the time is coming when every single person has to stand before our marvellous God to give an account of things done while here on earth. In Romans, Chapter 14, it says: "Each of us shall give an account of himself to God."

The story is told of a king who died unexpectedly in his sleep one night.

"Where has he gone?" asked one of the king's crafty advisors.

"Why, to heaven," replied the others.

"No," said one gravely. "I served this king for many years and travelled with him extensively. He loved to travel, and would talk about his trips often beforehand. Every detail was planned and expected. But I have never heard him say a word about travelling to heaven. It was a journey for which I saw no preparation. I am quite sure that he has not gone to heaven."

Sadly, a time of preparation for heaven has been neglected by so many people.

Another group of people called agnostics believe that God doesn't even exist, and have a faith that there is no resurrection from death, no accountability to anyone and no punishment for harm done to others. This belief denies that there is any place such as heaven to go to at the end of our lives on earth. God and His Son are rejected in the here and now. But denying the truth doesn't change it. The Lord says that every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess to God. Even the world's most famous agnostic man confessed in the world media recently that he isn't 100% certain that there isn't a God.

Others think everything can be explained away by saying that millions of years ago the world slowly and gradually made itself. Is this possible? There are many examples wherever we look at how two particular needs must work together from the very beginning. The Bible says that God created the world and everything in it. This is God's truth, even if most others these days reject it.

There are many such instances that simply cannot be explained away by the theory that everything gradually is getting better and better. Two simple examples are these: when a giraffe is thirsty and wants a drink, how can it lower its head to the stream of water without all its blood rushing down to its brain and killing it? God has devised a series of valves to stop the giraffe from being harmed. A horse has a very small heart for its size which can't effectively pump blood down to its hooves. So God has given each leg a booster pump so the horse can still gallop and jump around.

A medical doctor in America believed there was no God and that all religious beliefs weren't to be depended on. In 1977, the doctor was trying to save a man from dying. Every time the patient recovered a bit, he screamed, "I am in hell!" He was terrified and pleaded with the doctor to help him. The doctor was scared to death himself. When the man finally survived, the doctor gave the whole matter some thought. He did some research on near-death experiences. Nearly half of the stories he heard reported seeing lakes of fire, devil-like figures and other sights reflecting the darkness of hell. Just listening to these patients changed the doctor's life. He said, "There is life after death, and if I don't know where I'm going, it's not safe to die." The doctor started studying his Bible and became a Christian. He went on to write two books on his medical experiences.

The Bible teaches the truth about God and regardless of what some people say, we must never let others push their unbiblical views onto us. In Hebrews, Chapter 9, it says: "As it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."

C.T. Studd was only one of many faithful people looking eagerly for their reward in heaven. He faithfully served His Saviour in China, India and Africa. His motto was: "If Jesus Christ is God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him." So he gave away his cricketering career, his academic status, his fortune, his health and for the last years of his life, his family. His last word here on earth was "Hallelujah" which is an exclamation of praise to God.

The twin names of Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God are the major theme throughout the Bible. Like C.T. Studd, our motivation in life should be Matthew, Chapter 6, Verse 33: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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